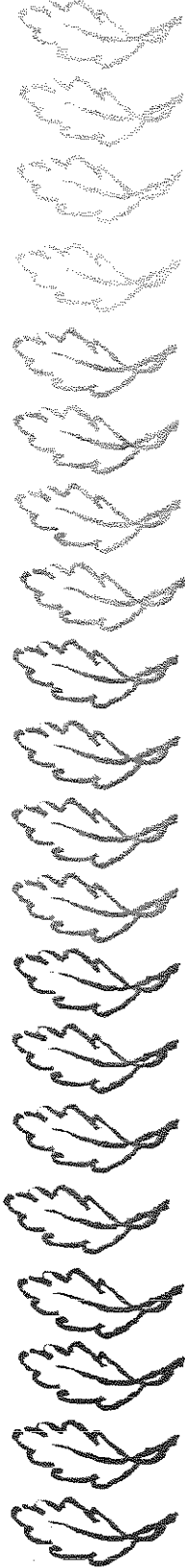




South Derbyshire  
District Council



South Derbyshire's  
Homelessness Strategy  
2003 - 2006

**Final Draft**  
(27<sup>th</sup> June 2003)

June 2003

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# 1 Foreword

- 1.1 A Homelessness Review for the District was carried out and published in March 2003. An action plan, to meet the gaps identified in the review, and programme management arrangements have now been added to this document to form the Homelessness Strategy.
- 1.2 Since publishing the Review further statistical data in the form of the official P1E government return form for the period January to March 2003 is now available. Hence, the statistical data gathered from the P1E forms, has been updated to reflex the latest information available.
- 1.3 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires housing authorities to take a long-term strategic approach to managing homelessness. They are required to carry out reviews in their districts, taking account of the activities and services available to tackle homelessness. Each housing authority must draw up a strategy for combating and managing homelessness in its district, based on its review. South Derbyshire published its' Homelessness Review in March 2003.

## **The Government's view is:**

The new Homelessness Act will bring about radical change in the way that central and local government, and all other partners, work together to tackle homelessness.

There are six key objectives that underpin our new approach.

1. To strengthen help to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.
2. To develop more strategic approaches to tackling homelessness.
3. To encourage new responses to tackling homelessness.
4. To reduce the use of B & B hotels for homeless families with children.
5. To sustain the two-thirds reduction in rough sleeping.
6. To ensure the opportunity of a decent home for all.

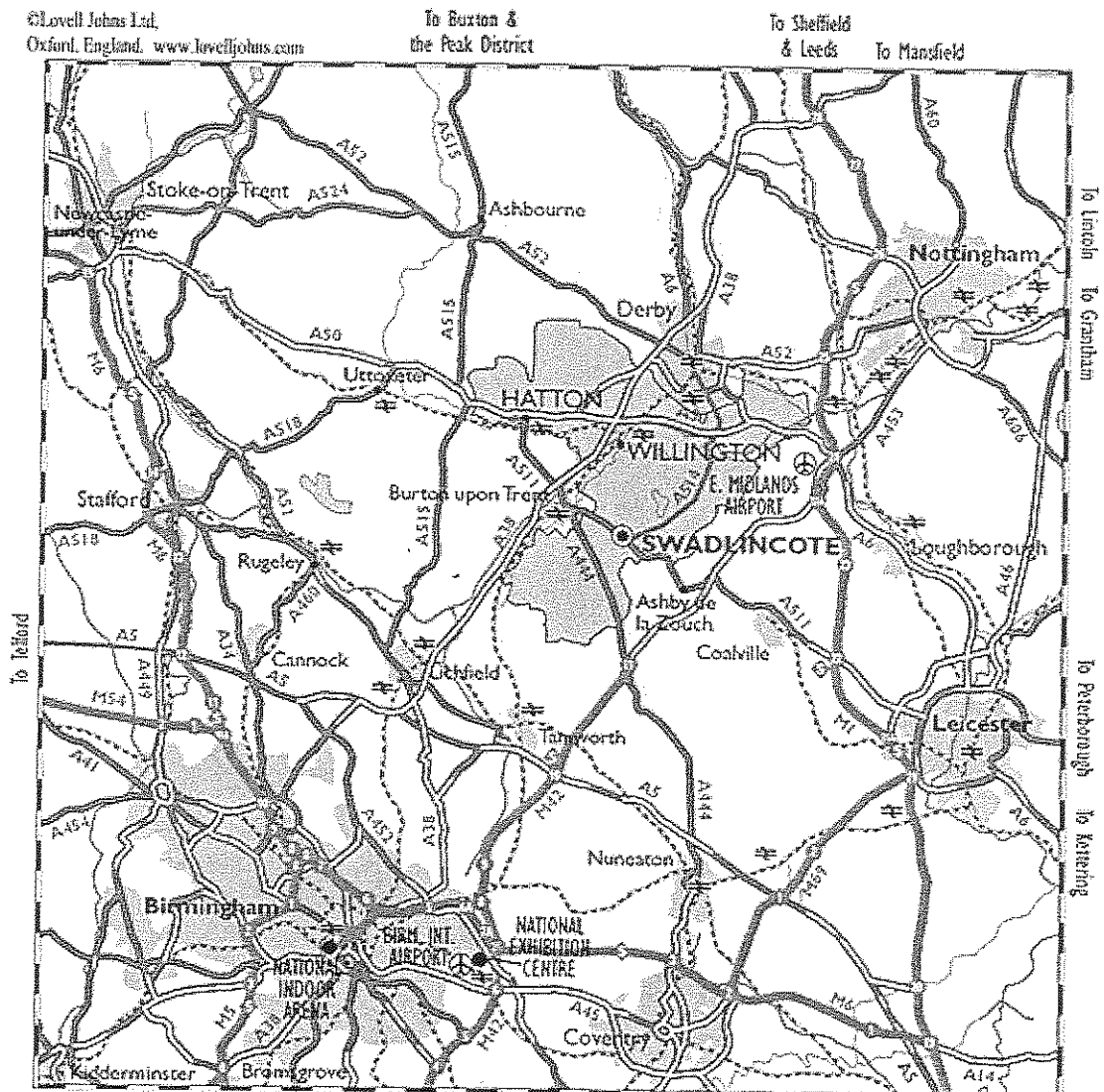
Rt.Hon.Stephen Byers MP  
**Secretary of State for  
Transport Local  
Government & The Regions.**  
13 March 2002

- 1.4 The Act presents a major opportunity to transform homelessness services, so that they focus on the prevention of homelessness and enabling people to find a suitable home. Therefore the emphasis should be on shifting away from managing homelessness as a crisis event, and focus on preventing homelessness arising, and providing support services to homeless people.
- 1.5 South Derbyshire District Councils Housing Strategy aim is *"to address the needs of South Derbyshire residents for good quality and affordable homes, located in healthy, safe and pleasant environment."*

- 1.6 Many agencies are involved with homelessness or potentially homeless people. In preparing this strategy the Council has consulted and worked with the local Citizens Advice Bureau, Council of Voluntary Services and Social Services to name but a few. See Annexe A for a detailed list of partners.
- 1.7 South Derbyshire is committed to delivering the requirements of the Homelessness Act. We will be working with partner organisations to prevent homelessness and provide appropriate housing and support to the homeless.

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 South Derbyshire covers an area of about 34,000 hectares (340 sq.km) and a population of 81,500 (Census 2001).
- 2.2 The City of Derby bound the district to the north, Burton upon Trent to the west and Ashby-de-la-Zouch to the east.



- 2.3 The town of Swadincote, comprising the communities of Castle Gresley, Church Gresley, Midway, Newhall, Swadincote and Woodville, is the main focus of the area, serving as an employment, shopping and service centre. About 32,000 people live in the town. The rest of the district is mostly rural in character. Extensive tracts of countryside are interspersed with a number of villages and settlements, some of which, like Repton and Shardlow, are of historic value. Melbourne is the district's second largest centre with a population of about 4,500. Other

villages include Etwall, Linton, Hatton and Willington. However, about 4,000 people now live at Stenson Fields on the edge of Derby.

- 2.4 The district has proportionally less 15 – 19 year olds than the national average. However, a higher proportion of 20 – 65 year olds.

Table 1: Age profile

Age Range	South Derbyshire	East Midlands	UK
0 - 4	6.1%	5.73%	5.93%
5 - 14	13.16%	13.05%	12.96%
15 - 19	5.93%	6.24%	6.23%
20 -65	60.27%	58.91%	58.99%
65-89	14.04%	15.47%	15.26%
90 and over	0.50%	0.60%	0.63%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Census 2001

- 2.5 At the 2001 Census, 2.8 % of the district's population (about 2200 people) belonged to minority ethnic community groups.
- 2.6 Unemployment levels in the district are relatively low at 1.4% compared with the East Midlands of 2.4% and National levels of 2.7%. However, there are pockets of areas in the south of the district, which has levels above the national average, i.e. 3.2% in Hartshorne and 2.7% in Newhall. (Figures are March 2003).
- 2.7 In April 2001, the district's housing stock stood at 34,636. About 1,900 homes are considered to be unfit. Many of these are located within the urban area of Swadlincote.
- 2.8 In terms of tenure, the majority of dwellings (87%) are either owner occupied or privately rented. A further 11% are rented from the Council, with the remainder under the control of Registered Social Landlords. Some 53% of properties are in Council Tax Bands A and B.
- 2.9 The economic base of South Derbyshire is relatively small with about 18,000 employees in employment. Nearly 85% of local firms (about 1,500 in total) employ fewer than 10 people.

### 3 Aims and Objectives

3.1 A Homelessness Review was carried out and published in March 2003. The purpose of the Review was to establish the extent of homelessness in the District, identify existing services currently available, assess the extent of homelessness in the future and identify the gaps that need to be addressed in order to meet the requirement of the Homelessness Act.

3.2 The aims and objectives of the Homelessness Review were to:

- Assess the current and future levels of homelessness in the district
- Identify the activities currently undertaken to
  - prevent homelessness
  - secure accommodation for homeless people
  - provide support to homeless people.
- Assess the resources available to the District, Social Services, other public agencies, voluntary organisations and others for such activities.

3.3 The aims and objectives of the Homelessness Strategy is to:

- To prevent first time homelessness in the district.
- To prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness.
- To ensure there is suitable services and accommodation for homeless people.

### 4 Methodology

4.1 In doing the Homelessness Review various methods of data collection were used. It was felt that close joined-up working between various organisations both statutory and voluntary was of utmost importance, in order to do an extensive and accurate review of homelessness within the District.

4.2 Homelessness Planning Strategy Day. In January 03 a forum was held to make Council members and partner organisations aware of the new Homelessness legislation and the new Implications it laid upon the District Council and other organisations. The day was facilitated by Shelter. Existing accommodation and support services known to the group were mapped out and discussions took place around the possible methods that may be used to prevent homelessness in the future.

4.3 Survey of Partners. Partner organisations were asked to complete a questionnaire to further increase the knowledge of existing accommodation and support, the extent of homelessness in the District, resources and to identify good practice.

4.4 "Mined" data sources. Information has been gathered by a variety of means including National Statistics, the Councils housing computerised rent system, the Housing waiting list, the P1E official government

returns, the Councils recently completed Housing Markets and Needs Study completed in July 2002, Supporting People "Shadow Strategy" for Derbyshire.

- 4.5 A Homelessness Steering Group was set up in April 2003 to jointly prepare this strategy. The group includes representation from key partner organisations, see annexe B. The Group will be working in partnership to ensure delivery of the action plan.

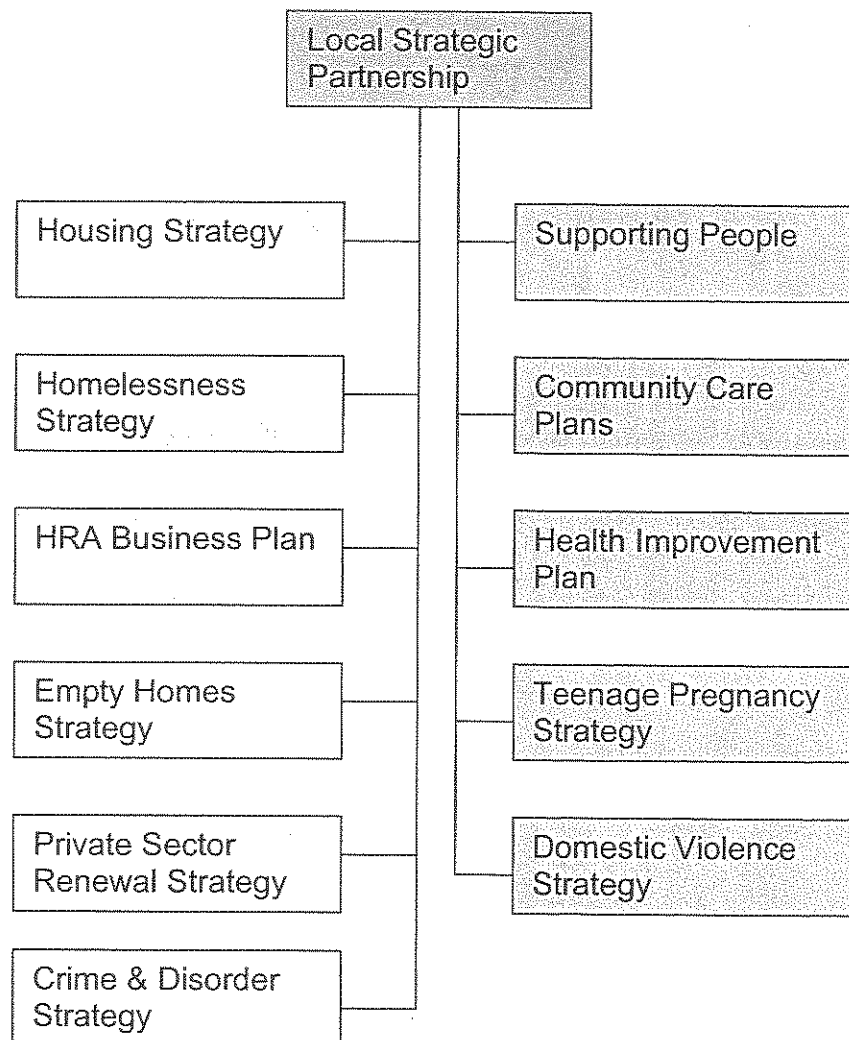


## 5 Links to Other Strategies

5.1 The District's Homelessness Strategy is linked to a number of existing strategies prepared both by the Council and partner organisations.

Examples of how homelessness relates to other strategies include:

- Preventing homelessness has a positive impact on health outcomes.
- Providing housing advice to young people can help achieve Derbyshire County's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.
- Providing opportunities for people with learning difficulties can increase employment opportunities.



## 6. Levels of Homelessness

### 6.1 Extent of Homelessness

- 6.1.1 The official P1E homeless statistics record cases where applicants are eligible for assistance. However, care must be taken in using them. Not all homeless people approach the council for assistance, especially if they felt that they would not be housed. In general, this has tended to apply to young single and childless people, who tend to go to other voluntary agencies for advice. Also, the figures do not routinely record enquiries where there is an enquiry but no responsibility – again often young single people or childless households.
- 6.1.2 The total number of homeless decisions made by the Council in 2001/02 was 260, which is roughly twice the number accepted, which was 132, (51%). For 2002/03 the Council made 125 homeless decisions of which 106 were accepted, 85%. Whilst there has been a reduction in the number of homeless decision made there has been a 34% increase in those accepted.
- 6.1.3 During 2001/02 partner organisations recorded 177 homeless households. Between the period April 2002 and January 2003, 82 households were recorded as homeless. However, these figures along with those recorded by the Council must be interpreted with some caution. It is likely that some homeless households will visit several organisations and this leads to double counting.

#### 6.1.4 Table 2: South Derbyshire's Homelessness Decisions

<b>Homelessness Decisions</b>	<b>2000/01</b>	<b>2001/02</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	177	132	106
Eligible, homeless and in priority need but intentionally so	15	21	4
Eligible homeless but not in priority need	38	49	7
Eligible but not homeless	39	55	8
Ineligible households	0	3	0
Total decisions	269	260	125

Table 3: Comparison of the National and East Midland figures:

<b>Homelessness Household for 2001/02</b>	<b>SDDC</b>	<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>Nationally</b>
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	66%	61%	65%
Eligible, homeless and in priority need but intentionally so	10%	6%	5%
Eligible homeless but not in priority need	24%	33%	30%
Total decisions	100%	100%	100%

Source: DTLR Regional Statistical Briefing

6.1.5 The Districts figures are relatively consistent with national trends for eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need. However, for both eligible homeless in priority need but unintentionally and not in priority need the District's figures do not follow the East Midlands Region and National trends.

6.1.6 There appears to be a downward trend in the number of homeless. However, trends in house prices and the private rented market suggest that this may not in fact be the case, and instead that homelessness is likely to increase – a perception confirmed by the staff in the homelessness section.

## 6.2 Homelessness Groups

6.2.1 It is important to know which people are becoming homeless, in order to make future provisions and update existing one's

6.2.2 Table 4: Indicates Homelessness Groups Recorded on the P1E returns.

<b>Homelessness Groups</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
Families	80
Applicant where a household member is pregnant and there are no other dependent children	14
Applicant aged 16/17 years old	6
Applicant formerly in Care and aged 18 to 20 years old	1
Applicant who is or whose household includes a vulnerable person - Old age	1
Applicant who is or whose household includes a vulnerable person - Physical disability	3
Applicant is vulnerable due to - having fled their home because of violence/threat of violence	2
Total decisions	<b>107</b>

6.2.3 First indications are that families are by far the most significant group. However, single people and couples not in vulnerable groups are generally not recorded as homeless as the Local Authority does not owe them a housing duty under the Housing Act.

6.2.4 Much published research suggests that young singles and couples probably account for the highest group of homelessness. From speaking to the homelessness and advice staff at the Council, it is felt that young single people probably account for the highest group of homelessness in the District. To give an indication of this the advice staff recorded over a 3- week period the number of single people and couples who reported to the Housing reception indicating they were homeless but were not eligible for assistance.

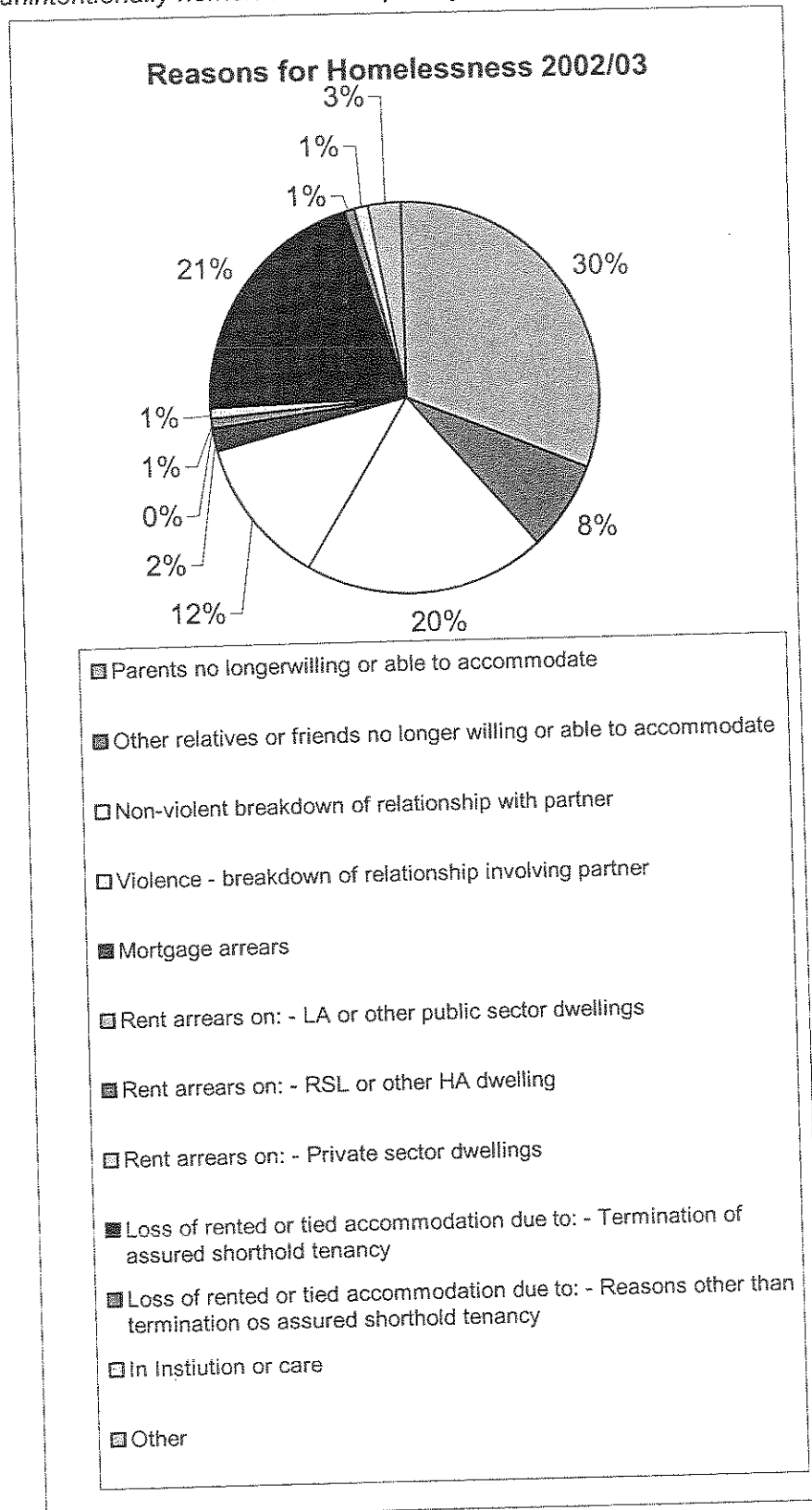
Table 5: Singles and Couples not eligible for advice. (Period 3<sup>rd</sup> February to 21<sup>st</sup> February 03).

<b>Category</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Single male	4
Single female	1
Couples under 21 years	2
Couples over 21 years	1

## 6.3 Causes of Homelessness

6.3.1 The causes of homelessness may give some indication of the longer-term trends and needs, but any generalisations should be viewed with caution.

Table 6: Reasons for homelessness, 2002/03 (those found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need).



6.3.2 For the previous two years the commonest cause of homelessness was violent breakdown of a relationship, followed by parents not willing to accommodate. For the current year, 2002/03 the commonest cause of homelessness was parents not willing to accommodated, 31% of decisions.

6.3.3 Partner organisations were asked to rank the groups listed below to help identify appropriate forward planning requirements. Each organisation was asked to rank each group with a traffic light system Red/Amber/Green.

- Green – this is not a large problem in the District
- Amber – there are practices in place, but there is room for improvement.
- Red – This is a big issue in the District that needs addressing urgently

The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Risk Factors and potential homeless

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>“Red” Issues - This is a big issue in the District that needs addressing urgently</b>
1	Unemployment
2	People experiencing harassment or violence from inside or outside the home
3	A combination of mental health, drug and alcohol problems
4	Substance or alcohol abuse
5	Young people leaving the parental home after a breakdown of family relationships
6	Previous experience of homelessness
7	Lack of social support network
8	People sharing accommodation with other households
9	People suffering mental health problems
10	People in financial crisis with mounting debts
11	Young people leaving care without adequate support
12	Young parenthood
<b>Ranking</b>	<b>“Amber” Issues - there are practices in place, but there is room for improvement.</b>
1	People who lose a rented or owned home
2	Young people who are persistently truant and/or are excluded from school
3	People experiencing marital or relationship breakdown
4	Contact with the criminal justice system/ prisoners leaving custody
5	Lack of qualifications/ literacy skills
6	People failing to furnish or maintain their home: a warning sign of tenancy failure
7	People with learning difficulties