

West Kent Joint Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016

Appendices

Sevenoaks District Council

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council



January 2011

Appendix One: West Kent Homelessness Strategy Project Team

Helen Clarke, Housing Needs Manager (Tunbridge Wells DC) (until 30/11/10)

Jane Ellis, Service Manager - Social Housing (Sevenoaks DC)

Jane Rogers, Housing Options Manager (Tunbridge Wells BC) (from December 2010)

Janet Walton, Chief Housing Officer, (Tonbridge & Malling BC)

Lynn Wilders, Housing Needs Manager (Tonbridge & Malling BC)

Pat Smith, Head of Housing and Communications (Sevenoaks DC)

Rav Kensrey, Housing Options team Manager (Tonbridge and Malling BC) (from December 2010)

Appendix Two: Summary of Homelessness Strategy Group Consultation Events

Event One: July 2010	
Addressing the needs of Young people 16-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More preventative work in education around housing and mediation services ▪ More supported accommodation from low support to high support ▪ More floating support services to reduce waiting lists ▪ A much more clear protocol with regards to crisis situations around housing services ▪ Clearer information and improved communication on services and signposting ▪ Emergency Housing such as Nightstop or Open House. ▪ Preventative education - leaflet/booklet for Young Persons and agencies? ▪ Housing Awareness for young people to dispel myths
Non Statutory homeless - maximising the use of the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Same rent deposit scheme for all local authorities ▪ More direct access accommodation eg Colebrook Road ▪ More early intervention ▪ Expanding information provided in Gateways ▪ Raising awareness –expand available information ▪ Allocation pointing system to recognise those in supported accommodation ▪ maximise use of DHP payments ▪ Non priority applicants to be able to access Rent Deposit schemes ▪ Maximising benefits
Maximising the Use of the Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting People banding – can those about to move into a private rental get prioritised for support so they receive help when they need it? ▪ People housed into tenancies from supported accommodation should be entitled to a run on of support from accommodation provider for 4 weeks ▪ Can LA housing options teams provide an in house tenancy support service to help sustain tenancies? Pooled across West Kent? ▪ Robust rent deposit schemes – strong relationships with landlords ▪ Housing options teams make full use of DHP funds ▪ Private sector leasing scheme that is attractive to landlords – eg rent at LHA rate, not below, guaranteed rent even when property is void?
Assisting vulnerable people with a high support need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training of staff – education on what is available across sectors ▪ Comprehensive advice from organisation such as the CAB ▪ Access to expertise on managing challenging behaviour ▪ Financial encouragement to landlords to work with high support clients ▪ Effective joint working protocols ▪ Producing a directory of services ▪ Involving clients in producing protocols and making them work. ▪ Gap in provision between supported accommodation and needs for residential care/provision. ▪ Need for high support scheme that will work with clients with complex needs
Best	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Sanctuary Scheme - better promotion required ▪ Quantifying demand– monitoring demands/more data collection. ▪ Consistent training & increase ease of access to information – same standard/level across all areas of local authorities/RSL's/other housing providers ▪ All RSL's to introduce Domestic Abuse as a breach of tenancy. ▪ Ensure a consistent approach to out of hours housing advice and

Practice/Provision for those affected by Domestic Abuse	<p>response. (Contact Centres to have at least one person with DA specialist knowledge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Widen reciprocal arrangements between local authority areas; ▪ Have joint policies and procedures; ▪ Provide more refuge accommodation in each borough ▪ To have early intervention in schools
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Event Two: December 2010			
	Aims	Tasks	Barriers
Working Effectively With Private Sector Landlords	<p>Increase the number of private sector landlords</p> <p>Ensure rent gets paid on time</p> <p>Tenancy sustained</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LHA Direct ▪ Tenancy sustainment resource ▪ Evidence of failures in the rent system ▪ Tenant training and accreditation ▪ Review rent deposit schemes ▪ Establish a Steering group of landlords to work with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reluctance to take LHA tenants ▪ Resources
Maximising Resources (Efficiency & Effectiveness)	<p>Make best use of stock across all sectors</p> <p>Transparent policies</p> <p>Work 'smarter' – avoid duplication of services</p> <p>Include accredited private rented sector in CBL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop under occupation schemes ▪ Bring back into use empty/in disrepair properties ▪ More cohesive thinking across organisations ▪ Promoting the needs of local people ▪ Joined up, efficient referral processes ▪ Share knowledge, expertise and best practice ▪ Explore new technologies ▪ Promotion of self-help measures ▪ Streamline processes ▪ Explore councils managing private lets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HB changes ▪ Financial incentives ▪ Support with the logistics of moving ▪ Flexible tenancies ▪ Managing aspirations ▪ Resources ▪ Smaller associations find this difficult ▪ National policies ▪ Culture ▪ Negativity of agents ▪ Prejudice against HB ▪ Payment for advert
Meeting The Diverse Needs Of The Community	<p>Helping young people more effectively</p> <p>Gypsy & traveller community</p> <p>People with mental health problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forum for young people and agencies working with this age group ▪ Engaging/reaching them – are we doing this effectively? ▪ Providing facilities <p>Getting provisions for 17 year olds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Geography – hard to get around the WK area ▪ Cultural difficulties and geographic

Homelessness Prevention	<p>Management of expectations</p> <p>School lessons in financial literacy</p> <p>Improve mediation</p> <p>Widen scope of rent deposit scheme</p> <p>Better use of stock – use empty homes above shops Decent Homes Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication – seek advice early ▪ Legal advice ▪ Education in schools/at Sure Start ▪ Adult numeracy and literacy ▪ Partnership with the private sector 	<p>District Council's cost</p> <p>Social exclusion/ mental illness</p> <p>ASB by tenants Landlords are anti-benefit clients</p> <p>No policy yet</p>
Creating Strong Partnerships	<p>Pooling resources</p> <p>Develop Kent-wide protocols</p> <p>Explore options appraisals for shared working</p> <p>Sharing knowledge/avoid overlapping and duplication</p> <p>Challenge of district/borough boundaries</p> <p>Getting local agencies to work together effectively</p> <p>Ensuring there is no duplication of advice services</p> <p>Looking at co-location and pooling budgets (e.g. minibuses)</p> <p>More effective advice and referrals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share best practice (e.g. HERO project) ▪ Joint training ▪ Building relationships ▪ Better communication of WNK of JPPB with strategy ▪ Procurement of shared services e.g. mediation ▪ Expanding the employment and training ▪ Understanding the local area ▪ Logical steps through supported to permanent/independent living ▪ Improved communication between agencies ▪ Discussion between relevant agencies ▪ Test efficiency of referral process (secret shopper) ▪ Co-ordinate housing 	<p>Capacity to develop staff – outsourcing work</p> <p>Fear of the loss of control</p> <p>Agreeing clear requirements HB changes</p> <p>Talk to each other! Flexibility Limited finance</p> <p>Logistics need to be resolved and fear of financial risks worked through</p> <p>Accepting need for change by service providers</p>

	<p>Telephone conferencing advocacy</p> <p>LA fund more preventive homeless advice</p> <p>Work with landlords forums and letting agents</p> <p>Get social services and LAS to work together on under 18s</p>	<p>advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with e.g. CAB ▪ Communicate and encourage a more proactive approach to accept benefit claimants <p>E.g. Connexions in schools and colleges</p>	
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Event Three: January 2011

This event focused on the draft strategy with attendees giving comments on the draft document. The session also looked at the draft action plan (Strategic Priorities 4 &5), with outcomes of which were incorporated into the final draft of the action plan.

Organisations represented in consultation meetings

- Tonbridge CAB
- NHS Capital Planning
- Sevenoaks DC
- Age UK – Sevenoaks
- The Bridge Trust
- Shelter
- Sevenoaks Seniors Action Forum
- Porchlight
- Tunbridge Wells CAB
- KCC Children’s Services
- Moat Housing
- Catch 22 Housing
- Sevenoaks CAB
- Kent CC 16 Plus Services
- Kent CC Supporting People Team
- Hope Kent
- Connexions
- KCC St Johns Community Mental Health Centre
- TMBC Community Safety Manager
- YWCA
- Kent Youth Offending Services
- MIND Sevenoaks
- DGS Mind
- SDSAF
- YOS
- Catch22
- Probation
- KMDASG
- NHS West Kent
- West Kent YMCA

Appendix Three: Summary of Service User Consultation

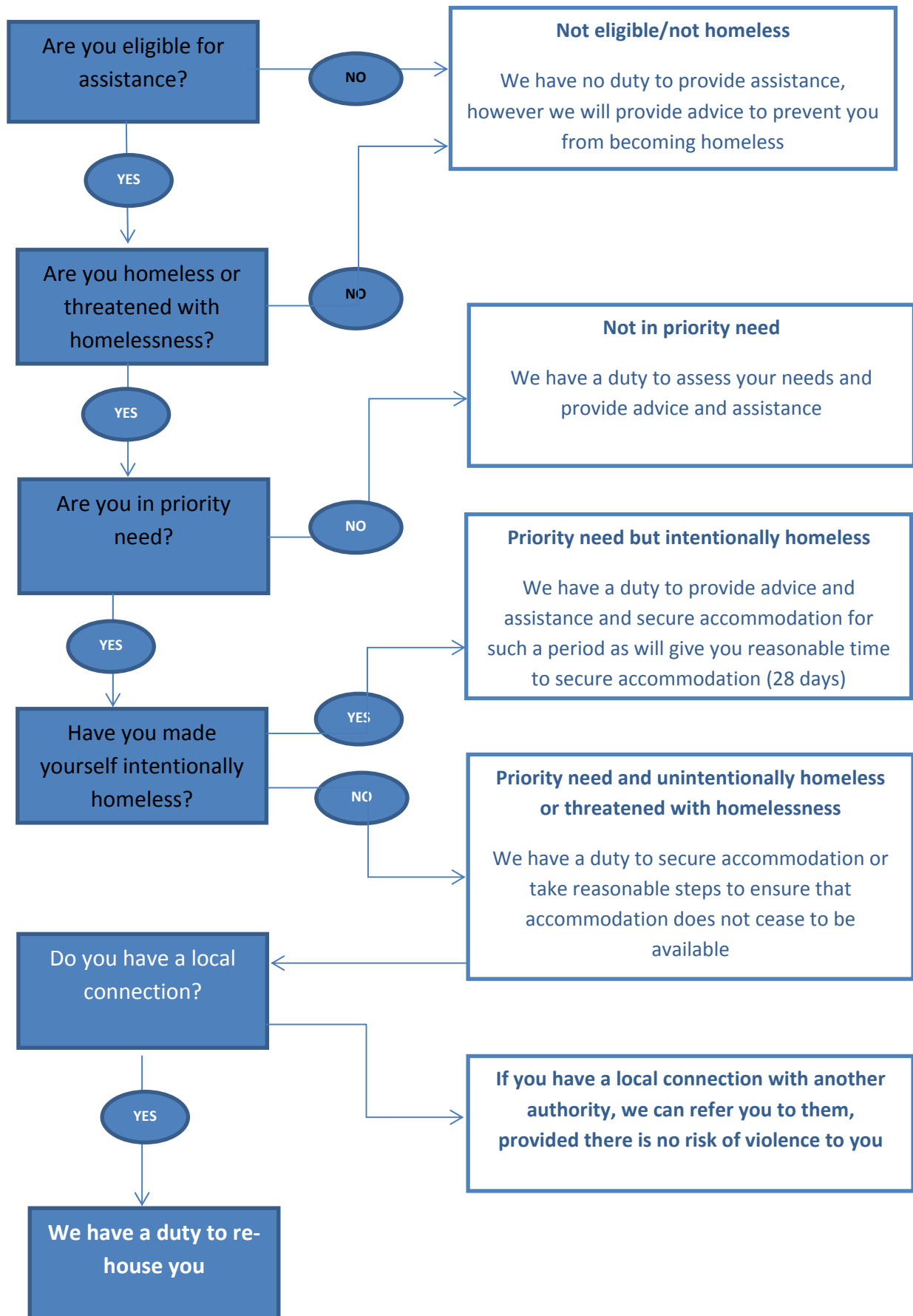
1. In order to seek the input of service users into the strategy, detailed telephone interviews were carried out with a total of 12 services users. These were selected at random from a list of contacts supplied by the three local authorities.
2. The interviews, lasting approximately 30 minutes each, were semi-structured and asked a series of questions:
 - Household details
 - How did you first come into contact with the Council's housing service?
 - Ease of accessing information and advice?
 - What they expected before they turned up?
 - Good things about the service?
 - What could have been better?
 - How did advice etc. help change their situation?
 - Name one thing that you would have wanted the Council to do differently?
3. The household characteristics of the interviewees were as follows:

Household composition	No. Households
adult, 1 child	5
1 adult, 2 children	2
1 adult, 3 children	1
2 adults, 1 child	2
2 adults, 3 children	1
2 adults, 4 children	1

4. The reasons for homelessness were varied with two households suffering domestic violence, two being evicted from the family home having had a child, three leaving private sector rented properties, two relationship breakdown and one an owner occupier whose home was repossessed.
5. Overall, the feedback about the service was generally positive. Most households found it easy to contact the Housing Options Team and several mentioned how helpful they found them (this is particularly noticeable at Sevenoaks DC where several applicants praised the clarity of advice and information given). A small number of interviewees found staff attitudes towards them somewhat unsympathetic and expressed the view that they would have liked staff to be more understanding of their situation.

6. Expectations of the service were mixed. In some cases, applicants expected to be housed by the local authority quickly whereas others had much lower expectations, anticipating that little assistance or a negative experience.
7. Positive aspects of the service were felt to be:
 - The quality of the service, especially helpful staff
 - Being kept informed and not making false promises
 - The HERO project received particular praise
 - Rent deposits (though there was a feeling that the caps were too low to find an acceptable property)
 - Sensitive to family history of domestic violence
8. Aspects of the service felt to be less effective included:
 - concerns about poor quality and cleanliness in temporary accommodation
 - temporary accommodation was a worry for some households, in terms of being able to maintain employment and family contact when placed long distances from their communities
 - what were perceived to be complexities of the points systems and of bidding for properties under Choice Based Lettings
 - several people would have liked more help and guidance completing forms
 - the difficulty of securing decent quality private rented accommodation

Appendix Four: A summary of the Housing Options Process



Eligibility

Applicants are not eligible for housing assistance if they...

- do not have full rights to live in the UK because of their immigration status
- are not considered to be 'habitual' resident in the UK, even if a British citizen

Homeless/threatened with homelessness

Applicants are classed as homeless if they...

- have no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere that is available for occupation and that they have a legal right to occupy
- have accommodation but cannot secure entry to it
- have accommodation but it is a moveable structure, for example, a caravan or houseboat, and have no place to put it or moor it, where it can be lived in
- have accommodation but it would not be reasonable for them to occupy it

Applicants are classed as being threatened with homelessness if they...

- are likely to become homeless within the next 28 days

Priority Need

Applicants are in priority need if...

- they are pregnant or if dependent children live, or might reasonably be expected to live with them
- they have become homeless or are threatened with homelessness as a result of a flood, fire or other disaster
- they are aged 16 or 17
- they are 20 or under and a former relevant child (see below for definition)
- they are over 21 and are **vulnerable** as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered at some time in their life
- they are **vulnerable** due to 'old age, mental illness, handicap, physical disability or other special reason
- they are **vulnerable** as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular navy, military or armed forces
- they are **vulnerable** as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence or harassment from another person or threats of violence from another person that are likely to be carried out

The only exceptions to these are, if they are a:

'Relevant Child' - if they are 16 or 17 and were in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and were looked after on their 16th birthday.

'Relevant Student' - a former relevant child in full time education and their term time accommodation is not available to them during a vacation.

'Child in need' - if a duty is owed to them under the Children Act 1989.

Intentionality

Applicants are considered intentionally homeless if they...

- deliberately did or did not do something
 - which caused them to leave housing which they would otherwise have stayed in
 - and it would have been reasonable to stay there
- All these points must apply.

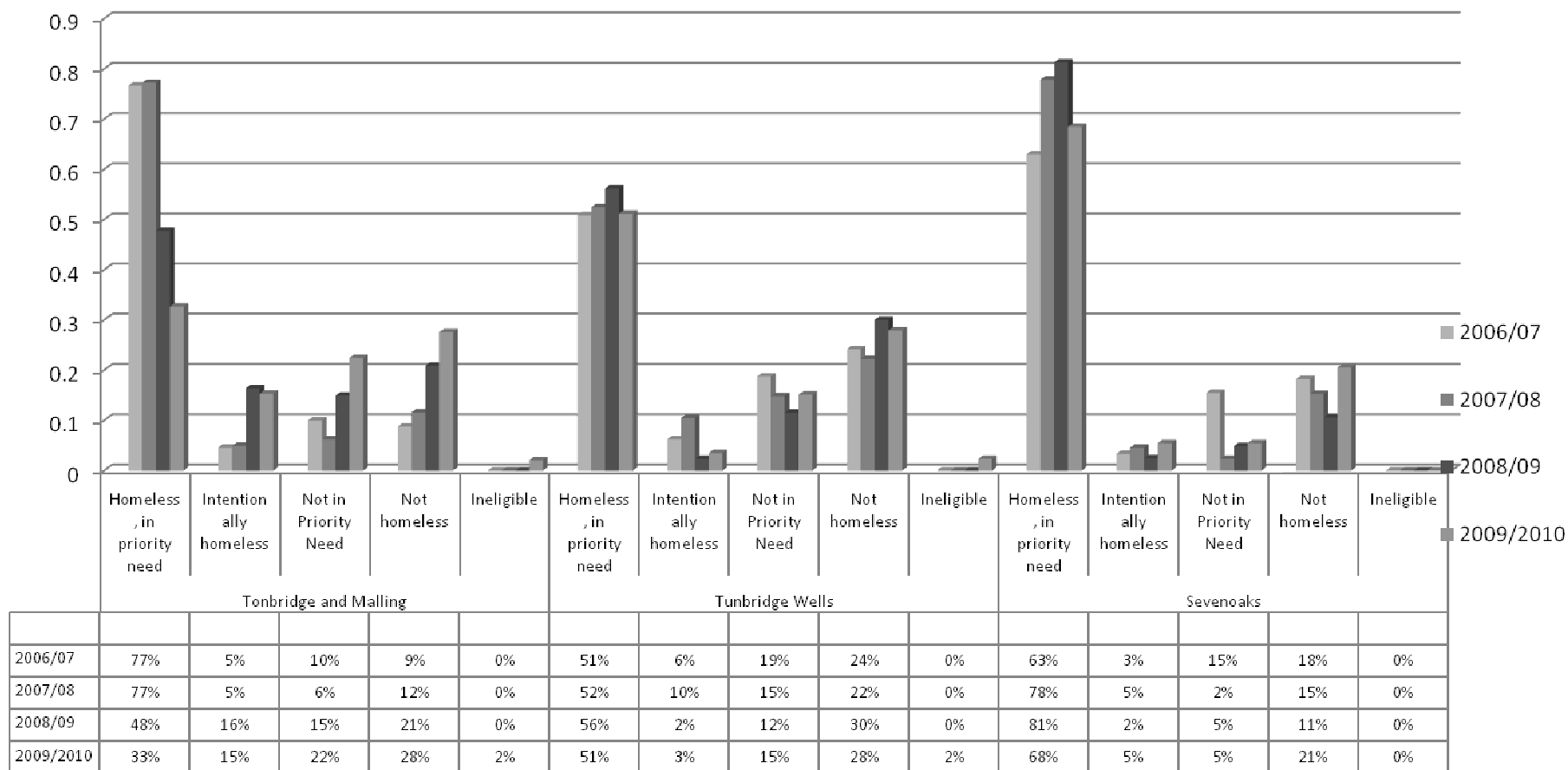
Local Connection

Applicants have a local connection if they...

- have lived in the area by choice for a certain time (usually for 6 of the last 12 months or 3 of the last 5 years)
- have a family connection in the area
- work in the area
- have a connection with the area for 'another special reason'

Appendix Five: Key data and trends in homelessness by local authority area

Appendix 5a: Outcomes of decisions 2006-2010



Appendix 5b: Reasons for homelessness 2007-2011 by borough

	Tonbridge and Malling				Tunbridge Wells				Sevenoaks			
	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11*	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11*	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11*
Parents unwilling/unable to accommodate	60	7	11	20	21	23	11	8	38	45	18	18
Relatives/friends unwilling/unable to accommodate	11	5	4	4	5	11	1	6	9	12	4	6
Non-violent relationship breakdown	25	1	6	16	5	3	2	2	3	3	1	2
Violent breakdown of relationship	16	6	5	12	14	8	7	6	7	6	5	10
Other forms of violence/harassment	3	1	2	6	8	4	7	4	3	1	1	0
Mortgage default	9	3	0	2	1	1	1	2	3	9	2	0
Rent arrears	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	2	0	5	0	6
Termination of assured short hold tenancy	38	3	2	10	13	9	9	8	19	9	7	4
Reasons other than termination of AST	6	4	0	2			2	2	9	2	0	4
Left hospital	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	0
Left other institution or LA care	2	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	1	2
Other	3	1	0	0	11	10	2	0	7	4	0	4
Total	173	32	32	72	85	73	44	40	102	100	41	56

* figures for 2010/11 projected from Q1/2 figures

Appendix 5c: Age of applicants accepted as homeless

Tonbridge and Malling							
	16-24	25-44	45-59	60-64	65-74	75+	Total
2007/08	76	77	14	1	1	4	173
2008/09	16	14	1	1	0	0	32
2009/2010	15	14	2	0	0	1	32
2010/11*	28	32	10	0	0	2	72

Tunbridge Wells							
	16-24	25-44	45-59	60-64	65-74	75+	Total
2007/08	35	37	8	0	0	5	85
2008/09	29	36	3	1	0	4	73
2009/2010	19	16	6	2	0	1	44
2010/11*	18	14	8	0	0	0	40

Sevenoaks							
	16-24	25-44	45-59	60-64	65-74	75+	Total
2007/08	51	39	11	0	1	0	102
2008/09	55	33	9	3	0	0	100
2009/2010	27	16	4	3	0	0	50
2010/11*	24	30	2	0	0	0	56

* figures for 2010/11 projected from Q1/2 figures

Appendix 5d: Priority Needs Group 2007-2011

	Tonbridge and Malling				Tunbridge Wells				Sevenoaks			
	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11*	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11*	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11*
Emergency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dependent children	99	18	15	48	47	33	27	22	56	49	30	38
Pregnancy	38	6	5	2	13	12	5	2	24	23	10	10
16-17 year old	5	1	2	4	6	7	3	4	5	7	3	0
Care leaver 18-20	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	2	1	0
Old age	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	3	3	1	2
Physical disability	8	4	2	4	3	3	3	4	5	8	4	4
Mental illness or disability	6	2	6	10	9	6	2	6	4	5	1	2
Other (drug/alcohol dependency)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Vulnerable = care leaver	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0
Vulnerable - HM forces	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vulnerable - custody/remand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Vulnerable - violence	14	0	1	2	6	7	2	0	1	0	0	0
Of which: a. domestic violence	12	0	1	2	6	7	2	0	1	0	0	0
Total	173	32	32	72	85	73	44	40	101	100	50	56

Data source: P1E forms

*** figures for 2010/11 projected from Q1/2 figures**

Appendix 5e: Household Type, applicants accepted as homeless

Year	Tonbridge and Malling						
	Couple with dep children	Lone parent with Dep children (male)	Lone parent with Dep children (female)	1-person household (male)	1-person household (female)	All other households	Total
2007/08	23	13	101	13	9	14	173
2008/09	10	1	13	5	2	1	32
2009/2010	6	1	12	5	5	3	32
2010/11*	10	6	34	4	8	10	72

Data source: PLE forms

* figures for 2010/11 projected from Q1/2 figures

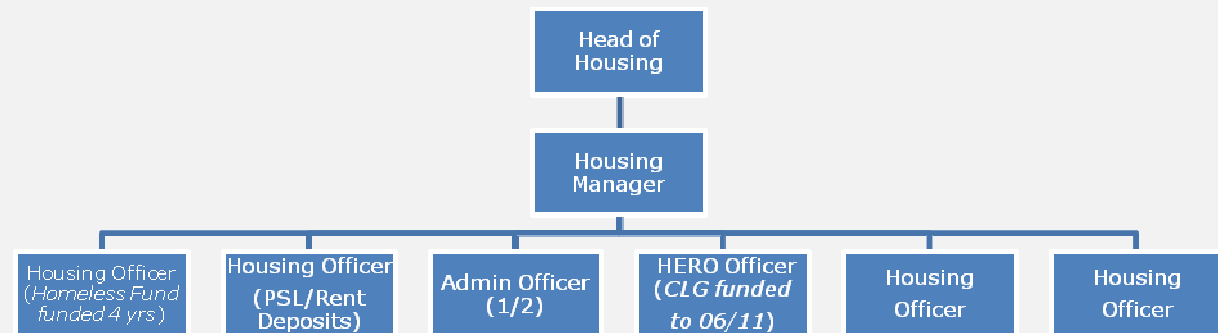
Year	Tunbridge Wells						
	Couple with dependent children	Lone parent with Dep children (male)	Lone parent with Dep children (female)	1-person household (male)	1-person household (female)	All other households	Total
2007/08	19	5	34	13	11	2	84
2008/09	17	3	25	20	8	0	73
2009/2010	13	1	18	3	5	4	44
2010/11*	10	2	12	6	6	4	40

Year	Sevenoaks						
	Couple with dependent children	Lone parent with Dep children (male)	Lone parent with Dep children (female)	1-person household (male)	1-person household (female)	All other households	Total
2007/08	24	1	53	13	7	4	102
2008/09	24	3	41	15	11	6	100
2009/2010	14	1	24	3	5	3	50
2010/11*	28	2	18	2	2	4	56

Appendix Six: The West Kent Homeless Teams: a brief overview

Sevenoaks District Council

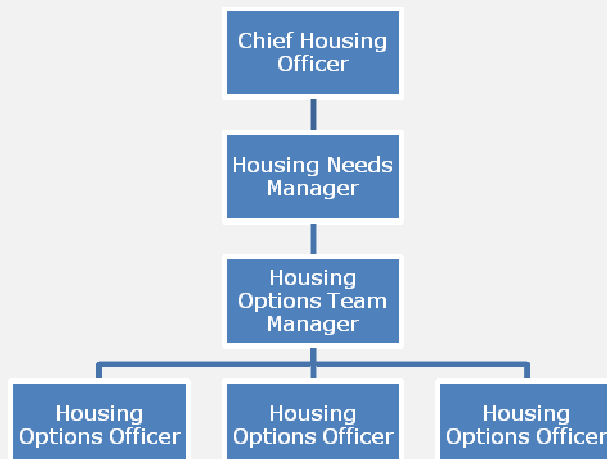
The Social Housing Team is led by a dedicated Service Manager. There are 3 Housing Officers responsible for delivering the Homelessness Prevention and Advice service (one a temporary, externally funded post) while a further Housing Officer delivers the Council's Private Sector Lettings Scheme which offers rent in advance, loans and deposit guarantee bonds to help people secure private lets. The team is supported by one shared administrative officer.



SDC attracted external funding to the HERO Project which employs 1 specialist worker to provide holistic advice covering housing, saving money on fuel bills, debt, welfare benefits, retraining and further education options, getting back to work, business start up.

Tonbridge & Malling BC

The housing options service was brought back in house in April 2008, having previously been managed by Russet Homes. The Housing Options Team is led by a dedicated Housing Options Team Manager (a post shared with a neighbouring authority) and consists of three Housing Options Officers responsible for delivering the Homelessness Prevention and Advice service, plus administrative support. The recruitment of a fourth Housing Options Officer for a period of 12 months was approved at the end of 2010.



Tunbridge Wells BC

The team operates from the Town Hall in Tunbridge Wells and is led by a Housing Options Manager and consists of 4 Housing Options Advisors and one trainee delivering the Homelessness Prevention and advice.

