



**Homelessness Strategy 2010-2015**  
**Knowsley Metropolitan Borough**  
**Council**



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## **1. A note from the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Economy and Skills**

Tackling homelessness is a priority here in Knowsley. This strategy sets out our ambitious plans for achieving this over the next five years. We will continue to focus on homelessness prevention wherever possible, and where we are unable to prevent homelessness we will ensure we provide good quality temporary accommodation for our clients, pending finding them a settled home.

We have worked really closely with all of our partners in Knowsley to comprehensively review homelessness and to produce this strategy. We want to thank all those who have helped us get to the stage of being able to publish this strategy, of which we are very proud.

This joint working will not stop here as over the next 5 years we anticipate having a joint approach to tackling homelessness and will work with every agency in the borough to implement the delivery plan. We thank our colleagues in agencies across the borough in advance for the work they will put in to make this strategy a success.

**Cllr Dave Lonergan**

## **2. Foreword**

This is Knowsley MBC's third Homelessness Strategy and follows the last strategy which was developed in 2006. Since the publication of the 2006 Strategy there has been some progress in reducing homelessness and improving services and the Council is fully committed to seeing this work being developed further over the next 5 years. This commitment is shown clearly through the development of this new Strategy and associated Delivery Plan.

The Council has made some positive steps in increasing prevention work and working with partners. We are aware of a number of key challenges for the future which include:

- To continue to develop services that prevent homelessness.



- Designing and delivering services in a customer focussed way that delivers value for money.
- Identifying what support services and temporary accommodation is needed.
- Improving how services are monitored to ensure accountability for meeting targets.
- Assisting vulnerable adults and young people to live independently and ensuring that services are developed that meet their needs.
- Ensuring that all tenures are available as housing options are available as housing options to prevent homelessness.
- Working with those affected by homelessness to see how they can be helped into employment and/ or training schemes.

This Strategy 2010-2015 will build on work undertaken to date, ensuring that a long term vision is taken and that the homelessness service is robust and responsive to changing needs. The Council knows that it cannot deliver the outcomes required alone and is determined to continue working with all relevant partner organisations and build further on the links already made.

The Council will not be complacent and it recognises that there are a number of areas where more work is needed.

These will be addressed through the Homelessness Delivery Plan which forms part of this Strategy.

### **3. Introduction**

Under the Homelessness Act 2002 there is a legal requirement for all Councils to develop a Homelessness Strategy.

The Strategy must set out the local authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for ensuring that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless. This can be provided directly or indirectly as long as its provision is effective and appropriate.



It is important for the Council to make sure that the Strategy is consistent with other local plans, policies and strategies that relate to and/or have some impact on homelessness both to the individual and the wider community.

The Homelessness Strategy is a key component of the Council's Housing Strategy which is produced in response to national housing policy and the desire of the Council to best meet local needs. The Government's strategy for tackling homelessness is outlined in Sustainable Communities: Homes for All and Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives, published in 2005

The homelessness review 2010 – available separately by emailing [housing@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:housing@knowsley.gov.uk) has helped determine the direction and content of this third strategy so that it builds on previous success particularly in relation to homelessness prevention.

In order to drive forward the Strategy, a Delivery Plan will be used to monitor continued improvement to existing services and the development and implementation of new services whether provided by the council or partner agencies. It provides a mechanism to make sure actions are addressed correctly and on time. The Delivery Plan has been informed by the outcomes of the review of homelessness services and will be monitored by the Knowsley Homelessness Forum. The Delivery Plan is included as an appendix to this strategy.

Key areas that the homelessness review has looked at for the area are;

- The principle causes of homelessness and how it can be prevented.
- Current levels of homelessness
- The provision of various housing options and choice given to households facing homelessness ( preventative work)
- The use of and length of stay in temporary accommodation
- How the Council and its partners are performing compared with national and regional performance comparisons.
- What services are provided across the district and by whom
- Customer views and expectations of the service provided
- Views of key partners as to what current services work well and where further service development is needed to meet needs.

## **4. Vision and Aims**



The Council recognises that homelessness hinders individual and community growth. Its high level Community Strategy which has the vision of “**Knowsley: the Borough of choice**” aims to create a place that has a sustainable and diverse population. It is recognised that providing (either directly or by commissioning) services that prevent homelessness and ensuring that a range of housing options are available for residents will contribute to this overarching aim.

The Council is committed to having strong partnerships in place to maximise the potential for people to have a settled and secure home and enjoy the consequent benefits for themselves and society as a whole.

**The aim of this Strategy is to prevent homelessness wherever possible through the delivery of customer focussed and high quality services that meet the needs of those at risk.** Early intervention and strong partnership working is essential if homelessness is to be reduced during the coming years. Increasing customer options and ensuring services are targeting those most in need are also integral themes to the Strategy.

However the Strategy also takes into account the fact that housing and combating homelessness is not just about bricks and mortar. It endorses the need to address the relationship between homelessness and access to a range of other services and options that help people live independent lives. It recognises the link to life chances as a whole and the need for people to be able to make choices and be able to improve their lives through work and education. Ensuring these aims are embedded in the Homelessness Strategy is key for the Council as it aims to meet its central vision of its current Corporate Plan of “**Improving people’s lives**”.

With this in mind the following key objectives have been established and form the backbone of the 2010-2015 Homelessness Strategy and Delivery Plan.

1. Increase prevention work by developing or increasing the use of appropriate services that meet identified needs.
2. Ensure there that homelessness services in Knowsley are delivered in a customer focussed way that delivers value for money
3. Ensure that appropriate support services and temporary accommodation options are available where needed.
4. Ensure that the homelessness services are delivering the required outcomes.



5. Increase access to all tenures as positive housing options.
6. Ensure that the allocations policy has emphasis on preventing homelessness and the best use of social rented stock
7. Ensure that partnership working to prevent homelessness is embedded across all services
8. Develop services to help people engage positively with training and employment opportunities.

All of the above are consistent with the council’s overarching aims and objectives as well as those at the sub regional level.

## 5. Strategic Links

This Strategy cannot be successful in isolation. It has been developed with reference to a range of other local and regional corporate strategies and plans. As well as ensuring that this strategy meets the aims of Knowsley’s Community Strategy and Corporate Plan it also takes account of the North West Regional Homelessness Strategy and Knowsley’s place within the Merseyside Sub Regional Area.

It takes account of the CLG’s own strategy for tackling homelessness “Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives (March 2005)” which focuses on: Preventing homelessness, providing support for vulnerable people tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness, helping more people move away from rough sleeping and providing more settled homes.

Key related housing strategies are indicated below;

Related Strategy	Nature of links
Knowsley Housing Strategy 2004-2010	There are three key objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and managing housing markets</li> <li>• Decent homes for all</li> <li>• Addressing housing need.</li> </ul>



Related Strategy	Nature of links
North West Regional Homelessness Strategy 2008	There are three Priorities identified; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevent homelessness</li> <li>• Increase access to a choice of settled homes,</li> <li>• Develop plans and activity based on a robust understanding of homelessness and housing need</li> </ul>
Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy - 2007	This Strategy has 5 priorities including creating a “City Region of Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Communities”.
Knowsley Young Persons Accommodation Strategy – 2008-2012	This Strategy has 5 key objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early intervention to prevent homelessness</li> <li>• Provision of adequate support for vulnerable young people</li> <li>• Development of a wider choice of housing options</li> <li>• Provision of fair and equitable access to homelessness services and housing advice</li> <li>• Improved joint working with partner agencies.</li> </ul>
Supporting People 5-Year Strategy	Ensuring the provision of support for vulnerable households in Knowsley

## 6. Homelessness in Knowsley: The Review



During April and May 2010 a thorough review of the 2006-2010 Strategy was undertaken. The aim of the review was to;

- provide a comprehensive evaluation of the extent, causes and demography of homelessness in the Borough
- establish the effectiveness and relevance of existing services in meeting the varied needs and demands of those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- identify gaps in service provision affecting those that are threatened with or become homeless
- establish the Council's priorities for the coming years to prevent homelessness wherever possible

In undertaking the review the Council has consulted widely and analysed data from a range of sources. Performance comparisons have been made against national and regional data. This approach has resulted in a holistic understanding of the key challenges facing the Council in delivering services to homeless people.

### **6.1. Key findings in review**

The review has shown that there is an increase in the number of people seeking advice and assistance in relation to homelessness over the past three years and that the number of clients referred to the prevention service has also remained high. However there has been little reduction in homelessness acceptances over the same time period and even though prevention work in some areas has increased there is still room for further improvement around the main causes of homelessness.

The number of preventions of homelessness by ensuring that the household can remain in their own home has fallen sharply over the past year while assisting in securing alternative accommodation has risen, especially through an offer from the housing register for social housing. This indicates that more work is needed around a strategy for prevention work concentrating on assisting households to be able to remain in their current home.



Prevention activity therefore needs to be increased and embedded, be integral to the homelessness strategy and carried out early. Drop in services, focussed mediation, useful working relationships with private landlords and services for those suffering from domestic abuse are all needed to achieve better results. This is particularly important given the top three main causes of homelessness were;

- Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate – 24.42%
- Violent breakdown of relationship involving partner – 16.59%
- Termination of AST – 9.22%

These three sets of reasons make up 50% of homelessness during 2009/10. As such there is strong reason to believe that significant inroads could be made to reduce homelessness if further energy and resources were targeted at these three areas of work.

Households accepted as homeless generally include children or an expectant mother which follows the national trend. There are, however, still a significant number of accepted households which are made up of vulnerable individuals. In 2009/10 32% of accepted households were single people. There were more single women accepted as homeless than single men.

Parental evictions were the biggest cause of homelessness in 2009/10. The use of family mediation should be reviewed and used wherever possible. Knowsley is the North West Centre of Excellence for Youth Homelessness and is working hard to deliver the outcomes outlined in their Young Persons Accommodation Strategy which has a strong prevention ethos at its heart. Work is also being carried out looking at the implications for 16 and 17 year olds following a landmark court ruling in 2009. In Knowsley there were 72 homeless acceptances for people under 25 in 2009/10. This is 33% of all acceptances. It is therefore vital that services for young people are provided and are targeted at the groups most likely to experience homelessness.

While some work has been done to look at expanding services for those suffering domestic abuse there is not a sanctuary scheme that is currently operational. This needs to be put in place quickly to ensure that people are able to remain living in their own homes where possible. This scheme needs to be supported heavily by partners including Housing Associations, police and partners that work in this area. Such a scheme in other boroughs has made a considerable difference to people's lives.



The use of the private rented sector needs to be maximised so that fewer tenancies result in homelessness and access to this sector can be increased where this is a viable option for households. There is a rent deposit scheme in Knowsley and this needs to be used as a housing option where appropriate.

A Mortgage Rescue Scheme has been particularly successful in Knowsley and with still uncertain times ahead it is important that such schemes that are working well are kept in place for as long as is deemed necessary.

Other successful work in Knowsley includes the High Priority Resettlement Panel. The purpose of the panel is to act as a focal point for deciding upon applications for priority rehousing not catered for in the normal allocations criteria and ensuring support is available to enable the household to sustain a new tenancy. A Move On Plans Protocol action plan was also produced in 2008/09 which has succeeded in significantly improving throughput in our emergency and short stay accommodation.

## **6.2. Key Statistics**

As part of the homelessness review, a full range of data was analysed to understand the borough and its relationship with housing need and homelessness. These are set out in detail in the review document, and summarised here.

- Unemployment is higher than the England average standing at 8.4% in 2008/09.
- In 2008 the most important sectors within the Knowsley economy in absolute employment terms were public administration, health and education (32.1%), manufacturing (19.8%) and distribution, hotels and restaurants (17.5%). Knowsley is underrepresented in managerial and professional occupations.
- Knowsley had 23.7% of the workforce with no qualifications in 2008. This compared to 12.3% in England as a whole. This will have an implication on the social/economic balance in the long term which will directly impact on attracting high skilled, high paying companies to the area.
- Knowsley is predicted to have a 90% increase in residents over 80 by 2031. This means that the development of services for this age group will be critical.



- The housing stock for the Borough totals 62,037 units of accommodation. Private rented accommodation is at 6% (against a national average of 12%), owner occupation at 62.8% and social rented accommodation at 29.5%.
- In 2009 there were 2218 households registered for social housing on the Councils housing register. The greatest demand is for 1 bedroom properties.
- Parents, relatives and friends wishing to evict, private landlords evicting and violent breakdown of relationship make up 56% of homelessness acceptances in 2009/10.
- In 2009/10 68% of all acceptances involved households with children or where a household member was pregnant
- There was an 8% decrease in acceptances in Knowsley between 2007/08 and 2009/10. During 2009/10 217 households were accepted as homeless compared to 236 in 2007/08.
- There has been a decrease of 28.5% in preventions whereby the household was able to stay in their own home between 2008/09 and 2009/10. Over the same period there was an increase of 33.5% in preventions whereby the households was assisted in securing alternative accommodation.

### **6.3. Consultation**

To fully understand the issues partner agencies face in tackling homelessness and to, establish a number of priorities a range of consultation was undertaken with stakeholders, including staff, service users and partner agencies . This ensured all stakeholders had an opportunity to feed into the review and get their particular issues raised and it enabled them to contribute to the formulation of this Strategy.

During early 2010 feedback from service users was collected. JenkinsDuval housing consultants were commissioned to carry out this work so that service users could talk openly and honestly about their experiences of being homeless in Knowsley. The results of this are available in the review.

During May 2010 a short survey was sent out to partner agencies asking for their views on homelessness issues in Knowsley. 8 agencies replied to this questionnaire.

Once an initial draft of the review was available, our partner agencies were invited to contribute to the development of the strategy. This was done by circulating a draft version of the review and by inviting stakeholders to a consultation session in late May.



The questionnaire and stakeholder sessions asked attendees to discuss a number of issues which included what works well in Knowsley, where they saw main gaps in provision and the main issues they encountered when trying to prevent homelessness. The outcome of these sessions is available within the review document and has helped to develop this strategy.

Colleagues from partner agencies have also been involved in developing this published version of the homelessness strategy, by inputting into draft versions, completing a survey on priorities and attending a drop in session at the council offices held in September.

#### **6.4. Key strategic Priorities**

The following have been identified as the 7 main strategic priorities for the 2010-2015 Strategy taking into consideration the homelessness review and the national and regional priorities;

##### **1. Prevent homelessness through increased early intervention**

Homelessness has significant negative consequences that mean issues need to be tackled early by prevention measures. Investment in prevention services can also produce direct cost savings for the local authority such as decreased use of temporary accommodation, fewer social service interventions and less dependency on acute services. Preventing homelessness also helps to reduce long term pressures on wider services such as health and unemployment.

There is still significant work to be done by the Council to ensure that there is a comprehensive range of prevention tools available and this is a key aim of this strategy. This means developing practical initiatives such as a sanctuary scheme, ensuring there is high quality mediation available and that measures to prevent the loss of private sector tenancies are available such as an increased use of the rent deposit scheme and use of discretionary housing payments

Crucial to making these initiatives work, is effective joint working with agencies and effective referral routes into services. Developing a comprehensive directory of services will be helpful in achieving this.



**2. Ensure there that homelessness services in Knowsley are delivered in a customer focussed way that delivers value for money**

There are a number of elements of the service that the Council wishes to further develop such as drop in services, training and development for staff, improved web based information, service user consultation and education based projects. Services must be widely accessible across the borough and delivered in a way that ensures that customers are at the heart of the service and have opportunities to shape it in the future.

There is little doubt that the financial climate for councils will be tighter in coming years and therefore all services will be under close scrutiny to ensure that they deliver value for money. Strong partnership working will remain vital in these circumstances.

**3. Ensure that appropriate support services and temporary accommodation options are available where needed.**

The review highlighted where there are services that work well and where there are current gaps. The Council will work with partners to fill those gaps.

The parental eviction issues need to be addressed with appropriate support services and work that has begun to address issues around a lack of accommodation for substance misusers needs to be taken forward.

The delivery of the Young Persons Accommodation Strategy is also a priority for the Council and links closely to the work on implementing this strategy.

**4. Ensure that the homelessness services are delivering the required outcomes.**

Understanding how Knowsley performs, especially in comparison to others, is important so that the Council can, where necessary, learn from others and introduce ideas from best practice to improve. Over the life of this Strategy the Council will look to develop a suite of performance information which can track performance and flag any issues. Performance information will be cascaded to staff who are doing the front line job both in the form of targets and feedback. In delivering this Strategy with partner agencies, it is anticipated that arrangements with partners will be formalised through



protocols and service level agreements. The Council will look to the multi-agency Homelessness Forum to monitor and manage performance on prevention and tackling homelessness. Services will be regularly evaluated to ensure they are delivering the necessary outcomes.

**5. Develop the use of all tenures as positive housing options in Knowsley and make best use of available stock.**

The Council aims to assist all those that approach it as threatened with homelessness with a realistic opportunity to access housing. This includes assisting those in greatest need through the housing register, and making better use of the private rented sector in the borough. The Council is committed to ensuring that its own allocations policy has appropriate priority given to those who are homeless or in a reasonable preference category and that work that is currently ongoing such as the Merseyside sub regional CBL scheme and CLG funded overcrowding work will deliver the best possible outcomes for clients.

In addition, the Council recognises the role that the private rented sector has to play and will be engaging with private landlords to explore opportunities for closer working in coming years /months. This will include an accreditation scheme and reviewing procedures around negotiation to ensure that where possible homelessness does not occur. We want to be able to access good quality private sector accommodation for our clients and be able to provide them with support in managing tenancies where appropriate.

The Council is also very keen to continue to work closely with partner RSLs in tackling homelessness.

**6. Ensure that partnership working to prevent homelessness is embedded throughout the borough to best meet the needs of residents.**

The Council cannot deliver this strategy on its own. Its relationship with partners is critical. This needs to be a true partnership that will best meet the needs of the residents of Knowsley. Joint working protocols need to be developed where necessary so all parties are aware of expectations and regular communication should be central to ensuring that those that can deliver services well are empowered to do so.



Where there are key challenges for the Council all parties will need to work together to deliver. Where current services are successful, such as the CAB or the High Priority Resettlement Panel these partnerships should be developed further to maximise the possible impact they could have.

#### **7. Develop services to help people engage positively with training and employment opportunities.**

This aim is a challenge for the Council but one that is very necessary taking into account the qualification, income and unemployment levels with the borough. An Enhanced Housing Options ethos should sit within the homelessness and housing advice services so that training and employment advice is available alongside housing advice and assistance.

Links with local employment projects, college, voluntary work opportunities and child care as well as projects that help with issues such as anger management, self esteem and parenting will ensure that a holistic view of a clients needs can be discussed and met where appropriate.

## **7. Predicting Future levels of Homelessness**

Since the first homelessness strategies were published in the summer of 2003, there have been significant changes, nationally and locally, as to how homelessness is addressed. Prevention is a key driver in reducing homelessness and is expected to compliment other wider aims such as improving opportunities for work or training. Proactive work helps reduce reactive and crisis driven responses.

It can be difficult to predict future needs, but the current socio-economic and demographic context suggests that there will be further difficulties for many households trying to access good quality affordable housing, especially in light of the current economic climate. Knowsley heavily relies on the public sector for employment opportunities and the future here is currently unpredictable.

However, notwithstanding this, what the review has told us is that locally Knowsley is likely to see further increases in homelessness unless it develops a more coherent strategy to prevent homelessness and reduce the need for temporary accommodation. The numbers of people seeking advice about their housing situation has increased by 22% over the past 3 years and there has only been a modest reduction in this period of acceptances.



There are a number of possible sources that can impact on future levels of homelessness. These are;

- The potential increase in the numbers of young people who will approach the service, because they cannot afford to access their own housing unassisted. The 20-29 population in Knowsley is predicted to increase by approximately 2000 over the life of this strategy.
- The potential increases if local unemployment levels remain high and there are fewer public sector job opportunities.
- The possible increase in homelessness due to a continuation of family and friends evicting because access to the owner occupied sector is made harder by mortgage companies
- Concerns that buy to let landlords may face financial difficulties and be forced to sell accommodation that they currently rent out in Knowsley, meaning threatened homelessness for some households and a reduction in properties available
- The increasing numbers who will approach because of the rising costs of home ownership and the risk of mortgage repossession- this may be small but may increase as general cost of living increases.
- There are a number of young people in care that are due to leave over the next 3 years. There is a challenge to provide services here that mean they do not present as homeless on leaving care.
- Specific vulnerable clients who need a package of support when leaving institutions and to then sustain tenancies. Work around identifying and providing services for specific client groups is vital.

Nationally we know from the trends in homelessness applications and acceptances and levels of clients in temporary accommodation that homelessness is more manageable now than it was 5 years ago and that reductions can be sustained

However, given the results of the review and the issues above, the Council is keen to tackle the root causes of homelessness and use our Delivery Plan as a way to make significant improvements



## **8. Accommodation for Homeless households**

There will be a continuing need for temporary accommodation, and the further development of this for specific client groups.

The target for temporary accommodation (TA) within Knowsley was 9 and this has been met with 8 households being in TA at the end of March 2010. A realistic target needs to be set for the future taking into consideration the needs within the borough. Numbers are small but any increase in homelessness presentations will undoubtedly make it harder to remain at such a low level.

There is no current use of bed and breakfast accommodation in Knowsley and all TA is within hostels. Stays in hostels are below the national average however the Council needs to satisfy itself that it is striking a balance between managing time spent in TA, with homelessness and TA becoming a fast route into permanent housing

Improved working with the Private rented sector to provide more good quality accommodation is required so that availability of housing for those facing homelessness can be increased. The development of a landlord accreditation scheme will aid this.

## **9. Preventing homelessness**

In June 2007 CLG published homelessness policy briefing number 19, “Local Authority Survey of Homelessness Prevention”. The briefing summarised the most successful types of prevention tools and included information barriers and solutions for success. The briefing made clear that the need for Councils to provide for temporary accommodation can be reduced by preventing households from becoming homeless.

Effective prevention work can reduce homelessness which in turn helps minimise disruption to individuals’ lives and impacts on wider services. Knowsley Council is keen to structure its resources so it can increase the prevention options that it has available to meet its needs over the coming years. The Council is aware from the work carried out during the homelessness review, that officers within the Homelessness Service do not have a comprehensive enough and effective toolkit at their disposal to help them in preventing homeless. Central to this strategy is the need to develop more prevention options for customers of the service. The Council is keen to learn from others in this respect and as such the Delivery Plan includes a



section relating to performance monitoring and benchmarking so that there are specific actions to learn from other Authorities to understand what works well and what makes a difference. In addition a number of tasks have been identified so that partnership working can be strengthened to target resources more effectively.

During 2009/10 217 households were accepted as homeless compared to 236 in 2007/08. Although this represents an 8% decrease over three years there was no change over the last 2 years. This is against national trends.

These issues and others are addressed within the Delivery plan.

## **10. Supporting the homeless and those threatened with homelessness**

Since 2003, the Council has been in a position to be able to access support services for homeless people, thanks to provision made by Supporting People funding. There have been some real successes in improving the support given to those facing homelessness. The Council is particularly proud of its High Priority Resettlement Panel which enables people to move on from supported accommodation into settled homes, thereby freeing up accommodation for others. The Move-On Plans Protocol developed in 2008 was particularly significant in improving throughput in emergency and short stay accommodation.

The review has identified areas where improvements can be made in service provision. Gaps identified indicate that while floating support works well there is a need for more, there is a need for further temporary accommodation for a range of client groups where there is a current unmet need, a need to ensure that needs of care leavers are met and that there is emergency provision for 16 and 17 year olds.

The survey and consultation sessions with stakeholders and agencies also suggests a need to make improvements in the understanding of what help is available, training for staff in issues such as safeguarding and the need for joined up working.

The links between the PCT and the Council are already strong in Knowsley and there are some good examples of joint working to provide services for vulnerable groups such as those with mental health issues and learning disabilities. There is current work ongoing to look to improve services in regard to substance misuse and supported living. This is a real strength when joined up thinking can deliver real benefits for residents.



Making sure there is a smooth transition from institutional care settings and that tenancies are sustained is important to avoid an increase in repeat homelessness and demand on other associated services. Reviewing the way support is provided may help to target it more effectively and this has been built into the Delivery plan. An Offenders and Substance Misusers Housing Forum was set up during 2010, to ensure the needs of this client group are addressed and the work of this Forum will link closely to the work of the Homelessness Forum.

The Government wants to encourage all local authorities to offer services to drive down youth homelessness such as peer mentoring and supported lodgings. The need to help give younger people a fighting chance is seen as very important and we are keen to participate in this agenda. Knowsley has a Young Person Accommodation Strategy and delivery against this will help meet a number of targets.

## **11. Housing services and Employment**

Unemployment and poverty are factors associated with homelessness and many of the householders who present as homeless in Knowsley are unemployed and in receipt of benefits. This makes it very important that joint working is effective. We need to connect homeless people not only to available opportunities for work and training but also education to help give them the right skills to meet employers' needs. In order to improve the prospects of those affected by homelessness the Council will strive to;

- find ways to assess the impact of homelessness on employment opportunities and access to training across the borough.
- seek to ensure that those affected by homelessness are not disadvantaged in accessing employment and training opportunities.
- successfully connect homeless people to existing Employment and Training Programmes
- ensure that relevant organisations consider people who are homeless within their strategies and plans



In doing so this would be consistent with the aim of generating mixed and thriving communities as stated in “Ends and Means: The future roles of social housing in England” published by John Hills, February 2007

## **12. Resources**

The Council has a number of resources available to tackle homelessness although it is recognised that the current climate around public sector finances will have an impact here going forward. To successfully implement the Delivery Plan, it will need to consider what other resources can be accessed. The Council must ensure that value for money is central to all work that is undertaken or commissioned and that monitoring of performance against targets ensures that there is strong culture developed to get best value for the money it spends. The resources available now are:

- General Funding from Council
- CLG funding through Homelessness Grant and any other funding available in light of the current economic climate
- Supporting people funding to provide support to prevent homelessness
- Partnerships with other agencies allowing the Council to tap into and benefit from the resources of others not only within the Borough but also further afield in the North West. This will be enhanced through a strong wish to develop joint working further.
- Service savings through a spend to save policy

## **13. Monitoring delivery**

In order to take forward the Strategy for 2010-2015 clear tasks have been identified and are located within the 5 year Delivery plan. It is recognised that new and emerging tasks may become apparent in the lifetime of the Strategy and these will be addressed appropriately. The Delivery plan identifies the key strategic priorities and is consistent with National and Regional agendas.



It is the role of the Knowsley Homelessness Forum to monitor progress against targets, to assess the impact that the strategy is having overall in the borough and to identify other actions for the Delivery Plan throughout the life of the strategy.

Regular monitoring and updating will take place with clear timescales to make sure the strategy is successful and that any amendments are made early. Benchmarking coupled with giving staff the opportunity to be innovative in preventing homelessness will help drive the Strategy forward although overall the Homelessness Forum will take responsibility for delivering the Strategy to success.

This strategy will not be delivered unless there is strong partnership working and all partners will need to take a responsibility for ensuring the overall success and improvement to services over the next 5 years.

## **14. The Delivery Plan**

The Delivery Plan is attached as Appendix 1. It defines the key strategic objectives and the tasks that are needed to bring success. It establishes what outcomes are anticipated and how these will be achieved.

The Delivery Plan will be refreshed annually and reported on quarterly to the Homelessness Forum meeting. The most recent copy will be made available on the Councils website.