

Evaluation of Enhanced Housing Options Programme
Final report

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Cambridge
Shared Intelligence

Department for Communities and Local Government

This research was commissioned by the previous government. The views and analysis expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Communities and Local Government. This document is being published in the interests of transparency.

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DCLG Publications
Tel: 030 0123 1124
Fax: 030 0123 1125

Email: product@communities.gsi.gov.uk
Online via the website: www.communities.gov.uk

ISBN: 978 1 4098 3160 0

Acknowledgements

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The analysis and views expressed are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as the views of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

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Glossary of acronyms

DCLG	The Department for Communities and Local Government sets policy on supporting local government; communities and neighbourhoods; regeneration; housing; planning, building and the environment; and fire.
DWP	The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for welfare and pension policy and is a key player in tackling child poverty.
EET	Employment, Education and Training provision, which may be delivered by statutory agencies or voluntary and community organisations.
EHO	Enhanced Housing Options – extending Local Authority Housing Options provision. In 2008 the Government launched the Enhanced Housing Options (EHO) trailblazers to deliver more integrated housing and employment advice.
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education. Qualification at the end of compulsory schooling.
HCA	The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the single, national housing and regeneration agency for England. The HCA was created on 1 December 2008 by bringing together regeneration body English Partnerships, the investment arm of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities and a number of housing and regeneration programmes from Communities and Local Government
IAG	Information, advice and guidance on job seeking and training opportunities, which may be delivered by statutory agencies or voluntary and community organisations.
JCP	Jobcentre Plus is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions. It provides services that support people of working age from welfare into work, and helps employers to fill their vacancies.
JSA	Jobseekers Allowance, known as JSA, is a benefit for people who are of working age but are out of work, or work less than 16 hours a week on average.
LAA	Local Area Agreements. Three year agreements introduced in 2008 for all local areas (negotiated by the local authority on behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership, partnerships which allow multiple agencies and local, public, private, community and voluntary organisations to work together on local issues) and central government which set out how local priorities will be addressed through the development and delivery of local solutions.
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership. Partnership led by the local authority with partners from other statutory sectors (e.g. police, health, JCP), private sector/employers and the voluntary and community sector. Responsible for developing a Sustainable Community Strategy and delivering this through the LAA (above).
NI	National Indicator. One of the National Indicator Set (NIS) introduced by DCLG in 2007 for central government to manage local government's performance.
PCT	Primary Care Trust. Trusts have control of local health care and cover all areas of England, receiving funding directly from the Department of Health.
RSL	Registered Social Landlord. Non local authority social housing provider.
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector. Organisations engaged in advocacy and/or service delivery which are self-governing, some being registered charities, some incorporated non-profit organisations, with some degree of reliance on volunteers

I Executive summary

Introduction

1. The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers programmes, introduced by the previous administration and run by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with support from the Department of Work and Pensions, aim to develop innovative approaches to delivering Housing Options/advice services. They offer housing advice to people with low and medium housing need as well as those with acute need, and link housing and wider advice about a range of issues such as training and employment, financial management, and access to benefits.
2. The four key objectives for enhanced Housing Options services are:
 - Meeting housing need with a wider range of solutions
 - Using stock more effectively
 - Tackling worklessness
 - Improving customer service
3. There are three programmes (First Phase/Extra, Second Phase/Standard and the most recent, Kickstart), funded from April 2009 for approximately two years, and evaluated up until October 2010 to examine the implementation, operation and development of the proposed service enhancements¹. The evaluation has also assessed the success of the programme in achieving a range of outcomes, tested the efficacy of the partnerships that have been developed, considered the value for money implications of this approach and drawn out key learning points.
4. The evaluation published a Scoping Report² on the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning research website in December 2009. This Final Report brings together the findings from desk research and field work carried out between April 2009 and October 2010 including:
 - Overview of the different priorities and approaches of the Trailblazers using monitoring and survey data, and case study research; and
 - Experiences of using the Trailblazer services and outcomes for beneficiaries from three waves of client tracking.

¹ The evaluation was closed early by the coalition government in October 2010 – it was originally commissioned by the previous administration to run until July 2011 and include the production of a toolkit for authorities.

² <http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Downloads/Trailblazers/evaloutputs/EHO%20Trailblazers%20Scoping%20Report%20Nov%202009.pdf>

Overview of Trailblazers

5. The evaluation has highlighted the diverse nature of the Trailblazers and the different ranges of services selected for inclusion. The additional Enhanced Housing Options funding has allowed Trailblazers to extend their housing advice services either by developing new services, or by enhancing the services they were already providing, most commonly through support for job seeking, education and training. This is not confined to the Job Centre Plus Extra Trailblazers, although with the recession the emphasis on employment has dwindled somewhat across most Trailblazers³.
6. Each Trailblazer is different although most Trailblazers define their clients as from certain groups, the two most common being 'all housing applicants' and 'workless households'. Some Trailblazers target young people, older people and specific hard to reach or vulnerable groups. Despite this variety the services provided in the case study Trailblazers fall into three broad groups:
 - helping hard-to-reach or vulnerable groups to access housing and/or training and employment
 - helping existing tenants to access work or training
 - finding solutions for existing tenants in unsuitable housing, such as overcrowded households, or helping under-occupied tenants to downsize
7. There are three main models of funding:
 - a separately identified Trailblazer budget wholly spent on the Trailblazer services
 - Trailblazer funding pays for specific staff but they work on a wider range of services
 - Trailblazer funding is integrated with other funding sources to provide the Enhanced Housing Options.

Key findings

8. In line with the Trailblazers' rationale, the clients of most of the Enhanced Housing Options services in tracking areas were people whose needs have not been addressed, or have been inadequately or insufficiently addressed, by traditional public sector service provision. Low self-esteem, low self-confidence, lack of knowledge of entitlement to local services, poor literacy and numeracy skills, mental health issues, substance misuse and offending history were common amongst the clients.
9. Overall 56 per cent of the Trailblazer clients interviewed initially were male, though this varied substantially by scheme from less than a quarter, to over 90 per cent. Most Trailblazer clients were in the young to middle age groups (16-54). The ethnicity of

³ Although the recession has meant an increase in the number of unemployed people, Trailblazers have found that many of these require housing support initially, and are cautious about the extent they can help people find jobs in the current labour market.

clients varied a great deal between schemes with 40 per cent of Trailblazer clients from an ethnic background other than white British, with black Caribbean being the next largest group.

10. Two Trailblazer objectives concern meeting housing need with a wider range of solutions and using stock more effectively. The tracking interviews showed that when clients first joined the Trailblazer schemes, 72 per cent of them were looking for accommodation, either to move somewhere more suitable or because they were homeless or in temporary accommodation. The numbers looking for housing fell considerably over the first two months to just 48 per cent of clients. Numbers remained broadly level between two and six months in all areas.
11. Housing problems tended to be addressed early on in clients' contacts with Trailblazer services or not at all. In total, 57 people had already been assisted into accommodation by the time of the initial interview. A further 75 clients moved home during the six months we tracked them, but only 21 of these moved to a home that the Trailblazer service had helped them to find. This is a fairly low proportion of the 200 clients who were looking for housing when they approached the Trailblazer service but does not fully reflect the broader assistance provided by the Trailblazers service.
12. Tackling worklessness and helping people into employment was another key objective of the Trailblazers. The timing of the programme posed unexpected difficulties for this aim, given the recession and overall rise in unemployment.
13. Nevertheless, there was evidence of success in some Trailblazer programmes. Overall, the proportion of working-age clients in either full or part-time work rose from 13 per cent at the initial interviews to 25 per cent by six months. Unlike the housing outcomes, these outcomes took time to achieve with the largest increase in employment taking place between two and six months.
14. Overall, clients expressed high levels of satisfaction for the way in which the Trailblazer schemes were designed and operated. The amount of support required varied considerably with some only requiring one-off advice or specific support for a few weeks while other clients benefitted from on-going support from staff for addressing issues across many aspects of their lives. Many clients appreciated the individual help to get back into work or training and many were expecting to make further progress over the coming months in these areas. In relation to housing, Trailblazers reliant on the limited supply of social housing found it more difficult to meet clients' hopes and expectations for more suitable accommodation than those helping people into private rented housing.
15. The Trailblazers programme has thus been able to evidence considerable success in relation to enhanced or innovative services that were generally appreciated by clients. In some cases it has driven step changes in services, organisational culture and management approaches as well as lasting partnerships that are likely to survive into the future.
16. Success was limited by challenges inherent to short term programmes, particularly associated with set up and sustainability. There were further challenges in the ability to engage with the most excluded clients, to achieve anticipated take up of services,

and to deliver the appropriate sequencing of housing, employment and training and other support to meet clients' needs. Success in some contexts will also occur outside the period of assessment.

17. Value for money assessments were carried out on a small number of Trailblazers projects for which the necessary data were available. Overall the evidence suggested that the projects where we could make estimates did have at least the potential to be good value for money. This is partly because the costs involved were often relatively small so even quite low levels of success generate large savings for the public sector. What was clear was that the big savings came from getting people into secure accommodation and into some form of employment. Other schemes had more general and less readily assessed benefits.

Conclusions

18. The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme was unusual in that money was allocated on the basis of action plans proposed by individual authorities in line with the general objectives of meeting housing needs; using stock more effectively; tackling worklessness and improving customer service. As such the programme was a forerunner to what might occur under the localism agenda. Each authority could determine its own priorities and capacities to support specific initiatives and allocate the funding as it saw fit.
19. The extent of diversity between and even within authorities had not been fully understood either by DCLG or by the researchers at the start of the research. This made the evaluation more complex – not least because of the lack of requirements for consistent, comparable monitoring - but also pointed to the value of locally 'owned' initiatives. One of the most positive aspects of the programme was the extent to which initiatives matched the needs identified by local decision-makers. Of course not every one turned out to be successful. But even where there were problems, important lessons were learned.
20. Generally, success was very much a function of the quality and commitment of specific staff members and benefited from stability in staffing. The quality of partnerships was also important, not least in the ability to attract additional funding, usually in kind through staff and/or premises.
21. Issues of partnership were particularly important in the context of those authorities that received a DWP Job Centre Plus package to support a more integrated employment and housing advice service. The most obvious failure in this context lay in the delays in bringing the Job Point equipment into operation and the difficulties in measuring usage and therefore potential value.
22. The two most important problems with assessing the success of the Trailblazer projects lie, first, in the capacity to identify additionality as changes may have occurred for other reasons, or the Trailblazer initiative may have nudged people towards solving their own problems as much as providing direct assistance; and second because of the early end date to the evaluation, which meant that by no means all the positive outcomes had yet occurred.

23. Although by no means easy, the evaluation has been relatively successful in tracking clients in order to learn about changes that have occurred with respect to housing, training and employment as well as their attitudes to the programme. Of itself, this is an important conclusion – people were happy to speak about themselves and to be re-interviewed regularly, generating interesting cameos as well as more general information.
24. In case study and particularly client tracking areas, the results look good and sometimes very good indeed. This of itself does not prove cause and effect in terms of Trailblazer activities and outcomes, as many other factors may have been involved. Moreover, there were other, less successful initiatives and authorities, some of which hardly started to implement their action plans. The main differences between initiatives appear to be in relation to focus and sustained staff commitment together with realistic and practical objectives.
25. Issues of additionality also arise when measuring value for money; it is probable that in many cases some forms of alternative assistance would have been made available and there is no way of measuring the costs and potential success of those alternatives. Even so a 'gross' value for money assessment generates impressive results in the small number of instances where the researchers had adequate information to make the calculations. It is clear from the evaluation that the big gains come from moving people out of homelessness and hostels; reducing criminality; and moving people successfully into work. The evidence strongly suggests that in these cases individual support brought with it many potential additional benefits.
26. Overall the Trailblazers project has exemplified a range of successful local initiatives. Bringing the housing and employment elements together often generated valuable synergies. It has pointed to the need to be realistic about what can be achieved but also suggests that local approaches can be well targeted and successful on relatively small budgets. Even so, there must be concerns about how many of the initiatives will be self-sustaining in the current financial climate.

1. Introduction

The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programmes

- 1.1. The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers programmes were introduced by the previous administration in April 2009 and are being funded for two years by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with support from the Department of Work and Pensions. The programmes aim to develop innovative approaches to delivering Housing Options and advice services. By offering housing advice to people with low and medium housing need as well as those with acute need, and also by linking housing advice to wider advice about a range of issues such as training and employment, financial management, and access to benefits, a number of objectives may be achieved:
- meeting housing need with a wider range of solutions
 - using stock more effectively
 - tackling worklessness
 - improving customer service
- 1.2. The key objective of these programmes is to build on Housing Options services (CLG 2008) to help transform housing services to be more holistic, outward facing, client-centred and capable of helping a broader range of clients to avoid acute need and access sustainable housing suitable for their specific needs and circumstances. At the centre of this approach is the principle of early intervention and provision of advice and services that address the root causes of housing need by working in partnership with supporting services - such as providers of employment and benefits advice. By encouraging local authority housing services to form partnerships and collaborative networks with other local service providers, the Enhanced Housing Options approach also aims to help local authorities to reach their Local Area Agreement targets.
- 1.3. There are three types of Trailblazers with different levels of funding: the First Phase/Extra Programme (12 local authorities, five with a Job Centre Plus package, receive a grant of up to £350,000 over three years), the Second Phase/Standard Programme (20 Trailblazers including local authorities and partnerships, receive a grant of £260,000) and ten Kickstart projects that receive a much smaller amount of funding to get them going. Further details of the three programmes and all 42 Trailblazers are shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.4. The programmes have been funded from April 2009 for approximately two years, and were evaluated up to October 2010⁴ to examine the implementation, operation and development of the proposed service

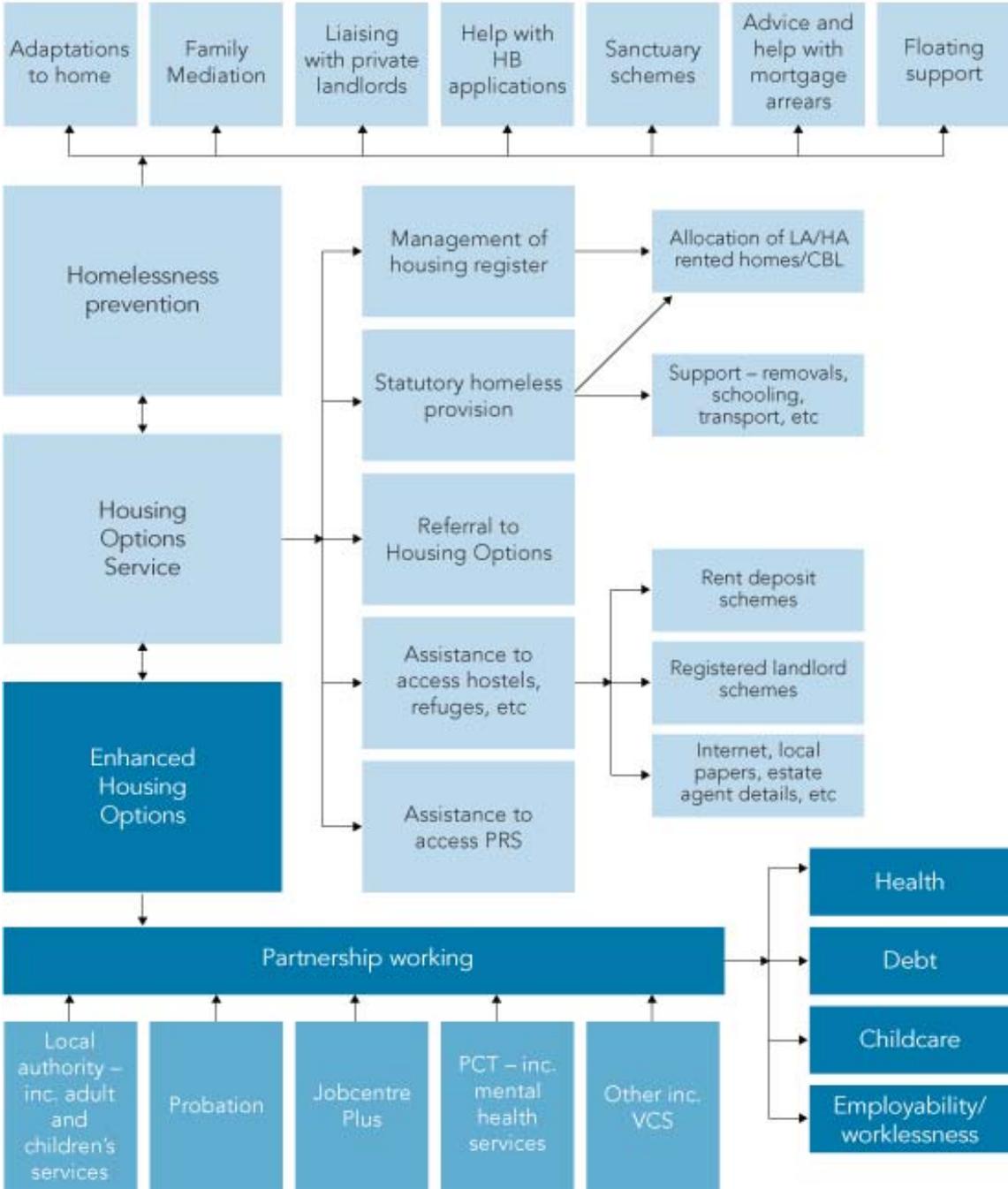
⁴ The evaluation was closed early by the coalition government in October 2010 – it was originally commissioned by the previous administration to run until July 2011 and include the production of a toolkit for authorities.

enhancements. The evaluation has also assessed the success of the programme in achieving a range of outcomes, tested the efficacy of the partnerships that have been developed, considered the value for money implications of this approach and drawn out key learning points for local authorities and government.

Objectives

- 1.5. The objectives and intentions of the Trailblazer programmes – and how they are to be achieved - can be conceived of, schematically, as in Figure 1 below.
- 1.6. As Figure 1 shows, the Trailblazer programmes support innovative and holistic approaches to customer service in housing advice and support, and test new approaches particularly through tackling worklessness. Most of the Trailblazer programmes are integrating and enhancing existing services, rather than only providing distinct additions, and are building upon the existing work around Housing Options and homelessness prevention.

Figure 1: Trailblazer objectives and intentions



- 1.7. One of the principles of the Trailblazers is to develop services that are inclusive to those who are most vulnerable or socially excluded (CLG 2008). The vulnerable groups commonly referred to in this context include the PSA 16 groups (care leavers, adult offenders under probation supervision, adults in contact with secondary mental health services and adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities), DWP client groups (people receiving out of work benefits or income related benefits), lone parents, black and minority ethnic groups, young people, older people, and homeless people.

Implications of changing economic circumstances

- 1.8. The national economy has been in recession for much of the Trailblazer programme (i.e. between April 2009 and March 2011). While there were signs that the considerable turbulence in the housing and financial markets experience in the UK had began to ease since the height of the crisis in the winter of 2008-09⁵, there are now new concerns about the effects of the coalition government's public spending cuts on access to both housing and employment for poorer and vulnerable people⁶.
- 1.9. The Enhanced Housing Options initiative is thus being implemented in much less favourable conditions than originally envisaged, and it is more likely that people's housing problems will be associated with unemployment and other financial problems. Overall the recession has placed additional challenges on Trailblazers, particularly in relation to objectives related to worklessness. Some targets have become impossible to achieve; others have required new thinking. In addition the Comprehensive Spending Review has had impacts on the likely sustainability of the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers.
- 1.10. This evaluation takes account of the changing economic context since early 2009 in both assessing outcomes and identifying lessons for the future i. e. beyond the end of the Trailblazer programme in March 2011.

Outline of the evaluation

Aims of the evaluation

- 1.11. There were five overarching aims of this evaluation:

⁵ See discussion of the likely effects of the recession on Trailblazers in the Scoping Report and Literature Review

<http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Downloads/Trailblazers/evaloutputs/EHO%20Trailblazers%20S coping%20Report%20Nov%2009.pdf>

<http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Downloads/Trailblazers/evaloutputs/EHO%20Trailblazers%20Literature%20Review%20Nov%2009.pdf>

⁶ See for example the Institute of Fiscal Studies' analysis of the Comprehensive Spending Review October 2010 <http://www.ifs.org.uk/projects/346>

- to assemble robust evidence on the process issues associated with setting up enhancements to existing services, as proposed by the Trailblazers
- to measure the success of the programmes in achieving core objectives (meeting housing need with a wider range of solutions; using stock more effectively; tackling worklessness; and improving customer service)
- to track the immediate and longer term outcomes for the different client groups who approach the service
- to explore the costs of running the service and the additional net cost savings and other benefits that the service can generate
- to identify lessons learnt to encourage and inform the development of enhanced Housing Options services by other local authorities

Evaluation to date

- 1.12. The evaluation has been undertaken by a team from Cambridge University, Birmingham University and Shared Intelligence and has run from April 2009 to October 2010^{7,8}.
- 1.13. The first phase of the evaluation (from April to June 2009) was designed to contextualise the Enhanced Housing Options programme and to understand the Trailblazers' plans and priorities, find out about the current and potential engagement of key stakeholders and explore their perspectives, and develop the evaluation framework and research tools. This has been reported on in the Scoping Report⁹, available from the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning research website.
- 1.14. The second phase of the evaluation (from June to December 2009) focused on collecting and developing data, including through a data audit and web-based survey¹⁰ of all the Trailblazers, collecting information on the local context, priorities and target client groups, services provided, and models of delivery and governance.
- 1.15. These data were used to select 15 in-depth case study local authorities, according to agreed criteria to include the five Extra Trailblazers with Job Centre Plus resources and a representative spread of other Trailblazers. These are listed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 provides pen portraits of all 15 case studies.

⁷ The evaluation was originally planned to run for two years and then use the learning to produce a toolkit for local authorities.

⁸ More detail can be found in Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer Evaluation Framework and Methodology
<http://www.cchpr.landecon.cam.ac.uk/Downloads/Trailblazers/evaloutputs/EHO%20Trailblazers%20Evaluation%20Framework%20and%20Methods%20Final%20Report%20Nov%2009.pdf>

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ Following the Scoping Report¹⁰ published on the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning research website in December 2009, other reports, including findings from on-line surveys and an Initial Report, written in June 2010 have been made available to Trailblazers, CLG and DWP on CAMTOOLS, an internal evaluation website.

- 1.16. Eight case studies were selected for client tracking with phase three of the evaluation (January – March 2010) focusing on the initial tracking work, to explore the views and experiences of the client groups for whom the Trailblazers were designed. Follow up interviews were carried out at two and six months providing three waves of data by the end of the final phase of the evaluation (April – October 2010).
- 1.17. Overall we interviewed around 300 people¹¹ across the eight Trailblazers over an eight month period and used the findings to construct ‘client journeys’. These record contact with the Trailblazer and the services used as well as outcomes and other relevant ‘life events’ (e.g. finding a job, moving house etc). Examples of client journeys are shown in Appendix 3.
- 1.18. Alongside the client tracking, the evaluation has been collecting baseline and quarterly monitoring data on core outcomes for all Trailblazers, with additional work to identify and develop indicators for local targets and outcomes set by the 15 case study local authorities.

Analytical framework

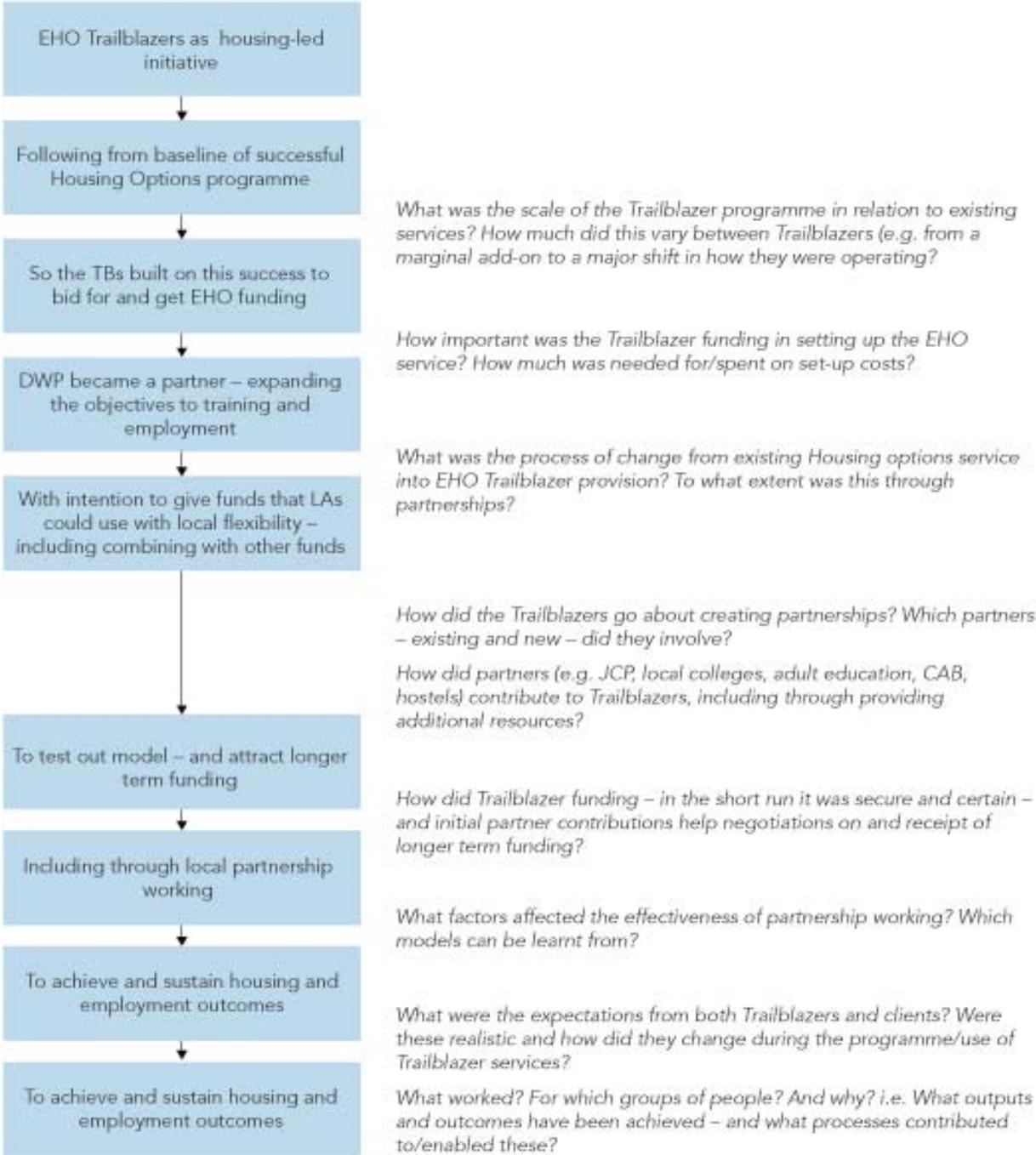
- 1.19. We have used the findings from this range of desk research and fieldwork to address some key questions based on the analytical framework shown in Figure 2 below.

Structure of report

- 1.20. This Final Report brings together the findings from desk research and field work carried out through the evaluation including:
- overview of the different priorities and approaches of the Trailblazers using monitoring and survey data, and case study research; and
 - experiences of using the Trailblazer services and outcomes for beneficiaries from three waves of client tracking
- 1.21. It then draws on the analyses of these findings to assess:
- outputs and outcomes - Trailblazers’ progress in meeting national and local objectives
 - progress in partnership working
 - value for Money considerations
 - learning from the Trailblazers; and
 - conclusions

¹¹ 474 people were interviewed initially which fell to 277 at six months

Figure 2: Analytical framework and key research questions



2. Overview of the trailblazers

- 2.1. This section provides an overview of the 42 Trailblazers, drawing on the web-based surveys and using examples from the 15 case studies. (The case studies included nine first phase Extra projects, five Standard Trailblazers and one from the Kickstart programme¹²). The aim is to provide an understanding of the diversity of Trailblazers and the different approaches that they have taken in terms of their goals and practices, and how they have used the additional funding. Pen portraits of the 15 case studies can be found in Appendix 2.

Funding arrangements

- 2.2. The scale of funding made available to the Trailblazers varied between waves with a maximum of £350,000 allocated over three years to the First Phase Extra Programme of 12 Trailblazers, £260,000 over two years for the Second Phase Programme of 20 and smaller amounts for the 10 Kickstart programmes. Department for Work and pensions funding contributed to the five Trailblazers with the Jobcentre Plus package of support.
- 2.3. No funding was guaranteed beyond March 2011, but the decision to wind up the programme in May 2010 did not curtail the existing funding allocated to any of the Trailblazers.
- 2.4. These were not insignificant sums in relation to the overall budgets for Housing Options teams in which the Trailblazers were often based, but were often split between up to four strands and were relatively small in relation to, for example, overall spend on employment, education and training provision within the case study areas. This suggests that their impact in enhancing the role of Housing Options teams was generally much greater than their potential impact on employment and training outcomes within these areas, and indeed on some other activities supported in the individual strands. This limited leverage may explain the limited engagement achieved with Job Centre Plus for example in some cases.
- 2.5. There are three main models adopted by the Trailblazers in using this funding:
- a ring-fenced Trailblazer budget spent exclusively on Trailblazer services
 - trailblazer funding for specific staff who may work on a wider range of services
 - integration of Trailblazer with other funding to provide enhanced Housing Options

¹² Shown in Appendix 1

- 2.6. The Trailblazers programme was designed to attract additional funding from partners and to secure ongoing funding to achieve sustainability for effective options. While 12 additional sources of funding were identified these related almost exclusively to government funding at local, regional and national levels; with local level funding (local authority, Supporting People and Homelessness grant) being the most common, with some partners also contributing services, premises and staff time. Further information on funding and value for money considerations was collected in a survey of six Trailblazers with reasonable information conducted towards the end of the project and reported in Chapter 6.
- 2.7. Case studies highlight some of the options and consequences of the three different strategies outlined above and of the allocation of funds between strands and types of activity (e.g. staff costs, training, publicity, development of IT systems) as illustrated by the four examples below.
- **Kettering** has spread the Trailblazer funding quite thinly between several strands, mainly to fund staff posts and temporary cover to release existing post holders, but also to fund removal expenses for the HomeMove scheme, tenancy training courses and advertising. Leverage was secured by the project manager being largely funded from the Council's own funds but spending 60 per cent of her time on the Trailblazer. This strategy enabled the inputs to the project to be clearly identified and the leverage achieved to be demonstrated without recourse to external partner funding. However, this did little to secure future funding to enable the project to continue beyond expiry of the Trailblazer grant.
 - **Camden** adopted a strategy of focusing the Trailblazer funding on just one strand (Pathways for All(PFA)) funding the two other strands from other sources so overall it accounted for just 15 per cent of Pathways for All funding. This pooling of resources and integration into mainstream programmes has raised hopes that the project would be able to continue after the Trailblazers but no future funding had been secured by October 2010. The pooling approach also makes it difficult to attribute impacts specifically to the Trailblazer funding.
 - **South West London Learning Disability Homefinder Project** adopted a very different funding strategy, over and above the pooling of Trailblazer funding of £220,000 between seven boroughs. The financial model involved an attempt to establish a sustainable fee-based social enterprise with landlords, tenants and social care commissioners expected to provide a third of the funding through letting and management fees initially, rising to all of the funding from year 3. The viability of such a trading model depends both on a minimum number of clients and there is still a strong dependence on public funding for service commissioning, with the balance to be paid by service users.
 - Greenwich and Islington had allocated a small part of their Trailblazer funding to the procurement of amendments to IT systems. In both cases this was to enable the steering of Housing Options clients to employment, education or training services. Both projects experienced some problems with getting the new systems going but nevertheless were examples of

the projects that invested in IT and staff training, which arguably contributed to a more sustainable enhanced Housing Options service than had they simply invested in current staffing costs.

- 2.8. None of these examples fully addressed the need for sustainability beyond the Trailblazer programme, which has grown in importance due to the consequences of substantial reductions in public expenditure. This is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Organisational location and context

- 2.9. While most of the case study Trailblazers focused on a single local authority, there were two which started with a wider geographical remit and one which developed cross-authority links. The South West Learning Disability Home Finder Project involved collaboration between seven Boroughs to create access to private rented housing and support for people with learning disabilities. The Tunbridge Wells and Rother Housing Options Money and Employment Support Project promoted co-operation between housing, Citizen's Advice Bureaux and third sector partners across a natural travel to work area in two adjacent rural authorities.
- 2.10. The West Dorset Trailblazer set out to develop practice in tackling worklessness, and specific aspects of young and older people's needs that would be transferable to other rural contexts. In the course of the Trailblazer, links were made with the adjacent authority of South Somerset to improve rural outreach. These examples illustrate the potential for shared approaches to developing Enhanced Housing Options services and the benefits of sharing learning with similar authorities.
- 2.11. Usually the projects were managed from within the Housing Options teams of local housing authorities, reflecting the remit and funding mechanism for the Trailblazers programme. Often the entire project was also located within Housing Options, and in some cases integrated with existing services so that it was not possible to distinguish Trailblazers services, clients and funding from other Housing Options services. Another strategy was to ring-fence the Trailblazer project as a distinct stream of activity to fund specific staff and stand alone projects, such as the Broadening Horizons project in Croydon, and the Learning, Employment and Accommodation Project (LEAP) in Norwich.
- 2.12. Several projects sought to increase service integration by co-locating previously distinct services in a single building, such as the Housing Aid Office in Nottingham which provided housing, employment and welfare advice. A more extensive one stop shop was the Doorways Centre for housing, employment and health services in Halifax town centre (Calderdale).
- 2.13. The reverse strategy was to hold surgeries in a variety of locations away from the Housing Options offices such as hostels (Bournemouth and Croydon), housing estates (Nottingham, Islington, Bradford and Croydon),

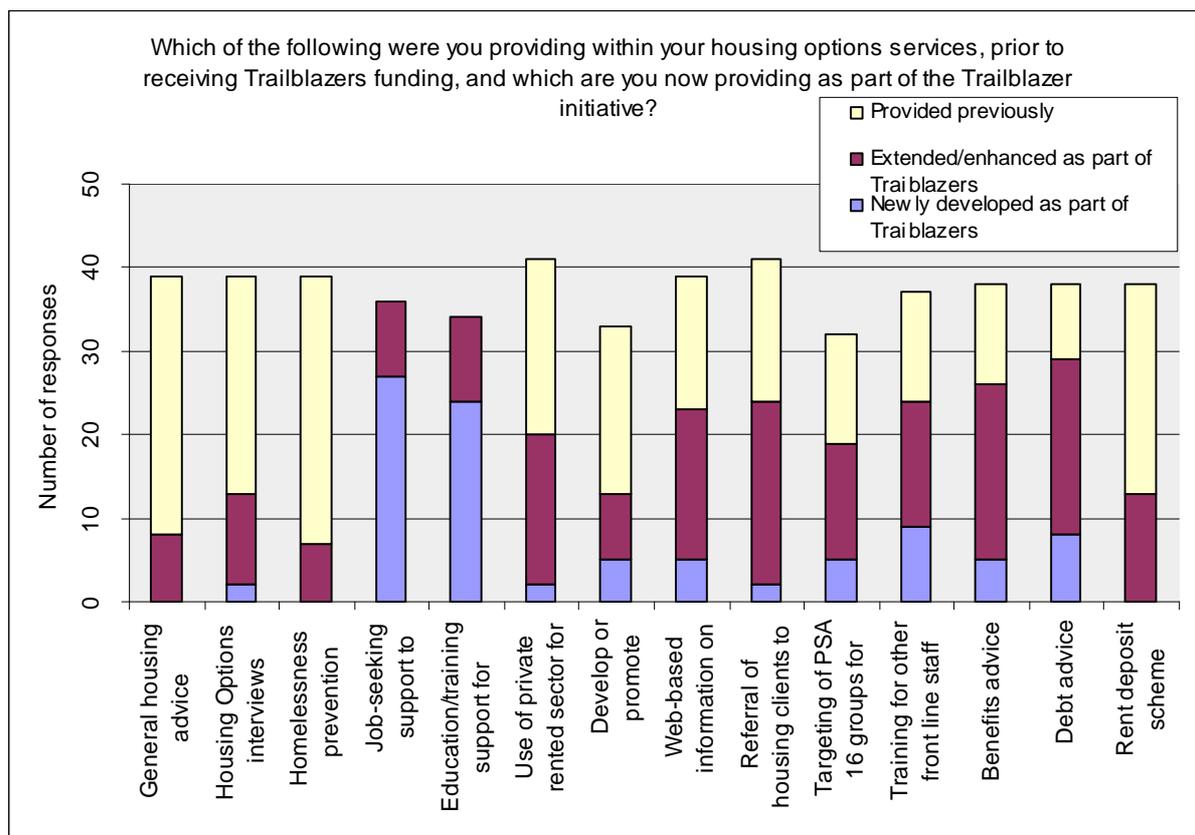
Citizen's Advice Bureaux, libraries, cafes and even people's homes (West Dorset). Here the problem was with ensuring that locations were well enough used by the key target groups of the project. In Bradford, where Housing Options was already outsourced to the local stock transfer landlord (InCommunities), it made sense to similarly outsource enhanced activities such as employment, education or training, although not necessarily to the same provider.

- 2.14. West Dorset, on the other hand, had decided to return homelessness services in-house in 2006; this had provided a platform for a comprehensive Housing Options service and a successful Trailblazers bid to reflect the rural context.
- 2.15. It is difficult to draw conclusions from the 15 case studies about whether an existing Housing Options service, a community space or co-location with another statutory agency is the best location for projects of this type. However the tendency to draw the boundaries of Housing Options ever wider has implications for the skill-sets required for this type of work and for decisions about where best to locate core services and where to undertake signposting and referral work.
- 2.16. The location of employment, education or training is probably one of the most difficult decisions in this context; with housing applicants and homeless clients forming a key target group and Housing Options advice being a key opportunity to access that group. On the other hand the skilled and specialist nature of these services may sit better with specialist providers; and a division between access and signposting services with Housing Options and core provision with specialists was apparent.
- 2.17. Two Trailblazers, (Greenwich and Islington), were taking the opportunity to improve IT systems to steer housing service users to employment, education or training services. While there was general consensus that many clients need help with both housing and employment and training, there was also recognition that these needs may not easily be met at the same time. A key message was 'home first then job'. Many clients, who were distant from the labour market, benefitted from early engagement activities such as Blackpool's 'My journey' workbook and cognitive behaviour training programme enabling them to reflect on how they can improve their situation.

The nature of the service provided

- 2.18. The evaluation has highlighted the diverse nature of the Trailblazers and the different ranges of services selected for inclusion. The main common feature of the services was that they had developed from existing Housing Options programmes of local authorities in expanding their housing advice and homelessness services to address the prevention agenda. There was also a strong influence from the worklessness agenda and growing recognition of the links with housing and homelessness which had led to DWP joining DCLG in this programme.

Figure 3: Trailblazer services



2.19. The specific combinations of services included were partly a function of which of the three phases of Trailblazer programmes had been bid for (with the Job Centre Plus package projects naturally placing greater emphasis on accessing employment, education and training services). They also reflected local objectives and circumstances which had variously led to emphases on homelessness prevention, better use of the existing social housing stock and more effective engagement with the private rented sector. Others had wider priorities and so included services such as debt and money advice for financial inclusion¹³, targeting specific vulnerable groups (e.g. Gypsies and Travellers, older people), running training initiatives and developing service partnerships with local agencies.

2.20. The complex map of Trailblazer objectives and intentions was shown in Figure 1 in the preceding chapter. Figure 3 above summarises the services Trailblazers were providing at the time of the first web-based survey in August 2009. It can be seen that the most significant categories of new services added by the Trailblazers have been job-seeking and education and training support.

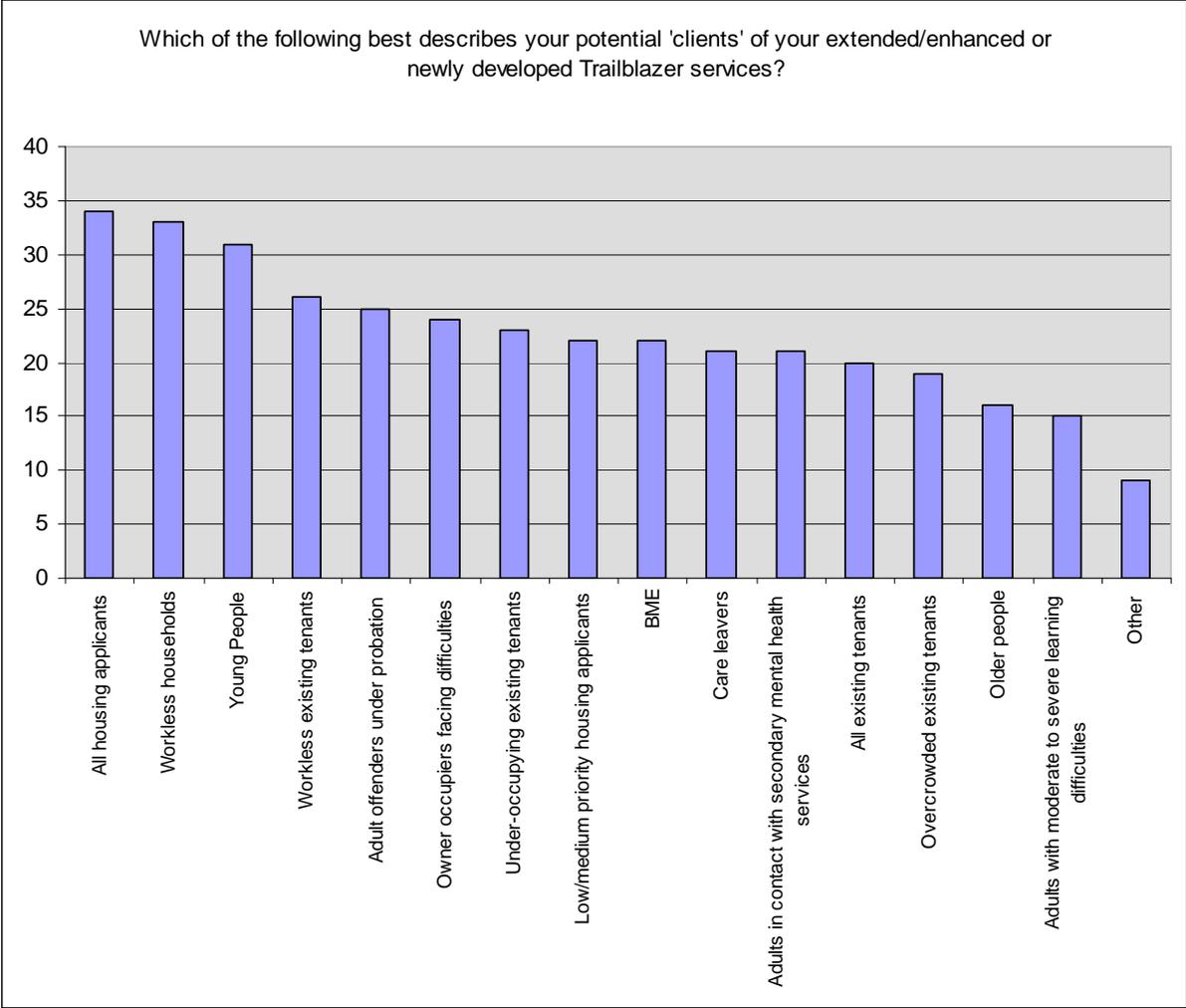
¹³ Financial inclusion is generally used to mean access to financial services at affordable costs for low income and disadvantaged groups.

- 2.21. Some case study projects aimed to extend and enhance existing Housing Options services (for example by funding additional specialist staff such as the Life plan and HomeMove Advisers within the Housing Needs and Strategy Team in Kettering). Others planned to develop new services (such as the adapted property register to make more effective use of adapted properties for people with disabilities in Newham) or to improve links and referral arrangements between existing services (notably the improved links sought between housing and Job Centre Plus services planned in several cases by locating job points in Trailblazers offices including Calderdale and Camden).
- 2.22. Two interesting dimensions of improving such links were the development of IT facilities to steer unemployed social housing applicants or residents to employment, education or training services (Islington and Greenwich) and the establishment of outreach services on social housing estates (Bradford, Islington and Nottingham) in hostels (Bournemouth and Camden) or in remote rural locations (West Dorset) to improve access to these and other services.
- 2.23. The range of services across the case studies was extremely broad, with each Trailblazer typically having three or four strands aimed at strengthening or developing specific services. The most common new services included were job seeking and education and training support. The rationale for providing more extensive delivery of services of this sort within Housing Options appears to have been based on the ability to provide a more holistic and client focused approach.
- 2.24. There are variations in the extent to which these additions were mainly about signposting clients to employment, education or training services or providing some element of training and support directly within Housing Options. In a few cases links have been made between help with housing and requirements of clients to sign up for employment, education or training.
- 2.25. The case for a more limited signposting and referral service, including the location of Job Centre Plus Job Points in Trailblazers, would appear to be based on difficulties in extending the skills and staff base of Housing Options teams to adequately resource employment, education or training activities. Even where new information advice and guidance or employment, education or training services were set up by the Trailblazers, these were relatively small scale in relation to overall provision within the locality and in some cases were seen to duplicate such services.
- 2.26. Existing services enhanced through Trailblazer funding included benefits advice (e.g. better off in work calculations), under-occupation and over-crowding transfers, access to the private rented sector (e.g. bond and registered landlord schemes) and Housing Options and homelessness prevention work (e.g. mediation schemes). These are activities more traditionally associated with housing advice and were thus less challenging in terms of organisational change.

Target client groups

2.27. The following graph shows targeting of client groups across all Trailblazers based on the web based survey carried out in August 2009¹⁴.

Figure 4: Trailblazer clients



2.28. Trailblazers tended to adopt a mixed strategy of providing some open access or very broadly targeted services and some very specifically focused projects. The former approach reflected the location of most projects in Housing Options and homelessness teams with a broad statutory remit and the widespread experience of housing needs across social groups. Examples of the latter included work with young people (West Dorset), ex-offenders (Bournemouth), workless households (Camden), street outreach to tackle repeat homelessness (Bradford), people with learning difficulties (South West London), people with disabilities (Newham Adapted Housing Register), vulnerable adults (Greenwich), older people (West Dorset), under-occupying tenants (Islington), overcrowded tenants (Camden) and various

¹⁴ Trailblazers could give more than one response

combinations thereof (expanded options for young people, ex-offenders and people with mental health problems in Kettering).

3. Client tracking

Methods and sample

- 3.1. A total of 474 trailblazer clients were interviewed initially in the eight case study areas that were selected for longitudinal client tracking. The full analysis of the quantitative data collected is contained in Appendix 3. It looks at the profile of the clients, their reasons for using the Trailblazer services and their initial experience of them. Bradford and Kettering were both running two very different Trailblazer schemes for distinct client groups, so the two schemes have been identified separately for the analysis.
- 3.2. Appendix 3 also contains details of client sampling and shows the proportion of clients interviewed in each scheme. Overall 52 per cent of eligible clients were interviewed initially. The proportion was over 80 per cent in most areas, but lower in Bradford in particular, where there were some difficulties in obtaining contact details. A total of 356 were re-interviewed at two months, and 277 at six months.
- 3.3. It should be noted that some of the Trailblazers' work, such as joining up different agencies or providing staff training, affects a broader group of people than those who we could count as 'clients' for this work. Newham and Kettering in particular were providing substantial amount of other work with the Trailblazer funding, the benefit of which would not be expected to be picked up from client interviews.
- 3.4. Most of the clients interviewed had been in the Trailblazer scheme for less than three months, although some had been in the schemes for between three and 12 months.
- 3.5. This section of the report first looks at the profile of Trailblazer clients, and then looks at the evidence from the client interviews on the four main aims of the Trailblazers. The two housing aims have been integrated because from the clients' perspectives the outcomes are similar.

The profile of Trailblazer clients

- 3.6. In line with the Trailblazers' initial remit, the clients of most of the Enhanced Housing Options services in tracking areas were people whose needs have not been addressed, or have been inadequately or insufficiently addressed, by traditional public sector service provision. Low self-esteem, low self-confidence, lack of knowledge regarding local service provision and their entitlement, poor literacy and numeracy skills, mental health issues, substance misuse issues and offending history were common amongst the clients. Many had bad past experiences of public sector services and had subsequently stopped seeking help for their problems, or had been waiting for a long time for their issues to be addressed. In some cases this meant that the clients were initially sceptical about the sincerity of the Enhanced

Housing Options service or its ability to help them. Clients in several tracking areas made frequent reference to other public sector service providers, and contrasted their experiences of the Trailblazer services with these.

- 3.7. Overall 56 per cent of the Trailblazer clients interviewed initially were male, though this varied substantially by scheme from less than a quarter, to over 90 per cent. Only the Kettering Lifeplan scheme had a strong focus on a specific age group (under 25s). Overall most Trailblazer clients were in the young to middle age groups (16-54). The ethnicity of clients varied a great deal between schemes, with particularly high numbers of ethnic minorities amongst the clients of Camden, Newham, Croydon and Nottingham. Overall 40 per cent of Trailblazer clients were from an ethnic background other than white British, with black Caribbean being the next largest group.

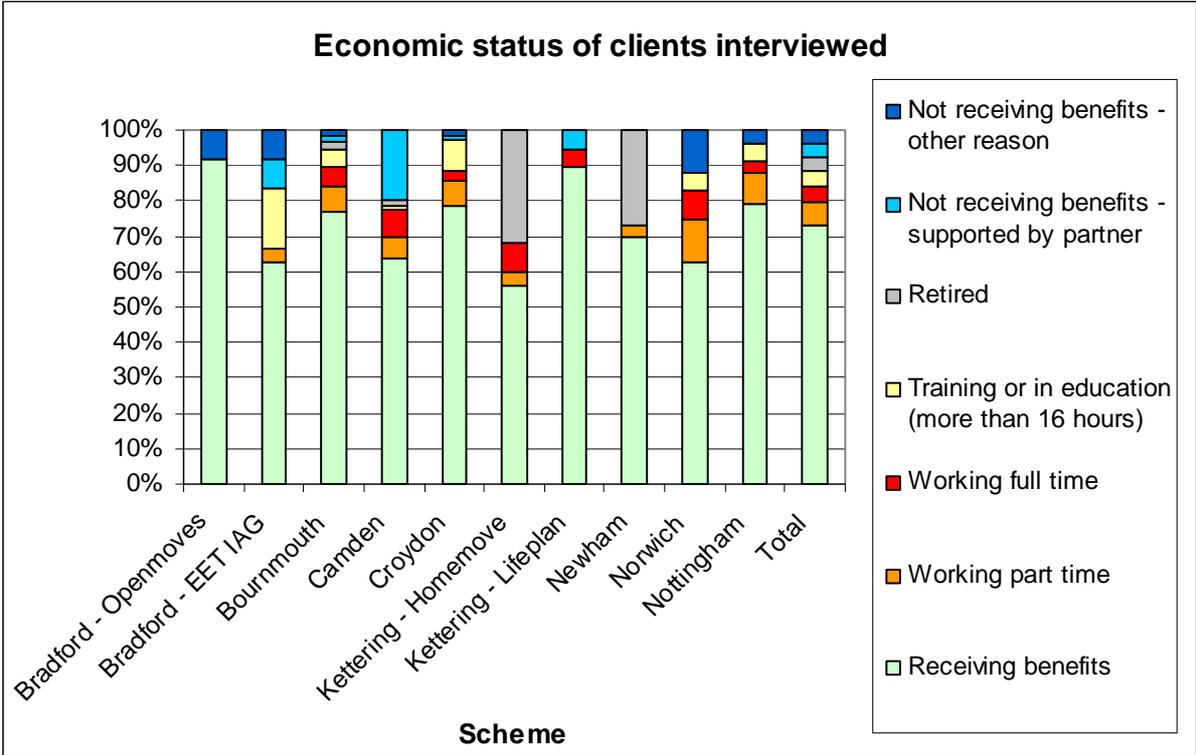
Tenure

- 3.8. In terms of the tenure, there was a considerable variation between the schemes, reflecting the differing services they were offering. The Kettering Homemove and Camden schemes are directed at existing council tenants, whereas the Norwich, Nottingham, Croydon and Bournemouth schemes are focused largely on people who are not in social housing.

Employment

- 3.9. One of the key aims of the Trailblazer programme is to help people into education or employment. It is therefore unsurprising that nearly three-quarters of clients overall (and a majority in every scheme) were out of work and in receipt of state benefits at the time of their initial interview (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Economic status of clients



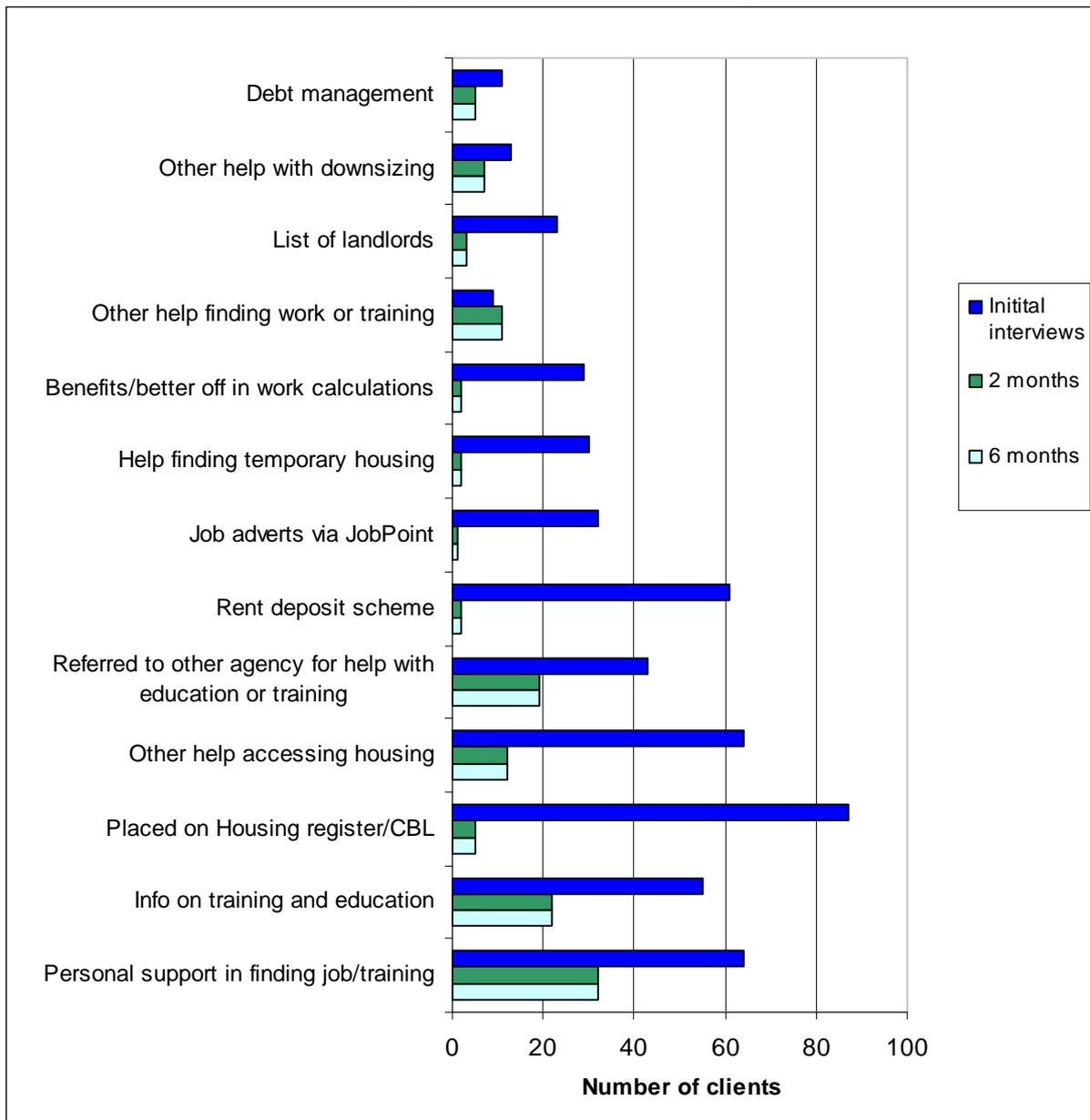
- 3.10. In the Newham and Kettering Homemove schemes the largest numbers were in receipt of Incapacity Benefit and/or Disability Living Allowance, reflecting the high numbers of people who were in these schemes because of their medical needs. In Camden there were larger numbers of working households and people who were out of work because they were caring for children. Elsewhere, the largest numbers were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance.
- 3.11. Four per cent of clients overall were in education or training for over 16 hours a week, a further 14 per cent were doing some education or training for under 16 hours a week. Nine per cent were also doing some regular voluntary work each week.
- 3.12. The majority of clients were looking for either full-time or part-time work, with the exception of those in the Kettering Homemove scheme (most of whom were retired or in ill-health) and Camden (most of whom were either already in work or caring for children).
- 3.13. Many of the clients came from a number of particularly vulnerable groups including care leavers (10 per cent), probationers (14 per cent) and users of adult mental health services (13 per cent).

Trailblazer services

First contact with the Trailblazer services

- 3.14. The ways in which people first come into contact with Trailblazer services varies hugely between schemes. Overall, most clients were referred either from within the council (such as the Housing Options team) or from another agency. Clients in Newham were contacted directly by the Trailblazer, and Camden and Bradford also contacted some of their clients directly, having established eligible clients from housing records or other agencies.
- 3.15. Some clients mentioned that they were surprised they had not been referred to the Trailblazer service any earlier by the Jobcentre Plus. It was also not uncommon for clients to state that they had approached the service following a recommendation from a friend or a family member.
- 3.16. Clients were asked why they had first approached the Trailblazer service. The reasons for approaching the Trailblazer service varied substantially between schemes, depending on their focus. Overall, wanting help finding work or training, or dealing with immediate housing problems and/or homelessness were the most common reasons. Relatively few people approached Trailblazer services seeking private rented housing, because they had problems with private landlords, or for general debt or money advice.
- 3.17. The types of Trailblazer services offered varied over the time clients were in the scheme as shown in Figure 6 below. Broadly, the housing-related support tended to dominate the early support given, whereas help finding work or training required more on-going work so formed a larger proportion of the work for those still receiving services at six months.

Figure 6: Trailblazer services provided at different stages



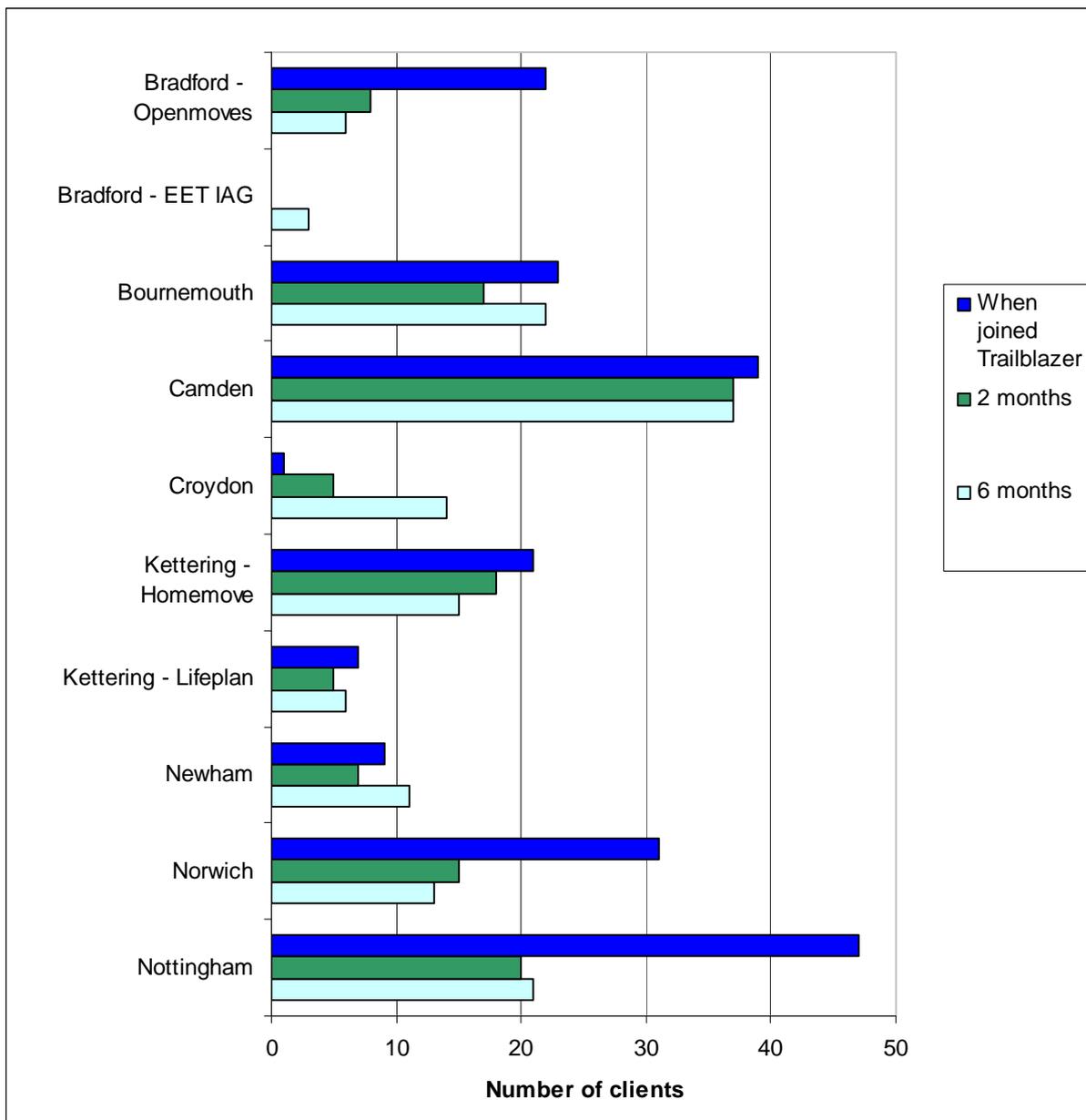
Housing objectives

- 3.18. The first two Trailblazer objectives concern meeting housing need with a wider range of solutions and using stock more effectively.
- 3.19. Meeting housing need with a wider range of solutions was a focus of most of the Trailblazer schemes we looked at, and a key part of the project in Bournemouth, Bradford Openmoves, Camden, Norwich and Nottingham. Camden, Kettering Homemove and Newham Trailblazers also had a particular focus on using stock more effectively by carrying out adaptations to properties and encouraging downsizing.

Looking for housing

3.20. When clients first joined the Trailblazer schemes, 72 per cent of them were looking for accommodation, either to move somewhere more suitable or because they were homeless or in temporary accommodation. The numbers looking for housing fell considerably over the first two months to just 48 per cent of clients, largely due to falls in Nottingham, Norwich and Bradford. Numbers remained broadly level between two and six months in all areas (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Number of Clients looking for housing

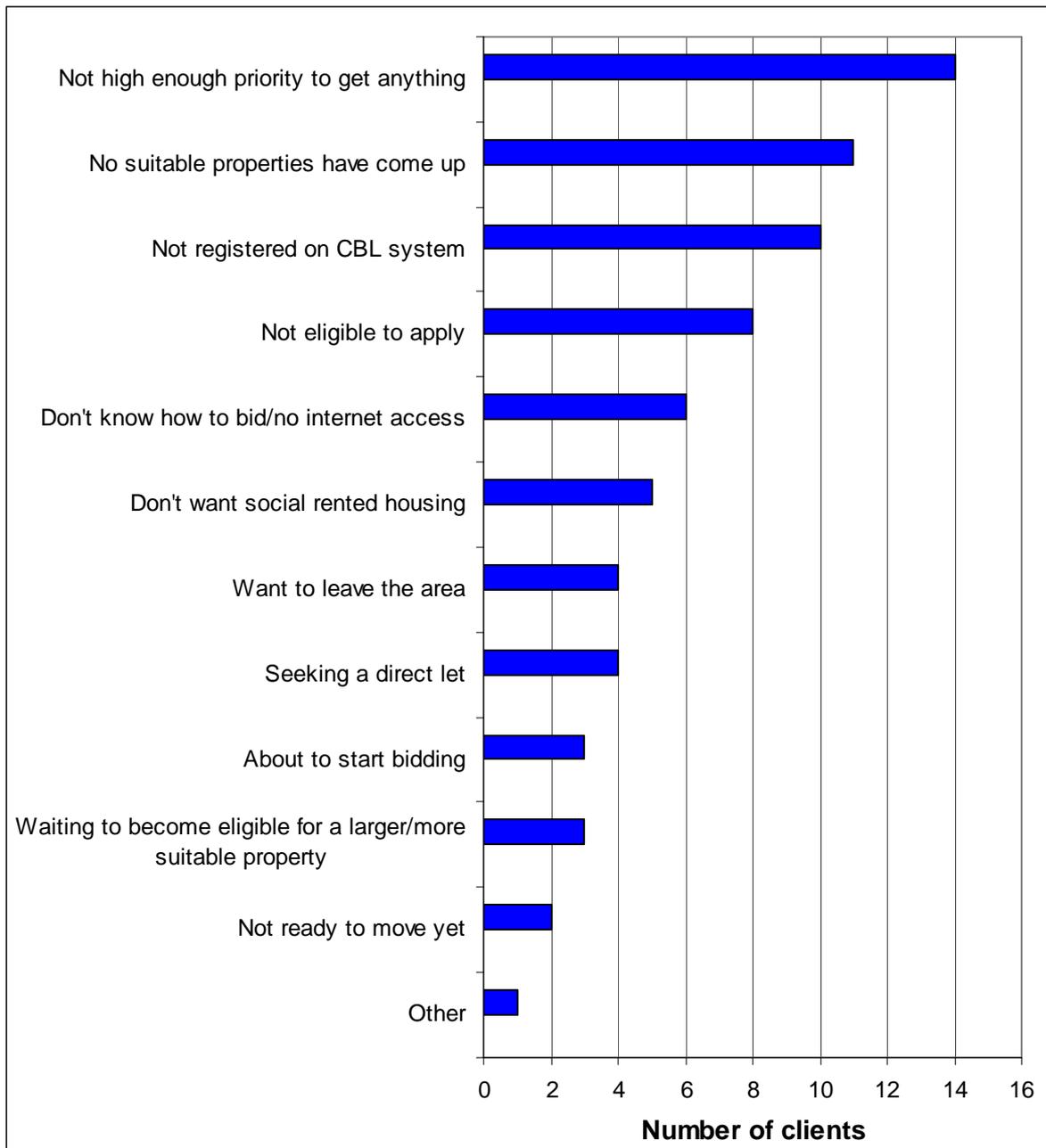


3.21. The large majority of home-seekers were looking for accommodation in the social rented sector, with 87 per cent stating that council housing was a preferred choice, and 39 per cent housing association properties. A minority

gave private rented housing as a preferred option (16 per cent) though a further 29 per cent were prepared to consider it.

3.22. Overall only 39 per cent of those who were looking for housing were actively bidding for properties. Figure 4 shows the main reasons why clients stated that they hadn't bid for any properties by the time of the six month interviews.

Figure 8: Reasons why clients hadn't bid for properties¹⁵



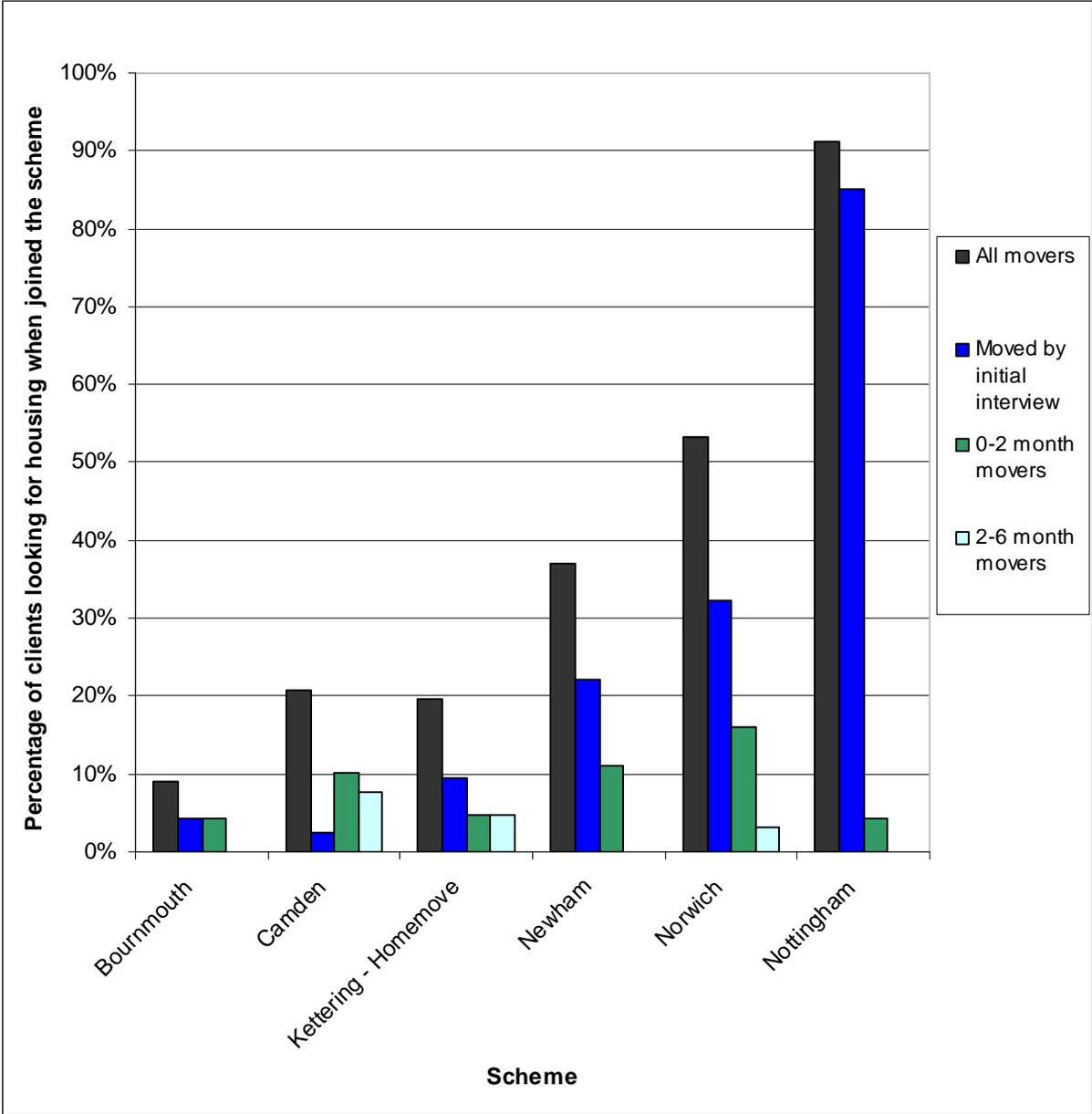
3.23. There was a mixture of reasons why clients didn't bid for properties, which varied between schemes. In Camden it was usually because clients were

¹⁵ Croydon does not operate a choice-based lettings system so has been excluded from this analysis as housing applicants were not required to actively bid for properties.

aware they weren't a high enough priority, whereas Kettering clients were more likely not to have seen any properties they liked. Problems getting registered and knowing how to bid on the choice-based lettings system also appeared to be a factor in several locations.

House movers

Figure 9: Clients assisted by the Trailblazers into new housing¹⁶



3.24. Housing problems tended to be addressed early on in clients' contacts with Trailblazer services or not at all. In total, 200 clients had been looking for housing when they first approached the Trailblazer. Of these, 57 had already

¹⁶ This figure excludes the Trailblazer schemes without a housing focus, where very few clients were looking for housing

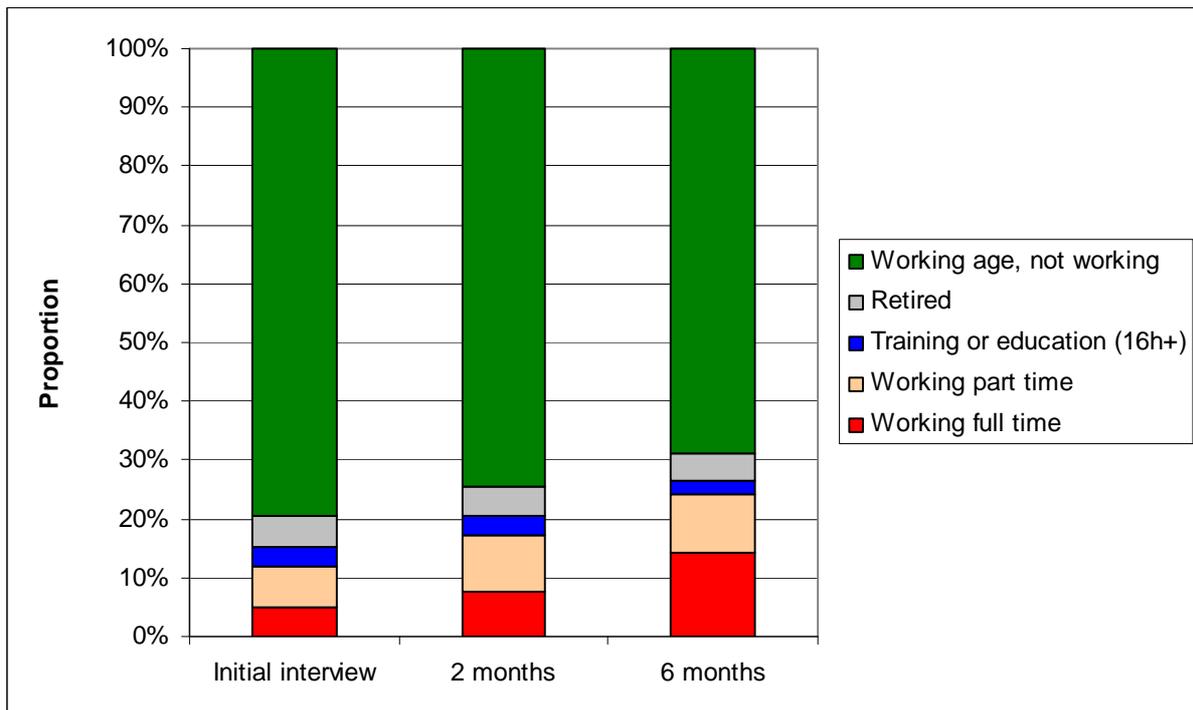
been assisted into accommodation by the time of the initial interview with the evaluation team. A further 75 clients moved home during the six months we tracked them, but only 21 of these to a home that the Trailblazer service had helped them to find. This is a fairly low proportion of the 200 clients who were looking for housing, resulting in only a modest decline in the numbers looking for accommodation by six months (148). However, as shown in Figure 9 above there was substantial variation between Trailblazer schemes in this respect.

- 3.25. The differing levels of success in finding clients accommodation in part reflects the differing nature of the Trailblazers aims and objectives. Nottingham and Norwich both helped clients to access private rented accommodation, whereas Camden, Newham and Kettering Homemove schemes were targeted at council tenants seeking more suitable homes within the social rented sector. Camden and Newham Trailblazers were both seeking alternative ways of alleviating housing need in an environment of extreme under-supply of social rented housing. The Bournemouth Trailblazer, although working with many clients who were homeless or in insecure accommodation, was essentially an employment-focused scheme.
- 3.26. In addition, the Camden, Newham and Nottingham Trailblazers were offering assistance to households to remain in their own home with the help of furniture or adaptations to alleviate overcrowding or improve mobility around the home. A total of 19 of the 108 clients tracked in these three schemes (18 per cent) received home improvements such as space saving furniture or mobility adaptations.

Tackling worklessness

- 3.27. Tackling worklessness and helping people into employment was one of the key objectives of the Trailblazer programme. The timing of the Trailblazer pilots did however pose difficulties for this aim, given the recession and overall rise in unemployment.

Figure 10: Economic status of Trailblazer clients



3.28. Nevertheless, there do appear to have been some success in the Trailblazer programmes. Overall, the proportion of working-age clients in either full or part-time work rose from 13 per cent at the initial interviews to 25 per cent by six months. Unlike the housing outcomes, these outcomes took time to be achieved with the largest increase in employment rates taking place between two and six months.

3.29. The largest increases in employment rates were in Bradford and Norwich. The numbers of clients who moved into work or who moved into training having previously been unemployed varied by scheme are taken to have improved their economic status and are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Numbers of clients improving their economic status during the six months of tracking

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Number improving economic status	8	2	10	2	6	0	1	5	9	13	56
Proportion of working age clients	36%	25%	27%	5%	17%	0%	7%	28%	29%	28%	20%

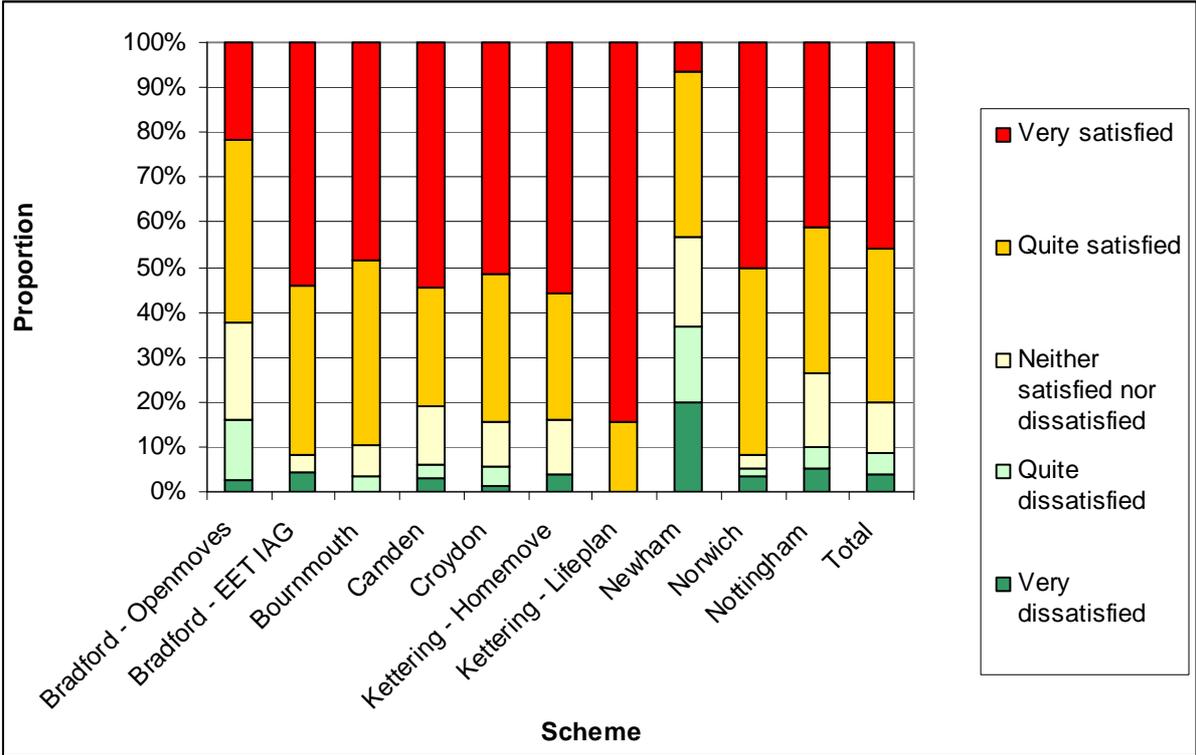
- 3.30. Overall, 20 per cent of working age trailblazer clients improved their economic status over the six months. In addition, there were some clients who had periods of employment or training during the six months but were out of work again by the six month point.
- 3.31. The opportunity to enter some form of vocational training was something that was warmly welcomed by many of the clients we tracked:
- 'If it wasn't for them I wouldn't have started this course and would have got kicked out [of a hostel]. This is the first time in over 16 years that I've actually finished something. This is the first time I'm not on benefits and I don't want to go back there.'* (Norwich client)
- 3.32. Many clients in the schemes addressing worklessness were people who'd had little previous opportunities to study for the kinds of jobs they wanted and welcomed the opportunities in fields such as childcare, nursing and IT as English language skills.

Improving customer service

Client satisfaction

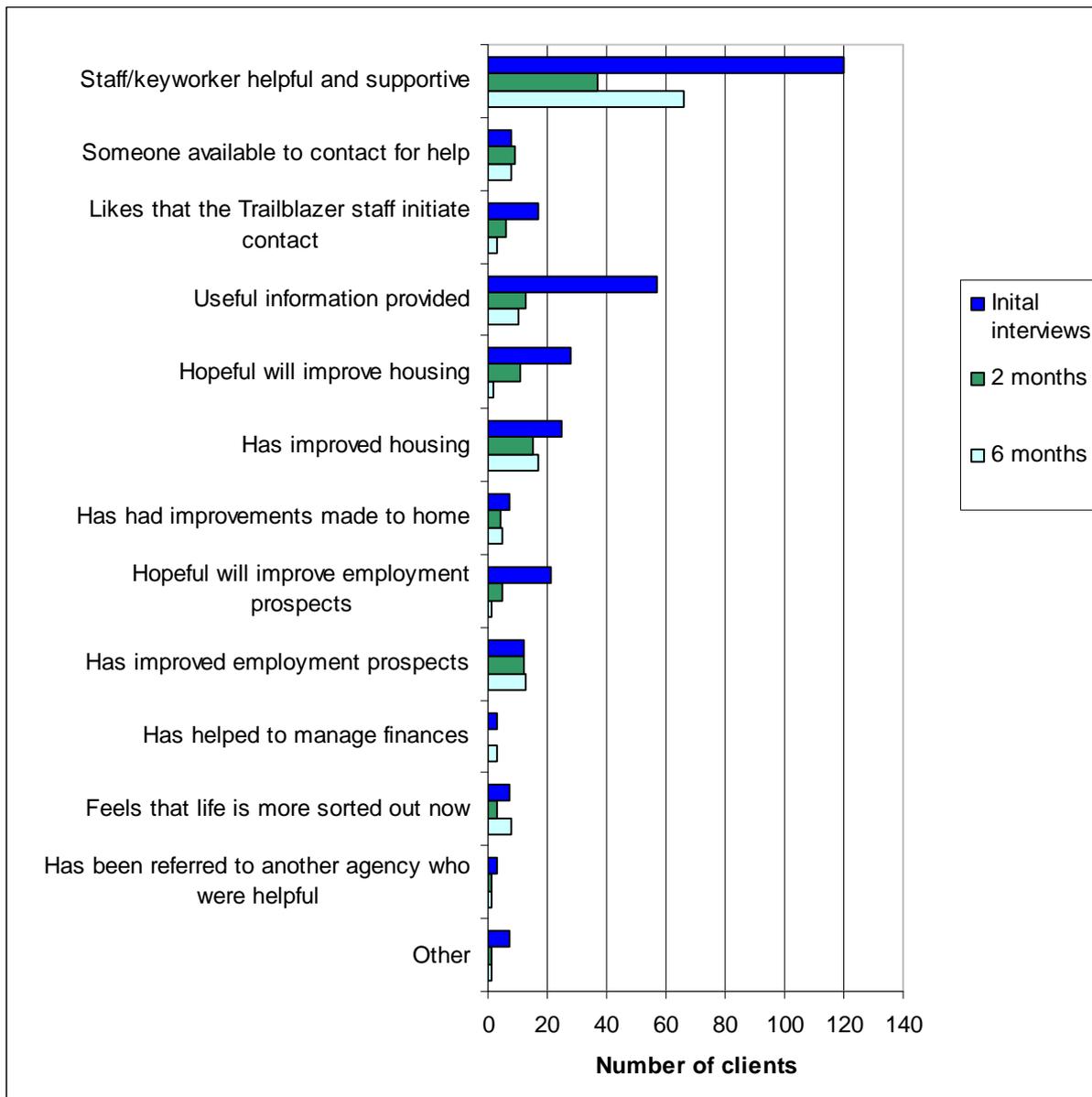
- 3.33. Clients were asked for their overall satisfaction with the Trailblazer services, on a scale of 1-5.
- 3.34. As can be seen from Figure 11, the majority of clients were satisfied, with 80 per cent across all schemes either satisfied or very satisfied. There was however some variation by scheme with clients of the Kettering Lifeplan the most satisfied and Newham clients the least.

Figure 11: Satisfaction of clients with trailblazer services



- 3.35. Clients were then asked in their own words why they were satisfied or not satisfied. A wide range of factors were mentioned as reasons for high satisfaction with Trailblazer services covering housing, employment and other aspects of the help provided.
- 3.36. The good interpersonal relationships the Trailblazer staff were able to form with their clients were one of the biggest reasons for high satisfaction rates, highlighting the importance of finding the right person for the job when targeting vulnerable populations. Some mentioned that they liked being able to contact staff when they needed them, and others that they liked the fact that staff would initiate contact with them, check how they were doing or get in touch about job opportunities.

Figure 12: Reasons for satisfaction with trailblazer services



3.37. Comments frequently highlighted how ‘nice’, ‘lovely’, ‘helpful’, ‘easily approachable’, ‘non-judgemental’, and ‘non-condescending’ the advisors were. In many instances the clients felt that they had got a lot out of the service before recordable outcomes had materialised. Factors such as ‘having someone to listen to you’, ‘having someone to pay attention’, ‘having the matter recognised’, ‘having someone interested in how you are doing’, were all mentioned as important by clients.

3.38. When the advisors were able to gain their clients’ trust, the clients felt cared for and motivated to overcome their problems and achieve their targets, or it just simply made them feel more ‘human’ and less as a ‘case’:

‘She doesn’t talk to me like a number but seems genuinely concerned.’ (Kettering Lifeplan Client)

'I came from the position of owning my own home and losing it so this whole process was new and they treated me on a humane level, as a human being and there was empathy with what was going on and what I was going through.' (Camden Client)

3.39. Some clients who had already been helped to 'move on' were keen to retain contact with the Trailblazer service 'to have someone to ring for advice' or 'to have a safety net to fall back on'. The kind of approach adopted by many of the Trailblazer programmes - allowing clients to remain with the service to receive ongoing support even after being referred to another agency or being moved on to stable housing - seemed to be much appreciated by clients.

3.40. Clients also appreciated the extent to which the Trailblazer staff would work on their behalf in between meetings, finding out about work or training opportunities for instance:

'They are trying to get me back into study and work and are trying very hard to find something to suit me.' (Croydon client)

3.41. Providing an integrated service and working across different aspects of clients' lives was also a particular strength of most of the Trailblazer projects. The client tracking exercise found many examples where improvements in one area had helped clients to make positive changes elsewhere:

'I went there wanting advice on one issue. From explaining this to [the Trailblazer representative] they were able to identify issues I had not noticed or considered about my situation. They have given me a completely different perspective.' (Bournemouth client)

3.42. Clients in Nottingham who found stable accommodation via the Bond Scheme were now able to focus on getting into work or training:

'I'm planning to start college in September on a beauty therapy course.'

'I'm planning to go to college in September to retake my GCSEs.'

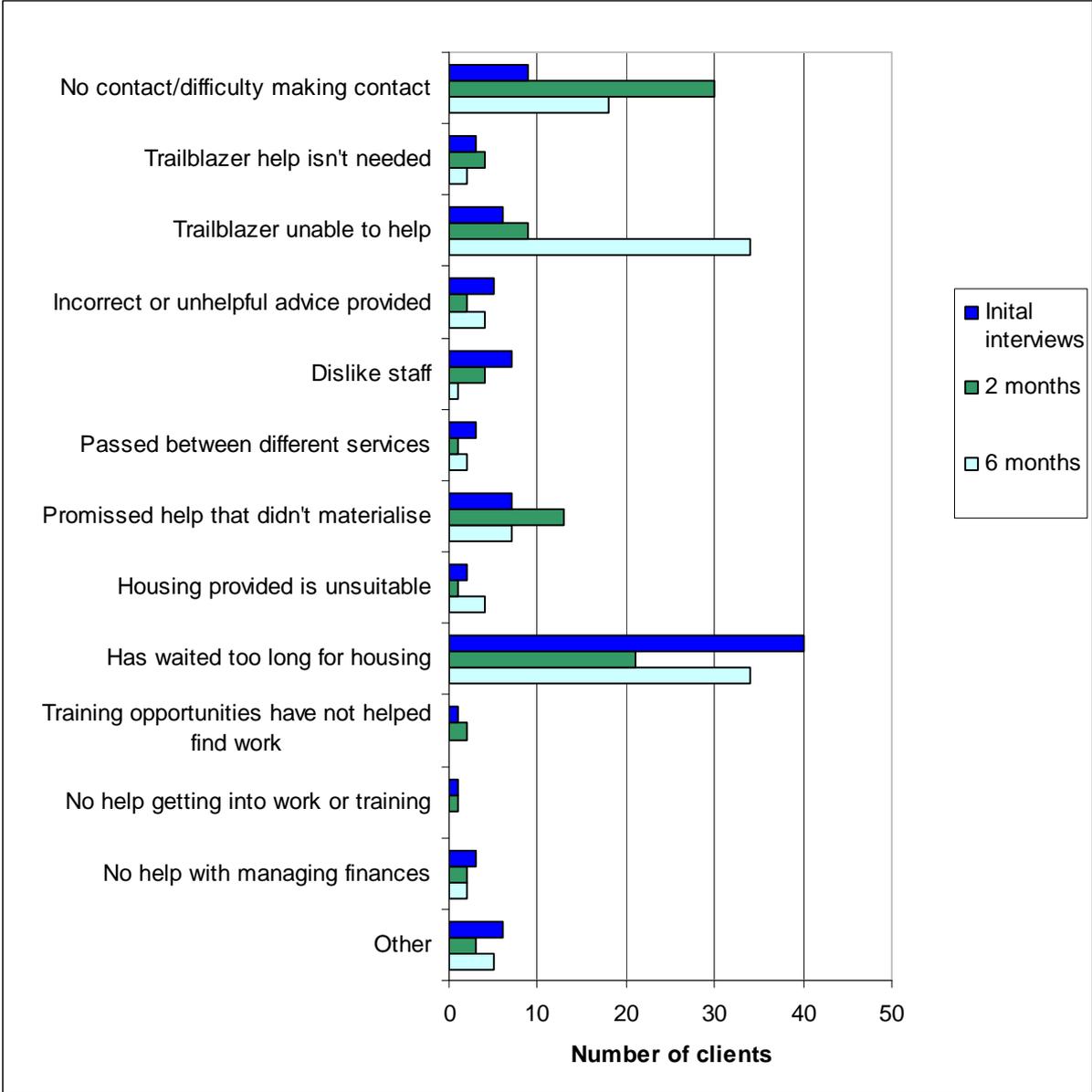
'I'm due to start a nursing course in September.' (Nottingham clients)

3.43. Others found that stable housing provided an incentive to avoid re-offending:

'[It] gave me that extra bit and stopped me thinking going to prison all the time. I've got something to lose now.' (Norwich client)

3.44. Reasons for negative ratings varied more between schemes and focused on poor communication, lack of solutions to problems, and having to wait too long for a positive outcome (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Reasons for dissatisfaction



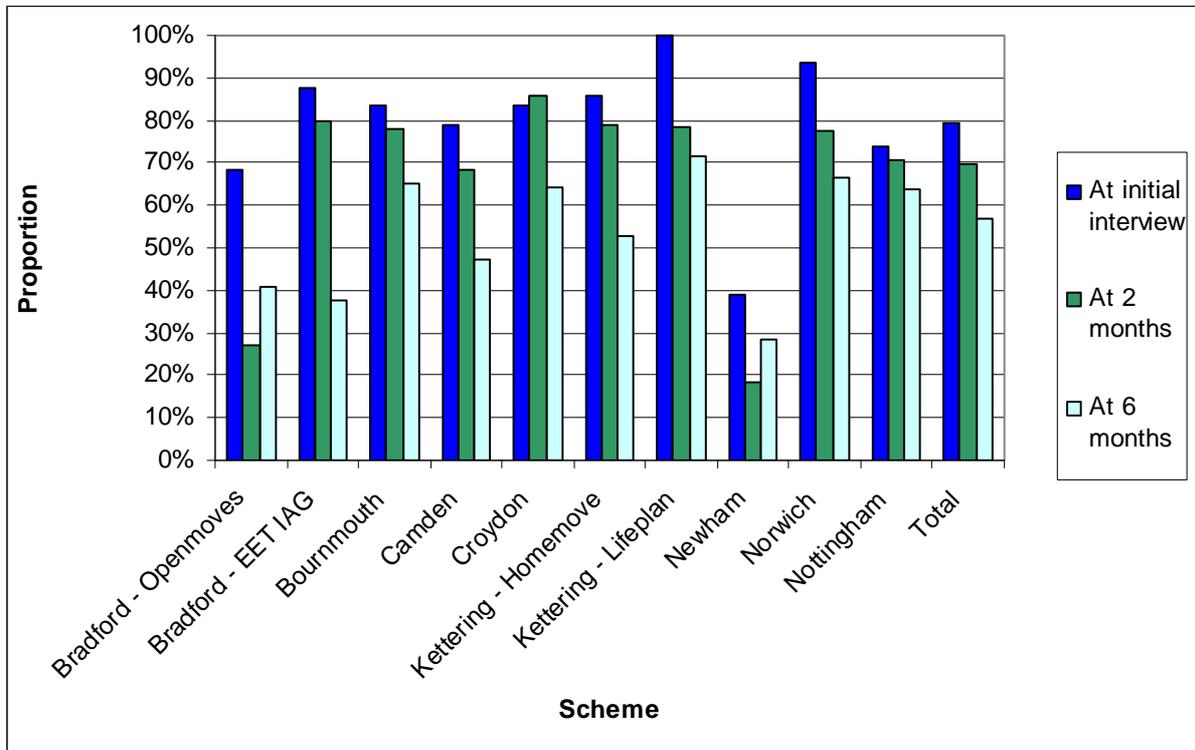
3.45. Satisfaction levels fell in every scheme over the course of the six months (Figure 14)¹⁷. Clients seemed to be initially keen on the idea and remit of the Trailblazer service, but had specific areas with which they wanted to receive help and were generally less happy after a few months if their expectations had not been met.

3.46. A failure to find suitable housing was a major reason for dissatisfaction with services. This may reflect the fact that, although clients were happy to receive help with employment and training opportunities, they had more specific expectations and hopes of the Trailblazer schemes in terms of housing outcomes, given that the schemes were run by housing

¹⁷ This finding cannot be explained by selection bias and drop out from the research programme because only clients who were interviewed at two and six months are included in the longitudinal analysis.

departments. It may also reflect a tendency to blame themselves or the overall state of the economy for difficulties finding work, but to focus on the housing allocation system (and therefore the council running the Trailblazer) for difficulties in obtaining (social) housing.

Figure 14: Percentage of clients satisfied or very satisfied with the Trailblazer service



3.47. As discussed above, there were many examples where Trailblazer support in one aspect of a client's life helped them make positive changes in another. The findings from the client tracking however also demonstrated the importance of getting the order of the different types of support right, and the failure to do so in all cases was one reason for clients expressing dissatisfaction with the service. A small number of clients felt that they needed to address other issues in their lives before being ready to look for new accommodation. For instance, one commented that he was in remission for cancer and wanted to get well first.

3.48. A larger group was prioritising the need for more suitable accommodation before they felt ready to look for work or training. Some Trailblazers, such as Nottingham's Bond Scheme, accommodated these needs by offering housing relatively quickly, whereas others focused from the start on addressing training and employment needs, which caused frustration to some clients in overcrowded or temporary accommodation who found studying difficult in such circumstances:

'You can't swing a cat in the room and I'm at college and I need a desk to study at but can't fit one in.' (Bournemouth client)

- 3.49. Camden, Newham and the Kettering Homemove scheme all focused on existing social tenants looking for more suitable housing. All of these schemes failed to move most of their clients into more suitable accommodation within the six months, a factor that caused some frustration amongst clients although some did benefit from adaptations to make their existing accommodation more suitable.

'She has advised us to bid on a one bed ground floor flat which we have points for, even though we need a two bed. A ground floor flat would be so much better as we are on the 15th floor of a tower block with a baby and five year old.' (Camden client)

'It sounded very good when it started up, but either they don't have the properties, or they are not putting enough effort into finding me something. You'd think they would put more effort in as I'm sitting here in a three bed house, you'd think they'd want that. The individual staff are all very nice but there just aren't the properties.' (Kettering client)

'My problem is that I need to get out of this house! I can't live here. No amount of adaptations will help me. I can't get in or out of the property. There are two flights of stairs and no lift... I can't get to the toilet, what will some grab rails do? It is not enough!' (Newham client)

- 3.50. The other main reason clients gave for being dissatisfied with the Trailblazer service across many of the schemes related to means of keeping in contact. Many schemes were initially pro-active about contacting clients, leading to expectations that this would continue. As staff workloads built up and, in some cases due to staff turnover, some clients found that they were no longer contacted. A lack of formal systems for moving people off the scheme meant that in some cases the clients were unsure whether or not they were still on the scheme and were reluctant to initiate contact themselves.
- 3.51. Overall, clients expressed high levels of satisfaction for the way in which the Trailblazer schemes were designed and their overall aims and objectives. The amount of support required varied considerably with some only requiring one-off advice or support for a few weeks (for instance whilst applying for a Bond scheme to access private rented housing) and were then able to progress in their own lives without further help. Other clients benefitted from the on-going support that staff were able to give them addressing issues across many aspects of their lives. Many clients appreciated the help given to them to get back into work or training and their responses at the six month interviews suggested that many were expecting to make further progress over the coming months in these areas.
- 3.52. In relation to housing, Trailblazers reliant on the limited supply of social housing appeared to find it more difficult to meet clients' hopes and expectations for more suitable accommodation. Those helping people into private rented housing enjoyed more success in this aspect.

4. Outputs and outcomes

The benefits of being a Trailblazer

- 4.1. A short web-based survey was carried out in October 2010 in order to find out the Trailblazers' views on how their projects had gone, lessons learnt and plans for the future.
- 4.2. Twenty-seven out of 42 Trailblazers completed the final evaluation online survey. Of these nine were Extra Trailblazers, 10 were Standard Trailblazers and eight were Kickstart Trailblazers, resulting in a fairly even spread of respondents across Trailblazer types.
- 4.3. Table 2 below sets out the responses to 12 statements regarding the effectiveness of Trailblazer funding and partnership working in achieving outputs and outcomes. Twenty-six Trailblazers answered this section of the survey although not all answered every question.
- 4.4. The vast majority of Trailblazers agreed that Trailblazer funding enhanced and improved various aspects of their Housing Options service, had helped people into employment, education or training and had enabled better partnership working. It is possible that those who disagreed did not implement the services in question as Trailblazer programmes were highly varied.

Table 2: Effectiveness of Trailblazer funding and partnerships

	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	N/A
Trailblazer funding helped us to improve or enhance Housing Options services	21	5				
Trailblazer funding enabled us to meet all our aims set out in the action plan	10	15		1		
Trailblazer funding enabled us to meet housing need with a wider range of solutions	10	11	1	1		
Trailblazer funding enabled us to use our housing stock more efficiently	7	8	7		1	3
Trailblazer funding has helped us enable people into education or training	16	6	4			
Trailblazer funding has helped us tackle worklessness by helping	12	9	3	1		

people into jobs						
Trailblazer funding has helped us improve customer service	13	10	1			
Trailblazer funding has enabled us to better meet the needs of vulnerable clients	14	9	2			
The status of being a Trailblazer has been beneficial to us	17	6	2			
Trailblazer funding enabled us to establish better referral arrangements between partners that are likely to be sustained in the future	14	8	2			
Trailblazer funding enabled us to establish new one stop access points and surgeries that are likely to be sustained in the future	6	9	6	1	1	2
Partnership arrangements established for the Trailblazer have led to new joint projects between the partners beyond the original Trailblazer	10	6	7	1		2

4.5. The survey went on to ask what elements of the Trailblazer service proved most successful and why. This question was open ended. Twenty-five Trailblazers responded and their answers could be categorised as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Most successful Trailblazer elements

Most successful Trailblazer elements	
Enabled vulnerable adults to get in touch with EET IAG	16
Enabled successful partnership working	12
Income maximisation advice	4
Outreach enabled increased take up of service	4
Engagement of hard to reach/vulnerable/BME/Gypsy/Travellers	5
Training housing advisors to take a holistic approach	3
Access to PRS/Rent deposit	3
Reduce offending	1
Mortgage rescue scheme	1

4.6. Enabling vulnerable adults to get in touch with employment, education or training information, advice and guidance, a service set up for the first time as part of their Trailblazer programme, and successful partnership working were both noted by many of respondents as having proved the most successful aspect of the Trailblazer projects:

‘Trailblazer funding has allowed us to launch two brand new services which are delivering improved outcomes for vulnerable clients’

‘Helping vulnerable people to access good quality private sector housing, bringing empty homes back into use, engaging with younger people to ensure better education and employment opportunities, introduced a skills for life project for young people...’

4.7. Conversely we also asked which elements of the Trailblazer service were not as successful as they would have liked and why. Again this question was open ended. 19 Trailblazers responded. Four Trailblazers noted that partnership arrangements had not worked as well as expected at the outset of the project.

Table 4: Less successful Trailblazer elements

Less successful Trailblazer elements	
Partnership arrangements have not worked as expected	4
Participants lower than expected/didn’t deliver anticipated benefits	2
Recession curtailed outcomes	2
Unable to achieve target outcomes	1
Lengthy implementation process	1
Emphasis on employment not always needed	1
Difficult to get feedback on successes	1
Working with private landlords has been challenging	1
Duplication with other partnerships/departments	1

Case study successes and challenges

4.8. The analysis of client tracking data in the previous section identifies both housing and employment outcomes for users. The case study data provides examples of these user outcomes and how they were achieved. It also highlights some of the challenges experienced by Trailblazers in meeting their original aims and objectives and the expectations of their clients.

Successes

- 4.9. There are five main ways in which the success of the Trailblazers was evidenced through the case study research:
- through increased take up of housing and employment services
 - through hard outputs and outcomes of getting people into training and jobs and improving their housing situation
 - through qualitative evidence of improved individual outcomes for clients
 - through organisational changes that promised to improve services into the future
 - through specific improvements that could be attributed to the partnerships set up as part of the Trailblazers programmes

INCREASED TAKE UP OF HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- 4.10. Many of the Trailblazer programmes had established new services or changed the way in which existing services were delivered in order to improve take-up, either in general or from specific excluded groups (e.g., ex-offenders, rural residents etc). A common measure of success was therefore based simply on recording service take up.
- 4.11. An example of improved take up of housing related services is provided by the LEAP project in Norwich which had managed to successfully engage over 200 individuals who were homeless and at risk of exclusion. In West Dorset the rural outreach service had been accessed by 190 clients while the new post-support service for older people had helped over 60 people to move home. In Islington the extension of the choice-based lettings system to include private landlords had resulted in 100 applicants bidding for private rented properties between August and October 2010.
- 4.12. A strong theme across the Trailblazers was to use housing advice and management services to make contact with people in need of employment and training support services. The rationale for this was summed up by the choice-based lettings provider in Islington, one of the two Trailblazers, (the other being Greenwich) which were seeking to use Choice Based lettings software to route large numbers of housing applicants to employment, education or training advice:
- '65 per cent of Islington's social housing tenants are out of work. 80 per cent of people use internet bidding so they can see the tab for training and employment'*
- 4.13. However, the need for services to dovetail with IT applications was provided by the Greenwich case where many choice-based lettings clients were clicking the link to employment information but there was no method of tracking how many of them secured information, advice and guidance on employment, education or training.

- 4.14. Many of the other Trailblazers had set up referral arrangements with Job Centre Plus, installed Job Centre Plus access points, or set up new services to provide employment, education or training information, advice and guidance to Housing Options clients. Here the evidence of success was strongest in the case of new tailored services such as Bournemouth's personalised support service to help clients become job ready. In the first six months 241 clients had received information, advice and guidance, including 60 who received advice on job search, 13 of them on interview skills and 23 on job applications. Eighty-seven were referred on to a job broker at Job Centre Plus. The added value of this service in increasing take up was demonstrated by the 55 referrals to Job Centre Plus that had not previously been in contact.
- 4.15. This added value was apparent in other case studies; for example in Camden 60 per cent of their Pathways for All clients (adult children of council tenants) who were economically inactive had engaged with employment, education or training support as a result of the Trailblazer programme.
- 4.16. Although Job Points were intended to be a key part of those Trailblazers with the Job Centre Plus package, the delays of up to a year in getting these up and running (discussed earlier in this report) and the decision to curtail evaluation work with case studies from July 2010 meant that it has not been possible to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these.

HARD OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES OF GETTING PEOPLE INTO TRAINING AND JOBS AND IMPROVING THEIR HOUSING SITUATION

- 4.17. While only 23 of the Trailblazers had submitted the individual evaluation indicators in spring 2010 (i.e. before this aspect of the evaluation was curtailed), the case studies identified some evidence of hard outputs and outcomes in relation to both employment and housing goals.
- 4.18. Employment and training outcomes were monitored by several Trailblazers. Croydon's Broadening Horizons programme had provided guidance to 175 people and enabled 13 to take up voluntary work, 58 further training and 23 to get jobs within six weeks of completing further training. Bradford had secured 100 work experience placements with 13 mainly public and third sector employers.
- 4.19. Housing outcomes were also evidenced. Camden had relieved overcrowding in some way for 40 per cent of overcrowded households on the housing register; within this group, 9 per cent had moved to more suitable accommodation either through choice-based lettings or into the private rented sector. Islington's under-occupation officer had enabled 166 households to downsize, and 150 of these released accommodation for larger households to relieve overcrowding; 350 people who had been in overcrowded accommodation moved into suitably sized homes as a result.
- 4.20. A common aim of several projects was to increase access to private rented accommodation. The Nottingham Trailblazer claimed considerable success in this regard through its rent guarantee and supported bond schemes. But

in this case take up was hit by a rival initiative (a supported housing diversion scheme) which was proving more attractive to landlords, highlighting the need to strategically manage local market interventions.

- 4.21. Multiple outcomes were achieved by projects combining housing, employment and other goals such as avoiding re-offending, as in the LEAP project in Norwich. This project has seen 221 clients and helped 83 into work focused activity, while 23 had secured jobs and 43 private rented accommodation through the programme. It had housed 19 ex-offenders in private tenancies in its first 12 months, and 11 had retained tenancies and avoided re-offending after 18 months.

QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE OF IMPROVED INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES FOR CLIENTS

- 4.22. The client tracking data has identified the generally positive impacts of the enhanced services on clients' lives and this aspect was also emphasised by the Trailblazers themselves.

- 4.23. This was summed up by staff in Bournemouth who felt that the key to success was the opportunity to make a real difference by employing workers with the necessary time and skills:

'It is this type of 'invisible' help that really makes a difference and turns around people's lives. Clients felt that they were treated with dignity and respect and that 'nothing was too much for them'.

- 4.24. Similarly staff in Greenwich focused on soft outcomes including success in engaging with a vulnerable group and helping make changes to their lives. In Newham the appointment of an Occupational Therapist to the Trailblazer team led to an increase in the number of disabled clients, with emergency priority, who were rehoused. This had been achieved through links with the clients' Occupational Therapists previously, but there was a concern that other clients without regular Occupational Therapist support were missing out in the absence of an alternative route to securing appropriate housing, which the Trailblazer now provides.

- 4.25. The cases studies have shown that careful targeting and design of projects to meet the needs of specific client groups has sometimes led to very positive outcomes. This was something that would have been unlikely in hard pressed generalist Housing Options services without the opportunity created by the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers programme.

Organisational changes with promise to improve services into the future

- 4.26. In some cases the success of the Trailblazers was in providing the opportunity for participants to try something new and to set the conditions for a step change to improve services into the future.
- 4.27. Investment in new systems for identifying and allocating properties adapted for people with disabilities (Newham), to create a specialist housing and

support service for people with learning disabilities (South West London), to expand choice-based lettings systems to include the private rented sector (Islington) and to steer applicants to employment, education or training information, advice and guidance (Islington and Greenwich) are clearly in this category.

- 4.28. Changing the location of the service was seen as a major success in increasing access for clients in several cases. The Doorways Centre in Halifax was seen as successful in enabling residents to access a variety of services under one roof in an attractive and welcoming environment, thereby delivering the Council's 'tell it once' approach. In four other cases access to services was decentralised to outreach locations at specific estates in Nottingham and Islington, to three outlying locations in Bradford and to rural locations in West Dorset. In each case there were successes in reaching groups of people who had not previously been accessing Housing Options services; although the Islington and Nottingham estate based services had taken longer to get established.
- 4.29. Finally, Trailblazers had been successful in changing organisational culture. This was apparent in Greenwich where staff in Housing Options now have a wider perception of their role:

'previously it [Housing Options] was all about maximising people's benefits, not maximising their employment possibilities'.

Specific improvements that could be attributed to the partnerships set up as part of the Trailblazers programmes

- 4.30. A key test of partnership working is whether it results in any tangible benefits to services. A number of the case studies attributed some of their successes to the partnerships that had been established with other agencies. This is discussed alongside other evidence in the following chapter.
- 4.31. Calderdale and West Dorset Trailblazers had been based on strong existing partnerships with local agencies including stock transfer housing associations, which meant that existing links and resources were effectively utilised to provide as holistic and comprehensive support as possible.
- 4.32. In Blackpool a tangible success was achieved through mobilising partners on the Homelessness Forum to publicise the Trailblazer activities and to attract support for initiatives such as the work experience placement programme which quickly established 100 six month employment placements with 13 local partners.
- 4.33. The ongoing importance of such partnership links was highlighted by the LEAP project in Norwich where improved collaboration between agencies was expected to lead to joint bids which was seen as *'a viable option to ensure continuation of services at a time when cuts in funding are likely'*.

Challenges

- 4.34. Alongside these successes the case study research raised a number of challenges which can be broadly grouped as:
- set up and exit challenges
 - client related challenges
 - the challenging wider context

SET UP AND EXIT CHALLENGES

- 4.35. In any time limited programme such as the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers key challenges arise particularly at the points of setting up and exiting from the programme
- 4.36. Some of the main set up problems related to attracting and building understanding with partners and recruiting the right staff to deliver the Trailblazer aims. These problems were well illustrated in Bradford:
- ‘Running a project as fragmented and ambitious as the Trailblazer in Bradford is challenging, especially in a context where all services are contracted out’.*
- 4.37. This had led to a slow procurement process and delays in getting projects off the ground, which made it difficult to assess success.
- 4.38. Challenges in attracting and building understanding between partners are best illustrated by common problems found across the Trailblazers in building effective local relationships with Job Centre Plus. For example, the Job Centre Plus Job Point in Bournemouth took a long while to install and even when up and running was hardly used and so did not achieve its original purpose (i.e. for potential clients to access Job Centre Plus services) as most of their clients were not ready enough to look for work. In Tunbridge Wells and Rother early problems with referrals and transfer of information between councils and third sector (Citizen’s Advice Bureaux and Royal British Legion Industries) partners were tackled through dialogue and shared understanding of roles and activities.
- 4.39. There were variable experiences in involving private landlords in Trailblazer activities. While some cases attracted good levels of participation (e.g. Norwich’s LEAP work with ex-offenders, and Islington’s choice-based lettings access to private rented properties), others found it harder to attract private landlords.
- 4.40. Staff recruitment and retention problems figured in several of the Trailblazers including Bradford and Islington where estate outreach posts proved particularly problematic to fill and retain. Croydon’s Broadening Horizons programme experienced similar difficulties where the project struggled to identify people with the appropriate skills as careers information advisers. Projects also encountered problems in retaining key staff, and in some cases

progress was hampered by long term sickness of key staff members (always a potential risk where progress is dependent on a few individuals).

- 4.41. In relation to exit, it appears that few of the Trailblazers have secured continuation funding in a period of large scale public spending reductions. This is a major concern to Trailblazers given that their key contribution was to enable service levels to be improved and extended, but without continuation funding it seems unlikely that these improvements will be sustained. Even social enterprise models based on trading income and thus reliant on fees from other organisations (such as the Golden Lane scheme in South West London matching people with learning difficulties to private landlords and support packages) are partly or mainly dependent on public budgets for commissioning the services provided.
- 4.42. Challenges of continuing the service after the Trailblazer were tackled in some cases by embedding new ways of working through staff training both within Housing Options and in partner agencies. The Blackpool Trailblazer has left a legacy of a framework of information on work experience placements and supporting training that can be used by other local authorities. In other cases the use of part of the Trailblazer budget to invest in IT applications has helped to deliver services in new ways.

CLIENT RELATED CHALLENGES

- 4.43. Many of the Trailblazers deliberately focused their work on clients whose needs were not being met by mainstream services. In a number of Trailblazers the aim was to increase client take up of services through different types of delivery (and some successes in this respect have been outlined above). Other Trailblazers were based on the premise that a variety of client needs could be met through the common access gateway of Housing Options services.
- 4.44. The Nottingham Trailblazer illustrates some of the learning arising from focusing on 'challenging clients'. The Life Coaching experience project with long term unemployed ex-offenders and homeless people was discontinued because it proved difficult to track clients' outcomes over time. Meanwhile the intensive one-to-one employment broker service delivered high quality job outcomes but only assisted a small number of people and was also found to duplicate services offered by other providers.
- 4.45. The experience of take up for new services such as outreach provision for excluded groups was quite variable. Several Trailblazers shared the Nottingham experience of quite low volumes of customers for new services. Kettering found it difficult to attract sufficient clients to some tenancy training courses and to maintain attendance; its Homemove scheme had also attracted fewer tenants than anticipated partly because many of the tenants registered were older people who did not have access to the internet so staff had to help them to bid for properties by phone.
- 4.46. A further problem arose in relation to client throughput. Greenwich's Housing Options Plus service to vulnerable adults found that clients a long way from

the workforce needed ongoing support. Unless there is provision for referrals to longer term support, these caseloads rapidly use up the capacity of available staff.

- 4.47. A key challenge arising from linking housing and employment and training support that recurred across the case studies is the question of the best timing of interventions to meet client needs. Kettering's Lifeplan scheme providing flexible one-to-one support to unemployed people was found to work best where people were ready to make changes to their lives. Croydon's Broadening Horizons programme found that a significant number of clients referred were not ready to engage in education, training or employment advice as they needed to resolve their housing issues before they could consider anything else. Hostel residents were more willing to engage after they were settled and ready for the next steps.
- 4.48. Similarly in Bournemouth, clients needed to be ready in order to benefit. Here, there was a need to address ex-offenders' drug and alcohol problems alongside housing needs but before employment and training needs. However, a fast track private renting scheme was available for job ready prison leavers in return for signing up for training and employment.

THE WIDER CONTEXT

- 4.49. The case study research drew attention to external challenges relating to the wider social, political and financial context. Programmes focused on alleviating housing need and worklessness were clearly affected by the wider economy and the state of local labour and housing markets.
- 4.50. In Blackpool, programmes to address worklessness had been affected by the economic climate and it was anticipated that public sector cuts and knock on effects for third sector organisations that were providing the majority of work experience placements would affect the sustainability of the programme and potential to disseminate to other authorities. In Camden it was expected that the Pathways for All programme would continue but with reduced funding in the future.
- 4.51. In Norwich, eligibility criteria and delays in processing Housing Benefit have presented challenges when working with unemployed clients. Changes to welfare allowances following the Comprehensive Spending Review will have impacts on work with clients who are unable to access the labour market within the first year of support from the project.
- 4.52. Sometimes there were barriers associated with different eligibility criteria for services arising from the different statutory basis of services such as the different age criteria (under 19s for certain purposes, under 25s for others) affecting Greenwich's integrated young people's service.

SUMMARY

- 4.53. In summary the Trailblazers programme was able to evidence considerable success in relation to enhanced or innovative services that were generally

appreciated by clients. In some cases it provided for step changes in services and lasting partnerships that are likely to survive into the future. Success was limited by challenges inherent to short term programmes, particularly associated with set up and exit. There were further challenges in the ability to engage with the most excluded clients, to achieve anticipated take up of services and to achieve the right sequencing of housing, employment and training and other interventions. Fundamentally the success of the Trailblazers was affected by the national and local context in which they operated.

5. Partnerships and other key processes

The importance of partnerships

- 5.1. The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme was established on the basis of testing out a partnership approach to addressing the complex and interrelated needs of clients, particularly in relation to housing circumstances and worklessness.
- 5.2. Five Extra Trailblazers were set up with a formal relationship between the local authority and Job Centre Plus. Others have developed partnerships with a range of agencies especially those providing employment, education and training services and housing and other support services for vulnerable groups (e.g. hostels, probation service).
- 5.3. As shown in Table 2 in the previous chapter, Trailblazers felt partnerships had helped improve referral arrangements as part of the Trailblazer service and led to new joint projects between the partners beyond the original Trailblazer.

Nature and management of local partnerships

- 5.4. All of the case studies involved partnerships between Housing Options and other statutory and third sector partners; in some cases there were also effective partnership arrangements with private sector organisations including private landlords and training providers. There were, however, quite big differences in the numbers of partners involved and the level of their involvement in funding, planning and operating the Trailblazer services. The case study pen portraits (Appendix 2) each include a paragraph on the strengths and weaknesses of local management of projects and partnerships illustrating issues that often arise in partnership working.

Management strengths and weaknesses

- 5.5. The need to promote openness, overcome mistrust and build engagement of partners from the earliest stages (Kicker et al 1999) is a well known principle of network management. The relevance of network management is demonstrated by the experiences of several Trailblazers in engaging with Job Centre Plus, leading to the recommendation to *'present your scheme to all potential partners at the earliest opportunity'* (Bournemouth). Similarly in Islington the Trailblazer has overcome poor prior links between the council's regeneration department which delivers employment initiatives and local housing associations:

'Prior to the Trailblazer there was little joined up thinking between the two. Since then it has led to data sharing and referral opportunities'.

- 5.6. The ability to harness contributions of expertise, staff time and use of premises from partners is illustrated by a number of Trailblazers, notably the Doorways Centre in Halifax and Calderdale Council's 'tell it once' approach. Calderdale residents are now able to access a variety of housing, employment and financial advice under one roof in an attractive and welcoming environment.
- 5.7. The long term benefit of effective partnerships for service co-ordination was testified to by the improved data sharing and referral processes reported by several Trailblazers. In Tunbridge Wells and Rother, closer integration between Housing Options, Citizen's Advice Bureaux and Royal British Legion Industries had reduced waiting periods and prevented homelessness by enabling people to get advice sooner. The strength provided by strong partnerships in providing opportunities to put together joint bids to ensure continuation of services in the face of future funding cuts, was shown in Norwich.
- 5.8. The LEAP project in Norwich had exceeded initial expectations in numbers of clients engaged and housed and their satisfaction. This was attributed by the evaluation to the well defined scope of the project, through planning and preliminary preparations prior to the commencement of service delivery. Furthermore the project benefited from a structure that enabled frontline staff to engage with the management of the project; they had found the right people, trained them and given them flexibility over budgets to meet small costs on an ad hoc basis. This had enabled them in turn to build trust with clients. The experience of the worklessness adviser had shown that *'the importance of the quality of the first contact can hardly be overestimated as it often determines the client's willingness to truly engage'*.

Stages of partnership development and issues

- 5.9. The success of the Trailblazer partnerships can be considered in relation to four main stages and activities
- getting started
 - developing collective a collective approach
 - bringing in new partners to increase expertise or impact
 - problems in attracting and engaging key partners and
 - problems in aligning priorities and activities with some partners even after they had been engaged

Getting started

- 5.10. Pre-existing partnerships were generally more effective in getting new services off the ground than were those established at or after the start of the Trailblazers programme. West Dorset Trailblazer was able to make effective use of existing links with employment and training, floating support, care and repair and housing association partners established prior to the

project to engage these partners in the design and development of new services from the start.

- 5.11. Prior network links were also apparent in Camden where all three strands (focusing on existing tenants, homeless households and other housing applicants) built on existing work with a wide range of partners (including Surestart, Camden Working (an information, advice and guidance and training provider), WISH (a community safety organisation), Early Years Employability Team and Consumer Financial Education (formerly part of FSA). This enabled the Trailblazer to hit the ground running and harness existing budgets (only the Pathways for All strand working with existing tenants was funded directly from the Trailblazers programme).

Developing a collective approach

- 5.12. This positive experience can be contrasted with some common difficulties faced in developing partnerships, agreeing priorities and making appointments to get some of the other Trailblazers off the ground. For projects with less prior grounding, the advice emerging from the Bournemouth Trailblazer is very apposite: *'Present your scheme to all potential partners at the earliest opportunity, at a meeting with a presentation and the opportunity to ask questions'*. Somewhat ruefully reflecting on a slow start it was observed that this advice *'could save valuable time by getting people fully on board from the start'*.

Bringing in new partners

- 5.13. The benefits of bringing in new partners to add expertise and increase impact is illustrated by the ambitious South West London Disability Homefinder project in which the seven participating boroughs eventually engaged with two charities and a lettings agent to tackle the problems faced by people with learning disabilities in choosing a place to live.
- 5.14. The problems that can arise in attracting the required types of partner are illustrated by the experiences of the Trailblazers in engaging with private landlords. While many of them aspired to improve access of Housing Options clients to suitable private rented accommodation, there was variable success in achieving this goal. This was particularly the case where the aim was to extend access to groups who had traditionally been excluded.
- 5.15. Attempts to adapt accredited landlord schemes or bond schemes for more excluded groups such as people with mental health, substance misuse problems or ex-offenders had met with some difficulties in attracting private landlords. In Nottingham, the supported bond scheme had enjoyed some success until a rival supported housing diversion scheme offering greater incentives had captured the attention of interested landlords. Bournemouth had been more successful than many in this regard, having forged a partnership with a local landlord prepared to provide housing to ex-offenders. The scheme aims within 48 hours of release to get ex-prisoners to sign up

for employment, education or training, get an appointment with Job Centre Plus, the keys to a flat, a crisis loan and a mobile phone.

- 5.16. Similar success was claimed by Islington for its 'extending choice across tenure' project to include private rented properties within the choice based lettings scheme. There had been a lot of work to engage private landlords and this resulted in 100 applicants bidding for private rented properties between the extended system going live in August 2010 and case study interviews in October. This contrasted with the experience of other Trailblazers such as Calderdale who had experienced problems in gaining the interest of private landlords in taking part in the choice based lettings scheme.

Aligning activities and priorities

- 5.17. A final example of partnership working relates to the difficulties in aligning the activities and priorities of different partners. This was illustrated across several partnerships by relationships between the Trailblazers and Jobcentre Plus.
- 5.18. Plans to establish Job Points (phone links to Job Centre Plus advisers) in Housing Options offices were included in several Trailblazers including Camden, Nottingham and Calderdale. However, there were considerable delays in installing these links and Job Centre Plus was often seen as the 'silent partner' when trying to solve these problems jointly.
- 5.19. Explanations for this lack of effective engagement may simply reflect the Trailblazers' starting at a time of rising unemployment when competing programmes were requiring Job Centre Plus's attention, or the relatively low importance of housing access routes compared with others to the Job Centre Plus service. In one case it was the absence of previous relationships between Job Centre Plus and Housing Options that was thought to explain cool initial relations; this in turn meant that partners were unsure of each others' aims and objectives and feared the loss of funding for their own agencies. This suggests more fundamental barriers to partnership and the failure to heed some of the lessons about sharing aspirations and plans from the start and maintaining good communication throughout that were apparent in some of the more successful partnerships outlined above.

Management, monitoring and accountability

Management

- 5.20. Fourteen Trailblazers that responded to the recent on-line survey answered questions about how successfully they felt their project had been managed and identified specific strengths and weaknesses. Eleven felt their project had been well managed, though two felt that senior managers could have been more involved and one had found it challenging to engage front line staff with the service.

5.21. In terms of strengths, three specific strengths of Trailblazer management arrangements were commonly noted:

- advice from DCLG/Regional Resource Advisors
- they were able to maintain a good strategic overview
- most targets were exceeded and the projects were running to budget

'The monitoring meetings kept us focused on the objectives and outcomes. The advice given was always acted upon and examples of good practice were helpful'

'We retained management in-house, this meant we had a good strategic overview, but didn't always have time to devote to managing the Trailblazer'

5.22. Difficulties for managing the Trailblazers had arisen in terms of:

- timing of job descriptions for Trailblazer staff
- late implementation of the projects

'We would in the future make sure that all job descriptions were agreed after the scoping of the project. This was an area in which caused some issues due to them being decided before the project was set up'

'The action plan was slightly off target to start with, and the project was late getting off the ground. Careful management and revision/implementation of the action plan bought the action plan up to date and this has bought the project to speed. One strength was the innovative use of triage to simply and easily identify customers with early housing issue'

'I do not think that originally the bid writers/ decision makers got the middle managers onboard with the project. It was seen as a project within Housing Options, rather than a Housing Options project, so it was more challenging to get front line staff engaged with the project'

Monitoring and accountability

5.23. Although Trailblazers were not specifically asked about their working relationship with DCLG quite a few interpreted the question about project management to be referring to the monitoring arrangements with DCLG. There were mixed views about the monitoring arrangements. While some Trailblazers found the monitoring meetings useful, as highlighted above, others mentioned dissatisfaction with the amount of monitoring required:

'The only criticism we have is that monitoring was very intensive and we were treated the same as all other projects although we

didn't receive full Trailblazer funding (£40,000 per annum Kickstart funding for 2 years.'

'The scale of monitoring at times has been difficult. This has included recording for CLG and Cambridge.' (Extra Trailblazer)

'The steer from CLG [on monitoring] was too inflexible, with little attention being paid to the local desires of the project.' (Standard Trailblazer)

- 5.24. Although not all Trailblazers found the monitoring requirements problematic, those reporting difficulties included all three types of Trailblazer, indicating that the challenge felt was not dependant on the amount of funding received. Case study research and feedback on a workshop run by the evaluation team to support Trailblazers in identifying outcomes and indicators and collecting data both raised issues of staff resources and analytical capacity as being more relevant.

6. Value for money

- 6.1. The objective of any value for money assessment is to identify the additional costs associated with the project on the one hand and to identify and value the outputs and outcomes on the other. However there are also issues of process as well as other objectives – such as sustainability.
- 6.2. It was never the intention to assess the overall value for money achieved from the Enhanced Trailblazers programme because the projects included in the programme were so diverse; because the Trailblazers were only asked to collect information against certain targets rather than in relation to all outputs and outcomes; because there is little available evidence on counterfactuals – i.e. what would have happened without the particular scheme; and because the assessment has to be done part way through the funding period, so while most costs to the public purse can be identified, the outputs and outcomes will be spread over then next months and years.

Evidence on process

- 6.3. The programme was not set up in a way which made it possible to ascertain certain basic monitoring information across all Trailblazers – notably with respect to whether particular projects went ahead; whether the funding was used to timetable; and whether the projects were able to address the issues as identified in the original specifications. This information is available mainly only at case study level. Moreover, the methodology of the evaluation project was chosen to ensure that it would be possible to learn from success – so the case studies and particularly the client tracking areas may be biased towards the more successful programmes.
- 6.4. The evidence from the case studies (appendix 2) suggests that there was a high level of compliance in terms of implementation although timetables sometimes had to be changed and in some cases the Trailblazers learned by experience to modify the projects. The two most obvious problems were that some projects took more time than expected to get underway; and that the numbers of clients that were expected to be involved were lower than projected – although in most cases these numbers have picked up over time. In one or two cases there has been management failure –because of the complexity of the project and/or because of turnover of staff and loss of skills. On the other hand in some cases it was possible to identify additional benefits notably to do with working with other agencies to reduce costs of delivery and to develop good practice.
- 6.5. One programme objective on which there was detailed evidence from the case studies was with respect to securing additional and on-going funding. The evidence suggests that it has been possible in 12 cases to identify additional sources of funding but these were all from government and agencies and reflected partnership working. A number of Trailblazers have stated that they would wish to continue successful projects using their own

general funding into the future. However the extent to which this will actually be possible could not be independently assessed. Sustainability is therefore an important ongoing issue.

Evidence from client tracking

- 6.6. The evidence on services provided (figure 6) suggests that the projects were generally successful in providing services, particularly on initial contact but also at two months and six months.
- 6.7. The services are clearly focused on the main objectives of the Trailblazer approach: providing housing training and job seeking support. The additional services provided after initial contact appear to be concentrated on the training and employment information and support. The qualitative evidence suggests that clients would not generally have received such focused and comprehensive assistance from elsewhere but it is not possible directly to assess what help the clients would have received if the projects had not been in place.
- 6.8. The most important finding from the client tracking evidence is that one in five of clients improved their economic status through being in employment at the end of the six months tracking period. In addition some clients had periods of employment during the period.
- 6.9. There is no available evidence of which we are aware on what the probability would be of improving chances of a similar group of people outside the programme so we have not attempted a direct valuation of this very positive outcome.

Value for money of particular programmes

- 6.10. It is generally relatively easy to identify the additional financial costs – although there may be some uncertainties about exactly what the alternative use of the resource might have been (e.g. when a manager takes on an additional responsibility). Estimating values is far more problematic. If what is mainly available is output information – e.g. how many people actually attend a training course or how many people actually take part in the programme – e.g. are given information – it should in principle be possible to assess the cost per unit of that output. This however gives very little information about the real value for money as this depends on the outcomes for clients, suppliers and government. Outcomes are far more difficult to identify and evaluate notably because it may be no part of the programme to track results past a certain point (e.g. providing information); in part because the detail is not available to assess the savings to the public purse. The examples attempt to give some interim assessment of these outcomes and their value.

- 6.11. Appendix 4 provides exemplification from three Enhanced Trailblazers – Kettering, Nottingham and Norwich.
- 6.12. Kettering involves four distinct strands which have been assessed separately because the assumptions required are so different. In three cases it was possible to make some assessment of saving based on evidence from the managers and from the client tracking evidence. In one case – tenancy training courses – the costs can be identified at £11,745 per year. However there is no direct way of assessing whether identified potential savings have actually occurred.
- 6.13. The three strands where annual costs and savings can be estimated suggest:

Strand	Costs (£)	Savings (£)
Lifepan	33,529	141,160
Homemove	41,325	68,188
Outreach work	11,849	546,948

- 6.14. The biggest savings come from successful placement in work; the transfer from hostels to rented accommodation and possible reduced re-offending. In all cases there is no direct evidence on probabilities so these are simply exemplification. However they do suggest that the potential benefits from both Lifepan and particularly Outreach are very large indeed. The benefits of downsizing are however limited by the fact that this usually happens late in life.
- 6.15. There were five distinct strands in Nottingham. For one of these strands costing £18,230 per year there is no direct savings so far because it has taken a long time to set up the partnership.
- 6.16. Three of the strands appear to have very large direct annual net savings:

Strand	Costs (£)	Savings (£)
Rent bond & guarantee scheme	56,730	1,283,810
Supported bond scheme	54,530	349,440
Employment Broker Service	74,980	247,250

- 6.17. The estimates suggest that one strand only just covered its costs so far:

Strand	Costs (£)	Savings (£)
Welfare Benefits Service	13,355	14,729

- 6.18. Again the big potential savings come from transfers from hostels; improved employment together with the reduced chance of re-offending.

6.19. In Norwich there was a single but holistic strand based on helping single young people:

Strand	Costs (£)	Savings (£)
LEAP	214,553	996,027

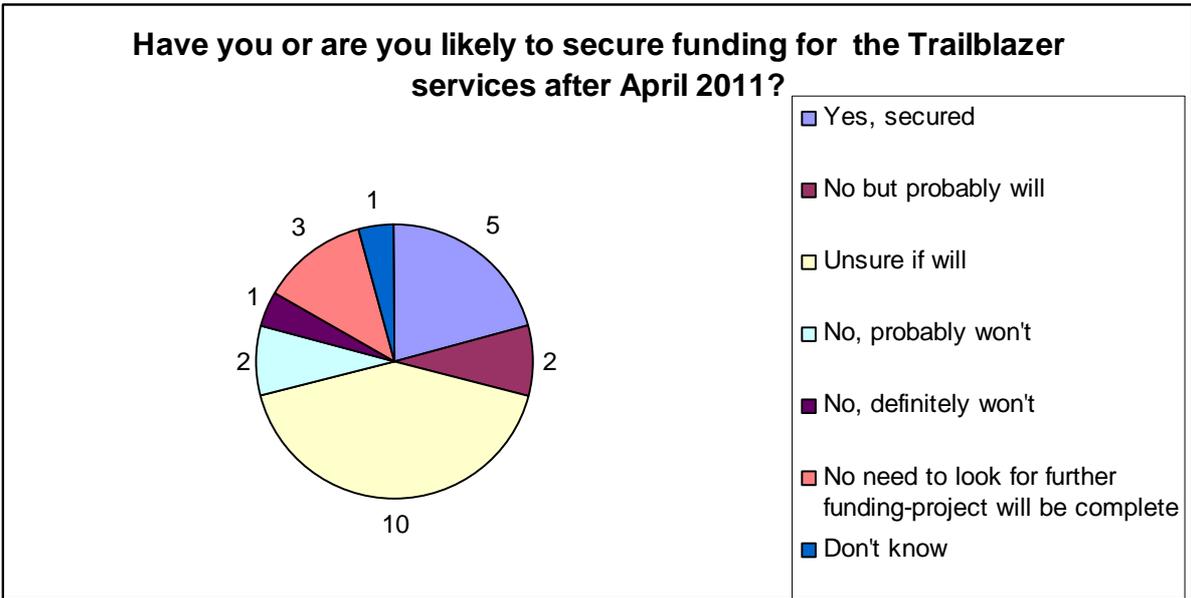
- 6.20. Again the main benefits come from re-housing; from support into work and training and reduced chances of re-offending.
- 6.21. Apart from the assumptions made in these calculations the main area of uncertainty is the extent to which these savings are additional. We have no evidence of what would have happened if the service had not been available - and it is likely that other services would have been available in many cases - although not in the focused fashion which is core to the enhanced Trailblazer approach.
- 6.22. The assessment also identifies other benefits that can be associated with these initiatives which are often rather more general and cannot be directly valued within this project.
- 6.23. The three examples are clearly not representative of the whole programme as they have been chosen because there are data available and evidence of outputs and outcomes so potential savings could at least in principle be identified. In many of the other projects the outcomes are far softer and thus more difficult to evaluate. Equally many have potential benefits which will be realised by other agencies while others will have benefits into the longer term which cannot be observed at this stage.
- 6.24. Overall the evidence suggests that the projects where we can make estimates do have at least the potential to be very good value. In particular the costs are relatively small so in many cases even quite low levels of success generate large savings.

7. Sustainability

Future funding

- 7.1. We used the recent on-line survey to ask if the Trailblazers had already secured funding for their project after the Trailblazer funding stopped in April 2011 and, for those who had not, what was the likelihood of securing funding post April 2011. The responses are shown in Figure 15. It should be noted that Trailblazer funding for some projects runs until April 2011 and for others until 2012. In addition some projects were later than anticipated in getting started, so still had money in their budgets to carry forward.
- 7.2. The vast majority of Trailblazers that responded to the survey (24 out of 42 Trailblazers) had not yet secured further funding at the time of the survey and felt it was unlikely that they would do so in the future. In terms of being able to secure funding post 2011 the majority of respondents were unsure about securing further funding and no one thought they would definitely secure funding. Indeed, two said they would probably not secure funding and two said definitely not.

Figure 15: Likelihood of future funding



- 7.3. Five Trailblazers said they had managed to secure funding post April 2010, and one Trailblazer said their original funding would take their project into 2012. Others mentioned a variety of funding sources, from central government funding, partnership funding (both via central and local government) and by landlord contributions to their choice-based lettings scheme. However, whilst funding had been secured at the time of the survey it was acknowledged by one Trailblazer that 'most negotiations are on-going given the current uncertainties around public expenditure.'

7.4. Three Trailblazers said they hoped to be able to incorporate work they had started with Trailblazer funding into their mainstream work. Two of these had Extra Trailblazer funding whilst the other had Kickstart funding. This Trailblazer added that their 'concept has been very successful'.

7.5. The following Trailblazer thought they 'probably' would secure funding post April 2011 and added:

'This was a valuable programme giving space and impetus to test new approaches. It has to be said, however, that some of the real benefit of the programme was to be gained through the longitudinal study so that it is a shame that this is being halted - once CLG start downplaying the importance it is inevitable that the participating LAs will also. We will probably come to view the EHO programme as part of the halcyon years of innovation - until the next 'boom' cycle that is!'

7.6. These and other similar comments emphasised not just the importance of sustaining the Trailblazer project through funding, but the overall approach. Sustaining this will require local authorities and their partners to embed the learning from the projects into a range of mainstream service delivery.

7.7. One Trailblazer who noted that funding would definitely not continue added:

'It has been brilliant to be involved in such a programme, I know locally we have been lucky enough to create services and interventions which have genuinely changed residents' lives, despite lower numbers than originally anticipated. Staff have been inspired and motivated by the EHO approach and its emphasis on person-centred work with residents rather than the somewhat restrictive, bureaucratic processes of the past. Unfortunately with the spending cuts on the horizon, and locally without consistency in senior management, I am concerned that these kinds of approaches will be seen as "optional" or additional and at least some of the momentum and drive behind them will be lost. We have tried, wherever possible, to ensure that there are proper handovers and structures to support relevant EHO projects becoming "business as usual" ...the culture change aspect has been the hardest'

7.8. As outlined in Chapter 2, case studies had adopted a number of different strategies to spending the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers funding including a ring fenced budget for specific Trailblazer services, funding for specific staff who might work on a wider range of services integration with other funding. While the latter approach had offered the greatest prospects for sustainability through mainstreaming of Trailblazer activities in practice there were no mechanisms to incorporate this finding into base budgets. In some cases it was suggested that the partnerships formed for Trailblazers could form the basis for future funding bids, but this was dependent upon there being such funds to bid for.

- 7.9. While most of the expenditure was accounted for by staff costs, some investment was made in IT systems and in staff training and supporting materials (such as Blackpool's information framework on work experience placements). This strategy provided a legacy for future activity that was less dependent upon attracting new funding. One Trailblazer had supported the establishment of a social enterprise to provide accommodation and support services for people with learning difficulties although the success of this strategy is dependent upon the continued commissioning of such services from public funds.
- 7.10. Overall, then the prospects for future funding were mainly dependent upon the public finances and future allocations for Housing Options and worklessness activities. In the latter respect the development of the new Single Work Programme and decisions in relation to the scale and type of contracts to be awarded will be an important factor in determining the continued viability of Housing Options based access routes into the delivery of information, advice and guidance and employment, education or training services.

8. Learning from the trailblazers

Identifying the lessons

- 8.1. The recent on line survey asked what advice Trailblazers would give local authorities considering similar enhancements to their Housing Options services that the Trailblazers had made recently.
- 8.2. From the 25 respondents, five Trailblazers stated that it would be difficult to offer advice at the moment because of cuts in funding. One thought there would be shifts in emphasis in future work by responding to homelessness rather than working on homelessness prevention.
- 8.3. However, those who offered advice to other authorities considering setting up similar services provided a variety of practical measures they thought important:
- facilitate collaboration and interaction at networking events
 - find the right people for the posts
 - ensure information sharing between local authorities
 - ensure proper allocation of staff time and training
 - concentrate on one stream of work only
 - provide a holistic service
 - take time to give careful consideration of partnership working
 - investigate all funding sources
 - provide a one stop shop approach for customers
 - get a service level agreement with partners sorted out early on
 - publicise widely
 - ensure management actively engages with the project
- 8.4. A Trailblazer that had secured further funding expressed the importance of the Enhanced Housing Options project through the recent online survey:
- 'I think it is important that experience and lessons from Trailblazers are published and that enhanced Housing Options services are sustained within Homelessness Strategies, Supporting People Strategies, Housing Allocation Policies, Worklessness Strategies, and a range of strategies and programmes for vulnerable people'.*

Learning from the case studies

- 8.5. Two main overall learning points arise from the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers programme and its evaluation. First the benefits to participants in taking part in the programme, and second the wider benefits associated with learning from the programme and transferability to other areas.

Benefits of taking part in the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers programme

- 8.6. Several case studies reflected on the benefits of being a Trailblazer. Inevitably a key advantage was the additional funding provided, which as noted earlier was significant in relation to the existing scale of many Housing Options services especially for smaller authorities such as Rother, Tunbridge Wells and West Dorset. Thus additional funding made the provision of new and much needed services such as the rural outreach project in West Dorset possible. Even larger authorities such as Islington were clear that without the additional funding most of the projects they had undertaken would not have been possible.
- 8.7. However, there is clearly a potential downside to this benefit if service quality and expectations have been raised and cannot be sustained into the future. A further dimension of this problem is that the more successful a service becomes the more clients it attracts and the more resources it requires to maintain standards. In this context the limited success enjoyed by the Trailblazers in securing follow on funding noted in Chapter 7 is a major concern.
- 8.8. A further advantage of being a Trailblazer was the acknowledgement of quality of core services instilling a sense of pride in Housing Options teams and the opportunity to use this to promote and defend the service (West Dorset). In Islington involvement was seen to have improved the reputation of Housing Options as well as fostering closer working with the Regeneration Department local housing associations and private landlords and information, advice and guidance and employment, education or training providers. They were pleased to have been part of it and were seeing positive outcomes.
- 8.9. The absence of central targets or imposed expectations made participation in Trailblazers easier than in more top down programmes. There was a genuine opportunity to develop proposals that were responsive to local needs. However, this degree of local freedom can be challenging for some local authorities and their partners that are used to working to standard, centrally determined targets.

Transferability to other areas

- 8.10. A key potential benefit of national programmes working through locally based projects such as the Trailblazers is the ability to share learning as the

projects develop. There are two potentially valuable dimensions to such learning exchanges. First, to transfer learning between participating projects, to 'avoid reinventing the wheel' and to enable potential barriers to be anticipated and solutions discussed between peers as the projects develop. Such intra-programme exchanges in a large, complex and varied programme like Trailblazers would probably work best through peer groups of projects tackling similar types of problems. These could be organised at the strand level rather than project wide level. A second dimension is to disseminate learning from the programme to outside authorities tackling similar problems. Again a themed peer group approach might work best.

- 8.11. While the Trailblazers programme did include some co-ordination by DCLG, DWP and the regional resource advisers and some regional meetings were held in 2009, the potential for learning transfer within and from the programme was not fully exploited. Although, it is understood that a wish for focus-specific workshops was expressed in some regional meetings and at the national indicators workshop held in London in December 2009 and again in 2010 (for example, the East Midlands event in May 2010), this was not acted upon at programme level. Instead some Trailblazers formed links independently with peers with a similar focus, mainly those that they happened to meet at regional events, and engaged in informal information exchange. Because this was not institutionalised within the programme it is not possible to assess its impact.
- 8.12. The potential benefits of learning transfer was an explicit consideration for **West Dorset** who wanted to share learning across rural areas with poor access and limited availability of specialist services for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. They were concerned at the dominance of urban contexts in existing best practice guidance and wished to pioneer models that would fit their own rural context. In practice they did begin to undertake joint work with the neighbouring rural authority of South Somerset and the West Dorset case study report concludes that there is scope for more sharing of the project's success with other largely rural areas with poor access to services and specialist support for vulnerable or disadvantaged people.
- 8.13. The **Blackpool** Trailblazer has developed a framework and information on their six-month work experience placement programme and supporting training courses which can be used by other authorities.
- 8.14. Some other case study reports (see Appendix 2) consider the potential transferability to other areas including:
 - **HOME Project Tunbridge Wells and Rother:** Co-location of services and improved referral practices between Housing Options and third sector (Citizen's Advice Bureaux and Royal British Legion Industries) are key elements of Trailblazer; these are in theory transferrable to other areas but may require funding to establish networks and design referral systems.

- **LEAP project (Norwich)** combines access to education and skills training for hostel residents with move-on into private rented sector and works with a wide network of partners (training, education, Job Centre Plus, housing providers, Business in the Community). In its first year it saw 167 clients, engaged 63 in work or training, moved 34 into accommodation and 14 into employment. All of the elements of this project could be replicated in areas with sizeable single homeless populations, hostels and private landlords and good links with employment, education or training services.

Learning about the programme and evaluation

Agreeing and monitoring outcomes

- 8.15. It is clear that DGLG did not intend the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers programme to impose conformity or require participants to meet pre-determined, common targets. However, in the early stages of the programme there was considerable ambiguity about the indicators and monitoring required by DCLG, which was unfortunately not clarified until the development of the evaluation indicator framework by the evaluation team. This included both national and local outcomes, together with guidance and a template for collection, but it could not be finalised until after a period of consultation and a workshop in December 2009.
- 8.16. The late start to data collection was compounded by the coalition government's decision to complete the evaluation in October 2010 and request the team to stop collecting data beyond the first quarter of 2010-11 resulting in a lack of useable time series data being available across the projects.
- 8.17. One important rationale for monitoring is in order to clarify inputs, outputs and outcomes in order to determine value for money and to inform future decisions. Without the capacity to undertake such an evaluation it is more difficult to make the case to maintain successful projects and to allocate future resources effectively. In retrospect an earlier recognition of the need for a self-assessment monitoring framework against which each Trailblazer could assess its progress and discuss learning points with both DCLG and the evaluation team may have been a more appropriate design for this type of government programme. A commentary on Trailblazer monitoring is provided in Appendix 5.

Overcoming institutional barriers

- 8.18. A second issue relating to the absence of top down steering was the failure of DWP to harness the involvement of Job Centre Plus in the Trailblazers in any meaningful way. This could indicate a lack of clarity about the underlying assumptions of the inclusion of employment, education or training and information, advice and guidance type functions within the remit of Housing

Options work or organisational barriers to engaging in these sorts of partnerships.

- 8.19. If the premise is that Housing Options teams and social housing organisations generally are well placed to steer people with employability and skill training needs into pathways into work, it must follow that involvement in partnerships with Housing Options will benefit Job Centre Plus teams. If this premise is not accepted in general or needs to be confirmed at the local level then there is a need for more active network management at the local level to share understandings between these organisations as a pre-requisite for common programmes to proceed.

Providing a framework for intra-programme learning

- 8.20. Despite local flexibility and an evaluation approach based on the promotion of learning rather than the checking out of compliance, the potential for intra-programme learning was not fully realised. A learning framework based on groups of projects with a similar focus and objectives meeting with each other and evaluators at workshops to identify barriers and enablers as the programme evolved would have helped encourage this. A thematic rather than a regional focus for knowledge exchange might have also accelerated learning and improved outcomes.

Client tracking

- 8.21. Perhaps the most innovative and successful part of the evaluation was the client tracking work, which enabled the impact and outcomes of the programme to be seen from the perspective of service users. This research method also allowed us to analyse the realisation of outcomes over time and the 'distance travelled' for the clients, who were coming to the Trailblazer projects in different circumstances and with different needs e.g. in relation to housing need, job readiness etc. Future evaluations of similar government funded, locally delivered programmes could adopt a client tracking approach for longitudinal, user-focused research and consider further methods to incorporate user perspectives such as peer research undertaken by current or former clients of, for example, Housing Options services.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The objectives of this evaluation were to examine process, outputs and outcomes of the Enhanced Housing Options programme. With respect to process this was possible in relation to the chosen case study areas. It was less easy to monitor the progress of other areas because of the paucity of data available. With respect to outputs and outcomes, again the analysis of case studies and particularly tracking areas proved successful, except to the extent that the evaluation was curtailed before many of the outcomes could be ascertained.
- 9.2. The methodology employed in the evaluation enabled the research team to track the progress of individual Trailblazer projects as they matured as well as the experiences of individual clients in the eight tracking areas. However, it should be noted that the schemes chosen were necessarily biased towards more structured options and ones that had been initially successful in delivering their action plans when the evaluation began.
- 9.3. The report summarises the research methodology and the detailed findings with respect to the nature of the initiatives, process, take-up, outputs and outcomes. In these conclusions we therefore concentrate on the lessons learned that may be relevant to future programmes.

The programme

- 9.4. First, the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme was unusual in that money was allocated on the basis of applications and presentations by individual authorities in line with the general objectives of meeting housing needs; using stock more effectively; tackling worklessness and improving customer service. Each authority could determine its own priorities and capacities to support specific initiatives and allocate the funding as it saw fit.
- 9.5. The result of this local freedom was a very wide range of initiatives both large and small. However because of the limited period of secure funding, and in line with the general objectives of the programme, most funding was used to provide additional staffing capacity to support more holistic approaches to addressing housing or employment needs. Staffing was clearly the most important resource in most cases, as a core objective was to give continuing support to more vulnerable households.
- 9.6. The most important attribute of the programme was its diversity. Yet although each authority chose its own particular client groups and implementation strategies, most activities fell into three broad groups:
 - helping particularly difficult to reach and vulnerable groups to access housing and/or training and employment
 - helping existing social tenants to access work or training; and

- helping existing social tenants in unsuitable housing to find more appropriate accommodation
- 9.7. In most cases, because they were seen as enhancing the basic Housing Options programme, the access point for services was often related to housing need, but in many cases the intention was to address broader issues more holistically. Each of the Trailblazers' strategies presented its own challenges but all had the potential not only to help individuals but also to give value for money (to the public purse) as resources were used more effectively and individuals became less dependent on welfare support.
- 9.8. One consequence of the devolved, localised approach was that there were very few conditions imposed on the authorities with respect to quantitative monitoring. Authorities were expected to define a set of relevant indicators for internal use but these were not originally seen as contributing to the evaluation; nor were they consistent or comparable between Trailblazers. High level national indicators (e.g. on employment rates) were identified but these could not be expected to measure the impact of relatively small and targeted changes. Measures of success and value for money were therefore limited to case study authorities where data were more readily available and, in some instances, client tracking data was collected by the researchers. This is a difficult issue going forward as it is important not to impose too great a monitoring burden on authorities. On the other hand it can be frustrating to be unable directly to measure success.
- 9.9. Finally, the research findings have highlighted the extent of diversity between and even within authorities. This made the evaluation more complex but also pointed to the value of locally 'owned' initiatives. One of the most positive aspects of the programme was the extent to which initiatives matched the needs identified by local decision-makers. Of course not every one turned out to be successful. But even where there were problems, important lessons were learned.

The process

- 9.10. There were three main models of funding:
- a separate budget spent directly on one or more Trailblazer initiative
 - funding for specific staff who worked within a broader based service; and
 - the integration of Trailblazer funding with other sources of funding to achieve Enhanced Housing Options objectives
- 9.11. There were obvious differences between these models. In particular the first approach took time to set up and was often subject to delays. However, once operational, the strength of focus helped to increase the chances of success. The third approach could generally be set in motion rapidly but it was often difficult to identify additionality. Some of the same concerns also applied to the second approach. More generally, success was very much a

function of the quality and commitment of specific staff members and benefited from stability in staffing.

- 9.12. A second important issue was the extent of partnership involvement. Again, where the project involved other organisations there were likely to be delays and in some cases the initiative was modified. Also, there was very little evidence of financial commitment from partners although they often contributed in terms of rooms for training and meetings as well as equipment. This contribution could sometimes be important especially as most initiatives were implemented from a single location.
- 9.13. Issues of partnership were particularly important in the context of those authorities that received a DWP Job Centre Plus package to support a more integrated employment and housing advice service. The most obvious failure in this context lay in the delays in bringing the Job Point equipment into operation and the difficulties in measuring usage and therefore potential value. Technical solutions did not appear to provide value for money.

Targeting

- 9.14. A key element of the Enhanced Housing Options programme was that it should target, and help, people whose needs were not adequately addressed by traditional services. Those targeted were often vulnerable and had a history of failure to benefit from available assistance. Others simply required different services from those usually on offer.
- 9.15. The range of clients depended on the focus of the particular initiative. It was inherent in the nature of the programme that there would be enormous differences in client groups in terms of age, gender and other attributes. In the areas where client tracking took place, a majority of clients was male; a larger majority in the young to middle aged group; and there was a disproportionate proportion of those from ethnic minorities. Overall it appears that vulnerable groups were targeted as was consistent with the general objectives of the programme.

Outputs and outcomes

- 9.16. The two most important problems with assessing the success of the Trailblazer projects lie, first, in the capacity to identify additionality as changes may have occurred for other reasons, or the Trailblazer initiative may have nudged people towards solving their own problems as much as providing direct assistance; and second because of the earlier end date to the evaluation, which meant that by no means all the positive outcomes had yet occurred.
- 9.17. Although by no means easy, the evaluation has been relatively successful in tracking clients to learn about changes that have occurred with respect to housing, training and employment as well as their attitudes to the

programme. Of itself, this is an important conclusion – people were happy to speak about themselves and to be re-interviewed regularly, generating interesting cameos as well as more general information. The results in general have been positive and in some cases very good indeed. However, this of itself does not prove cause and effect in terms of Trailblazer activities and outcomes, as many other factors may have been involved.

- 9.18. It is important in this context to note that housing issues could often be addressed quite quickly while issues of training and employment might not even be raised at the first meeting and took much longer to resolve. Bringing the two elements together often generated valuable synergies.
- 9.19. In the housing context a number of the initiatives concentrated on finding private rented accommodation for single homeless or those in hostels. Where successful these had high associated savings. The benefits associated with downsizing housing or moving to more appropriate accommodation tended to be smaller. This was partly because there were relatively few successful moves because the appropriate accommodation simply was not available, or other households received priority. Downsizing households also tended to want bungalows rather than flats which were less available. Even when a move took place, it was likely to be only of short term benefit because the person involved was elderly – so the larger unit would have come vacant relatively quickly. These examples point to the need to assess the potential viability of particular projects more carefully.
- 9.20. Tackling unemployment and worklessness was made more difficult by the recession. Again however there was considerable evidence of success in relation clients who were tracked in eight Trailblazers with a near doubling of the proportion of working aged individuals in work by the time the tracking ceased. Given that getting people into employment generally took time, there is likely to have been continuing improvement after the end of the monitoring period where support could be maintained.
- 9.21. Finally it was relatively easy to monitor training outputs, in terms of numbers of people, but almost impossible to link that training directly to positive outcomes, especially in the relatively short monitoring period.
- 9.22. One area where there appeared to be little success was in raising additional funding. This may partly be because of the short time scale involved. There were a number of authorities who were aiming to bring the initiatives within their mainstream funding but little evidence of success in securing this type of ongoing funding.
- 9.23. Overall, therefore, in case study and particularly client tracking areas, the results look good, and sometimes very good indeed. However it must be remembered that there were other far less successful initiatives and authorities, some of which hardly started to implement their action plans. The main differences between success and relative failure appear to be in relation to focus and sustained commitment together with realistic and practical objectives.

Value for money

- 9.24. Issues of additionality arise particularly in the context of measuring value for money. In particular it is probable that in many cases some form of alternative assistance would have been made available and there is no way of measuring the costs and benefits of those alternatives. Even so a 'gross' value for money assessment generates positive results in the small number of instances where the researchers had adequate information to make the calculations. It is clear from this assessment that the big gains come from moving people out of homelessness and hostels; reducing criminality; and moving people successfully into work. Other types of initiative had less potential for large scale savings and in some cases direct outcomes could not be assessed.
- 9.25. One other aspect that could not be directly valued was the fourth objective of improving customer service. However, the high satisfaction levels among many of the clients point not only to a successful process but also to likely positive impacts on self esteem and individual initiative. The main reasons why satisfaction declined over time was that in some cases, and on some housing initiatives in particular, expectations had been raised above feasible outcome levels. Overall the evidence strongly suggests that customised, individual support is not only effective in terms of employment and housing outcomes but brings with it many potential additional benefits. These include the sustained engagement and increase in self confidence that many 'harder to help' and vulnerable people need to be able to improve their personal circumstances.
- 9.26. Overall the Trailblazers project has exemplified a range of successful local initiatives. It has pointed to the need to be realistic about what can be achieved but also suggests that local approaches can be well targeted and successful on relatively small budgets. In this context the evidence from the evaluation raises concerns about how many of the initiatives will be self-sustaining in the current financial climate.

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Appendix 1: Trailblazer programmes and case studies

<p>1. The Enhanced Housing Options EXTRA programme</p> <p>The Extra Programme was aimed at local authorities wishing to enhance their existing Housing Options service and consists of 12 Trailblazers, five of which also receive a Job Centre Plus package from DWP. These Extra Trailblazers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are recognised to already have a strong track record on homelessness prevention, and be on track to have Choice Based Lettings in place by 2010 • become part of the “integrated employment and housing advice pilot” • are expected to develop services to specific groups of socially excluded adults • become a mentor to other local authorities within the Standard Trailblazer programme, and more broadly to share ideas and information with others • receive a grant of up to £350,000 over three years 	<p>Extra Trailblazers</p> <p>Ashford Bournemouth^{*CT} Blackpool^{*C} Calderdale^{*C} Camden^{*CT} Croydon^{CT} Greenwich^C Hammersmith and Fulham Kettering^{CT} Norwich^{CT} Nottingham^{*CT} Southwark</p> <p>* Authorities that receive the Job Centre Plus package</p>
<p>2. The Standard Enhanced Housing Options Programme</p> <p>This Trailblazer programme was intended for local authorities interested in developing Enhanced Housing Options services. The 20 Standard Trailblazers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benefit from mentoring and support from Trailblazers on the Extra programme • share ideas and information with other Trailblazers • receive a grant of up to £260,000 over two years 	<p>Trailblazers in the Standard Programme</p> <p>Blackburn with Darwen Cheshire West Manchester Salford Bradford^{CT} Islington^C Wakefield Easington (County Durham) Broxtowe Redditch Solihull Stoke on Trent West Dorset^C Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire Tunbridge Wells and Rother^C</p> <p>Exeter partnership: Exeter, East Devon, North Devon, West Devon, South Hams, Torridge, Torbay, Plymouth, Mid Devon, Teignbridge.</p>

	<p>Greater Haven Gateway: Babergh, Colchester, Braintree, Maldon, Ipswich, Maldon, Mid-Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal, Tendring</p> <p>East Surrey authorities: Reigate and Banstead, Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Tandridge, Epsom and Ewell</p> <p>London Learning Disabilities Partnership: Kingston, Croydon, Merton, Sutton, Richmond, Lambeth, Wandsworth C</p> <p>Home Options sub-region: High Peak, Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, Erewash</p>
<p>3. 'Kickstart' Areas</p> <p>These ten Trailblazers will receive a small amount of funding to 'kick start' enhanced services in their area, equivalent to the salary and on-costs of a project manager (although they do not have to use the funding in this way).</p>	<p>Kickstart Trailblazers</p> <p>Harborough Mansfield Sevenoaks Eastbourne Oxford Rotherham Newham^{CT} Hull</p> <p>Home Link sub-region: Cambridge, Fenland, Forest Heath, St Edmundsbury, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire</p> <p>West London Housing Partnership: Brent; Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea</p>
<p>Note: Case study and tracking Trailblazers</p> <p>^C Case study ^T Client tracking</p>	

Appendix 2: Case study pen portraits

Blackpool

Background

Blackpool already had a strong track record on homelessness prevention and saw the Trailblazer programme as an opportunity to become an 'integrated employment and housing advice pilot'.

The Blackpool Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer sits within the Council's Housing Solutions Team, which comes under Housing Options. This in turn is part of the Assisted Prevention and Support Division of the Adult Social Care and Housing Service.

The Blackpool Trailblazer is staffed by a project coordinator, a worklessness officer, and a training solutions officer. Joint funding has enabled a fourth person to be employed in the team - a financial inclusion officer.

Blackpool Council has a choice-based lettings system.

The Trailblazer programmes

There are three strands to the Blackpool Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer:

FINANCIAL INCLUSION

The welfare rights officer and financial inclusion officer undertake back-into-work calculations (220 since March 2009) and offer benefit support to Housing Options clients wanting to enter the workplace. The team also delivers a course for frontline staff on benefits (185 staff trained since March 2009), which includes a module on benefits available to 16-17 year olds - a unique programme in the Northwest region.

TRAINING FOR STAFF

Training is provided to internal and external staff to increase their awareness and knowledge of housing issues. This will help them to deal with clients' issues directly without having to pass them onto a number of different agencies.

WORKLESSNESS

A worklessness officer conducts in depth assessments during face-to-face interviews with clients in housing need to identify their needs and aspirations. They develop an action plan with the client and support them make the necessary steps to move closer to employment. Sixty-three per cent of the 137 clients seen since March 2009 have been helped into employment, education or training.

A Cognitive Behaviour Training course has been developed to help those clients furthest away from the workplace consider their position and reflect on what they can do to improve their situation. A workbook *My journey: making real and lasting change* has been developed alongside this course. Eight members of staff from other organisations have also been trained to deliver this course to their clients.

Six month work experience placements have been developed for clients in housing need who are seeking 'a good job' but feel this isn't possible to achieve for a number of reasons e.g. because they have no/poor qualifications from school, have a history of substance misuse/offending behaviour, have never worked before, or lack confidence. A pre-requisite to a work placement is attendance on a six week pre-placement training programme, also run by the Trailblazer. The course provides information and advice on practical aspects of working in an organisation.

Key successes

TRAINING FOR STAFF

Training internal and external frontline staff on how to identify and support the needs of people in housing crisis is expected to improve the consistency of advice to clients and reduce the number of enquiries received by the Housing Options team.

WORKLESSNESS

At the start of its programme, the Blackpool Trailblazer undertook a mapping exercise to identify the employment and training support the clients using the council's housing services required, whether these were already available, and whether they were accessing them. The results of this exercise enabled the Trailblazer to set up more intensive and personalised support for its clients in housing need who tended to be furthest away from the workplace. In this way, the Trailblazer added value to the existing services provided by Job Centre Plus and Positive Steps (an employment agency in Blackpool).

To date the work experience placement programme has been very successful on several levels. One hundred work experience placements have been established with 13 (mainly public and third sector) organisations in Blackpool without any financial incentives. The strength of the Trailblazer's relationship with partners through the existing Blackpool Homelessness Forum is key to the successful engagement of external organisations in this initiative. In terms of clients, six people have completed their placements as part of the pilot programme, 15 have just started their placements, and another 12 people are currently on the pre-placement training programme in preparation for their work experience.

The pre-placement training programme provides an opportunity for the Trailblazer to screen applicants for the work experience placements i.e. for punctuality and attendance, to ensure only suitable individuals are entered into the workplaces of the Trailblazer's partners. Applicants who don't yet appear ready for the workplace can be placed onto the cognitive behaviour training course instead which will help them to reflect on their attitude and actions.

The Trailblazer team has developed a framework of information on their work experience placement programme and supporting training courses so other local authorities can use it themselves and develop their own work experience placements.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

TRAINING FOR STAFF

The long term sickness of the training officer meant the development and delivery of the training programme for frontline staff was significantly delayed.

WORKLESSNESS

Given the current economic climate and anticipated public sector cuts (and knock-on effects for the third sector who provided the majority of placements), both the sustainability of the programme in Blackpool and the potential to disseminate it to other local authorities are in jeopardy.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN LOCAL MANAGEMENT (OF PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS)

Blackpool's local management is particularly strong in the following ways:

- they have effectively utilised the existing Blackpool Homelessness Forum to publicise the Trailblazer activities and identify partners for some of these activities e.g. training and work experience placements; and
- they recognised that for their worklessness activities to be most effective, they should add value to existing services i.e. those provided by Job Centre Plus and Positive Steps, by offering a support package tailored to the needs of those furthest from the job market and experiencing housing issues

The main challenge was in engaging with the Job Centre Plus partnership officer. Despite many attempts, the Trailblazer team has been unsuccessful in developing a strong relationship between the two organisations. In part this is due to a high turnover in partnership managers; five in 18 months; and, also to the sense that it is difficult for the staff of a national organisation to embrace a local initiative.

Bournemouth

Background

Bournemouth Enhanced Housing Options is an employment focused Trailblazer with a core objective of helping people become job ready. It employs two full-time staff who are based in the housing offices in the town centre. Housing advice is offered as part of the service but the key activities are to provide information, advice and guidance around employment and training issues, including an employment toolkit offering help with CVs and job applications, and life skills training to improve confidence and motivation and lead to potential employment. The scheme targets five client groups: ex-offenders, potentially homeless people, supported housing residents wanting to live independently, the 'most excluded' people (including rough sleepers and people with mental health issues) and families, especially young parents.

The Trailblazer programmes

Enhanced Housing Options clients are defined as anyone who is referred by a partner organisation, attends one of the regular drop-in surgeries or self referrals. Clients are offered a one-to-one personalised service comprising a 30-45 minute meeting with one of the staff. These meetings aim to be more than just sign-posting but to provide clients with contact details for an appropriate organisation or activity such as training. Additional services can take place at the meetings such as proof reading/writing CVs and completing application forms. At the end of the meeting an action plan is drafted with a letter detailing how to proceed with the options that have been agreed. Follow up meetings can take place soon after the initial meeting and generally between 1-3 months later. It is expected that the client's needs will have been sorted by then.

In addition the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer runs group-based, employment-focused training events at various locations in Bournemouth. Key to the scheme are the regular outreach surgeries organised at partner organisations such as YMCA, library, sure start children's centre, housing provider and mental health information provider. These provide a drop in service.

Key successes

By the end of the first six months, 241 clients had received information, advice and guidance of which 95 received advice about housing, 53 education, 35 training, 51 volunteering and 60 advice about job search. Of these last, 13 received interview skills training and 23 assistance with writing a job application. In addition, 87 of the total clients were referred to a specialist Job Broker at Job Centre Plus to use the job toolkit, 55 to the Job centre and seven to confidence and motivation training.

Since then there has been no shortage of clients and the confidence and motivation training has 'taken off'. This is evidenced by the individual tracking data.

Tracking showed many people entering employment or doing voluntary work while on benefits. In some cases this led to job placements and/or training.

Staff felt that the key success was the opportunity to make a real difference to some clients. Normal front line housing workers have neither time nor skills to help with CVs or forms, yet it is this is the type of 'invisible' help that really makes the difference and turns round people's lives.

Clients felt that they were treated with dignity and respect, that 'nothing was too much for them', and the individual hands-on approach made a difference to some people's lives.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

Location was a problem because hard to reach clients will not travel to the city centre, hence the outreach surgeries.

The Job Centre Plus job point took so long to install that even now it is up and running, it is not used for its original purpose, to access potential clients.

The timing of interventions of this sort is critical, clients need to be ready in order to benefit. Staff learned that most ex-offenders had more urgent needs than employment, education or training such as addressing drug and alcohol problems, so were not even ready for confidence building. Instead, the few who are considered work ready are identified before release and provided private rented accommodation in return for signing up for training/employment. This has taken almost two years to set up.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

The main challenge and initial weakness had been in getting the partnership started between a set of organisations that were not used to working together and had different priorities and levels of understanding.

Staff felt the partnerships would have developed faster if there had been a meeting where they could present the scheme right at the beginning. Potential partners did not initially understand what the Enhanced Housing Options was about and feared possible loss of funding.

A key strength was in the recruitment of high quality staff. Many clients felt it was the individual staff worker, not the scheme that had made the difference.

Bradford

Background

The Bradford Trailblazer included a number of different programmes, including Employment education and training information advice and guidance, housing advice for probationers, street outreach work, homelessness education for primary school pupils and basic literacy and numeracy training

The overall budget was managed by the Metropolitan Council and pooled with other funding sources but the provision of services was contracted out. A similar approach had been taken to the existing Housing Options service which was contracted to Incommunities, the stock transfer landlord, who manages over 20,000 social rented properties in Bradford.

The Trailblazer Programmes

Although some of the funding is used to part-fund other services and initiatives, the majority of the funding is directed to fully or partly fund the following initiatives:

ESTATE OUTREACH EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The purpose of this initiative is to provide education, employment and training information advice and guidance to people who live further away from the city centre and are therefore less likely existing services. The estate outreach post is fully funded by the Enhanced Housing Options initiative. The service was initially delivered by Incommunities at their offices in three different locations: Shipley, Keighley and Wibsey.

The service has been advertised by leafleting and posters at various locations, including Incommunities neighbourhood offices. Workless people who live in Incommunities managed properties have been invited by phone to come and see the adviser. In some outreach locations the take-up of the service has been fairly low, contributing, along with staffing difficulties to a decision to re-think the outreach locations in 2010. The services provided by the adviser include help with CVs and applications, information about education and employment opportunities, and interview skills training.

Another employment, education or training information, advice and guidance adviser, joint-funded with the Job Centre Plus, is based at the Incommunities offices in Bradford city centre, but seconded from the Job Centre Plus, thus enabling the adviser to take advantage of the Job Centre Plus database.

OPEN MOVES – HOUSING ADVICE FOR PROBATIONERS

This service, also delivered by Incommunities, aims to provide housing advice to probationers who are homeless or in precarious housing situation. The housing adviser sees clients in two different probation offices: the Shipley Hub and the City Courts.

STREET OUTREACH

The main objective of this project is to help tackle repeat homelessness by engaging rough sleepers and addressing the underlying issues that led them becoming homeless. This project started with some research into repeat homelessness. The findings from this research were then used to develop a job description and agenda for street outreach person's post to address the issue.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

This is an educational initiative aiming to raise awareness by distributing information on housing related issues (including matters such as domestic violence and homelessness) in schools to help prevent homeless. Outputs include an educational DVD exploring the reasons for homelessness, lesson plans on housing related issues and a series of story books, written by young people on the theme of homelessness.

BASIC LITERACY AND NUMERACY TRAINING

The purpose of this initiative is to provide basic literacy and numeracy training for people living in hostels to help them improve their generic life skills. The majority of the people who participate in BSSN community education initiatives lack confidence, due to barriers which include a lack of language skills, cultural understanding, displacement, health problems, absences from school due to ill-health, and multiple social exclusion.

Key Successes

ESTATE OUTREACH EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The local authority considers the project to have been very positive and plans are in place to secure future funding beyond April 2011. It has been particularly beneficial for the most job-ready clients who are not faced with immediate housing crisis, i.e. individuals whose housing situation has been recently solved or who approach Incommunities because of financial problems rather than urgent and immediate housing crisis.

OPEN MOVES – HOUSING ADVICE FOR PROBATIONERS

It has proved possible to adapt and develop the service to improve the numbers of clients who engage and to offer increased levels of support.

The local authority is keen to continue to fund the redesigned service in the future as they believe strongly in its potential.

STREET OUTREACH

Staff believe that the project has been very successful in facilitating joint working between local actors, including the police, who work with or encounter the street homeless.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

Learning resources are to be made available for all state schools in Bradford, and may in the future be made publicly available online for other areas too.

BASIC LITERACY AND NUMERACY TRAINING

The basic literacy and numeracy training appears to have been well-received by clients, especially black and minority ethnic women living in refuges, many of whom have limited English language skills.

Key Challenges and lessons for the future

ESTATE OUTREACH EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

It proved difficult to find the right staff for the project and problems with appointed staff leaving caused the service to be suspended at one point.

OPEN MOVES – HOUSING ADVICE FOR PROBATIONERS

Despite being based at the probation offices, turn-up was fairly low especially when the project first commenced.

Ensuring that probation officers understood the nature of the scheme took time.

As above, it proved difficult to find the right staff for the project and problems with staff leaving caused the service to be suspended at one point.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

It is difficult to measure the impact of schemes such as these where the intended benefits are many years into the future.

BASIC LITERACY AND NUMERACY TRAINING

Engaging people in the early stages of the project was difficult, possibly in part due to people's difficulties in getting about during the bad weather in the winter 2009-10.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

Running a project as diverse and ambitious as the Trailblazer in Bradford is challenging, especially in a context where all services are contracted out. The

process of procuring services is a slow one, and this led to delays in beginning services.

Calderdale

Background

The overall aim of the Trailblazer project in Calderdale was to improve housing options and employment prospects for the borough’s residents by filling the gaps in current service provision. Calderdale Council also used the Trailblazer funding to further extend its ‘tell it once’ approach; working with partners to ensure customers can access support through one organisation and avoid repeating the same information to a number of agencies.

The Calderdale Trailblazer programme sits within the Housing and Environment service alongside the Housing Options Service, Temporary Accommodation and Support Service, Housing Strategy Team and the Private Sector Housing Team. The Trailblazer funding has been used directly to employ the Project Manager and from June 2010 an Employment and Training Advisor. Match funding obtained also supports part of a Money Advice Worker’s time. In addition Calderdale Council has used the Trailblazer funding to attract funding from other sources.

Calderdale Council’s Housing and Environment service has a very close relationship with Pennine Housing 2000 (the local stock transfer landlord). This was demonstrated by the latter’s help to develop the Trailblazer project bid. Calderdale’s Trailblazer project is governed by a multi-agency Project Board. As well as the Housing Options team, the Private Sector Housing department from Calderdale Council is represented on the board. The key external partners who sit on the Project Board include Pennine Housing 2000 (the local large scale voluntary transfer landlord), Jobcentre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau, and Voluntary Action Calderdale.

Calderdale Council with its partners have a Choice Based Lettings service, KeyChoice.

The Trailblazer programme

The key activities supported by Trailblazer funding in Calderdale are outlined below.

Activity	Aim
Employ an Employment and Training Advisor to be based at the Housing Options Centre (June 2010). It is also anticipated that the advisor will be trained in ‘better-off in work’ calculations as well to encourage clients into employment.	Offer timely information and advice on education, employment and training opportunities to own and partners’ clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
Extend Housing Options outreach in rural areas with regular surgeries and home visits.	Improve access to and awareness of Housing Options services.
Develop and circulate Housing Options booklet providing customers and partners with information and	

advice about the services available.	
Research under-occupation in high demand areas.	Improve use of existing council and social housing stock by understanding the extent of under-occupation in preparation to address the issue.
Support the running of 'Doorways' a one-stop-shop for housing, employment, financial and health advice.	Develop the 'tell it once' approach.
Install a Customer Management System to enable a single integrated electronic record for customers in housing need which can be shared by key partners.	
Help fund Money Advice Worker at new Housing Options centre to provide financial and debt advice to clients.	Improve Housing Options by providing a wider range of solutions to meet housing need.
Improve the choice-based lettings system by advertising more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing associations properties • private rented sector properties • housing associations' Low Cost Home ownership properties; and • choice-based lettings scheme links in neighbouring local authority areas 	
Develop a bond and housing support scheme enabling clients with alcohol misuse problems to access and sustain privately rented accommodation.	
Develop a good landlord registration scheme and training package on good practice in tenancy management and tackling anti-social behaviour.	

Calderdale's Trailblazer project has also provided funding to support other housing projects with wider outcomes and benefits. For example £1,500 of Enhanced Housing Options funding has been provided to a social enterprise allotment project at the Councils Temporary Accommodation facility. The allotment allows residents to grow their own vegetables and encourage healthy eating

Key successes

Doorways – enables residents to access a variety of services under one roof in an attractive and welcoming environment in the centre of Halifax; and, its co-location of key partners within one premises has increased opportunities for partnership working e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureaux provide a Healthy Halifax Change for Life information shop which offers advice on healthy eating, healthy lifestyles and becoming more active and the Private Sector Housing Team offer advice regarding affordable warmth, empty homes and improving the standard of privately rented properties.

Employment advice – has provided residents in housing need with easy access a range of employment, education and training advice specifically tailored to their needs.

Allotments – as a result of the Trailblazer’s kick start funding have attracted additional investment for gardening equipment from a construction firm.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

Doorways – is located in the centre of Halifax and therefore the range of services it provides are not easily accessible to residents living in more rural parts of the district. However outreach surgeries are offered weekly at rural locations and housing advice has been offered via the mobile library however saw a limited take up by customers.

Regional special advisor – the monitoring requirements of the DCLG and evaluation team were at times perceived to be conflicting by the team which led to confusion however, over time the project built up speed and the monitoring requirements were bedded in.

Employment advice – could potentially duplicate services already provided by Job Centre Plus, however the employment advisor works in partnership with Job Centre Plus and they share case loads to avoid this.

The FAST (Fair and Safe Tenancies Scheme) set up to improve the standard of privately rented properties - hasn’t attracted the amount of properties originally envisaged. The benefits of this scheme need to be advertised on a larger scale to attract landlords to join.

Advertising private sector housing on the choice-based lettings system – attempts to enable this have not yet succeeded as the properties tend to be let before they were uploaded onto the choice-based lettings system.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

Calderdale’s local management is particularly strong in the following ways:

- They built on their existing relationship with the housing association Pennine 2000 to develop a Trailblazer bid together and provide a number of complementary services within the Doorways centre. The Trailblazer also has a well developed governance structure enabling all the key partners to influence the programmes.
- A number of partners including Job Centre Plus and Citizen’s Advice Bureaux were encouraged to provide services from the Doorways centre, thereby making additional services available to clients in housing need and encouraging a wider variety of people into a council service.
- The Trailblazer funding was used to kick start a wide range of projects to attract funding from others sources and fill gaps in the existing service.

The main weaknesses in a generally well managed project was that the project manager was new into her role and admitted herself that it took her some time to fully understand the different aspects of monitoring the programme both for DCLG and the evaluation team.

In addition, the Trailblazer funding was spread across a number of projects made it more difficult to calculate its impact.

Camden

Background

Camden Council used the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer to enhance existing services, rather than to develop new services. The three key strands focus on existing tenants, housing options applicants and homeless households. In each case these enhance existing work. Only one strand used the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer funding.

PATHWAYS FOR ALL – USING TRAILBLAZER FUNDING (SEE BELOW)

HOUSING OPTIONS AND ADVICE SERVICE – NOT USING TRAILBLAZER FUNDING

However, there is Job Centre Plus funding for this strand.

HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS SUPPORT SERVICE – NOT USING TRAILBLAZER FUNDING

As part of the Trailblazer programme Camden have built up strong partnership working with many local organisations including Camden Working, Surestart, the Early Years Employability Team, the Consumer Financial Education Body and WISH (Warmth, Income, Safety, Health).

The Trailblazer programmes

PATHWAYS FOR ALL

Camden's Pathways for All service aims to alleviate overcrowding by helping adult children of social tenants and tenants themselves into work or to become work ready and assist adult children into their own tenancies as well as providing practical help such as supplying space saving furniture. The Pathways for All element of Camden's Enhanced Housing Options work chosen for tracking is overcrowded tenants

Camden previously had an overcrowding team but the Pathways for All team has taken a broader approach to overcrowding issues. The Pathways for All service is split into two streams: a mobility, life, work and skills team; and an intensive outreach casework system. For the latter, staff are going out to introduce themselves to tenants, visit them in their home and offer whatever help they need. This includes offering space saving furniture, benefits checks etc.

The mobility, life, work and skills stream is to support the outreach work with existing tenants by building partnerships with other agencies in Camden that support worklessness. There is also a money advice specialist to support the case workers when they need it.

Camden originally set targets for the Enhanced Housing Options that focused far more on their ability to help people into work and into low cost home ownership, but one change is that for the first two or three years of the project they are thinking more about helping people to become job-ready. They have not lost sight of helping people into work but have shifted away from thinking about this as the primary aim. The Pathways for All service is based on four main areas of help:

- housing opportunities advice
- WorkLife coaching
- money advice
- wellbeing advice - Adopting the Think Family approach

Key successes

Whilst customers living in overcrowded conditions view moving to a larger property as their main priority many realise that their chances of moving quickly are minimal. The help provided via Pathways for All with space saving furniture has made a difference to some tenants as has information, advice and guidance about income maximisation and employment, education or training.

- forty per cent of overcrowded households on the housing register have had their overcrowded conditions remedied or relieved
- sixty per cent of suitable Pathways for All clients who are economically inactive have engaged with employment, education or training support
- nine per cent of clients have moved out of overcrowded accommodation, either via the choice-based lettings scheme or into the private rented sector

Partnerships have been forged with Camden Working and the Integrated Early Years service to enable overcrowded council tenants to engage with local training and employment opportunities.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

Performance against targets has been variable and Camden has reviewed their targets and monitoring and have set up new targets for the forthcoming year.

Camden is hopeful that Pathways for All will continue in some form after the Trailblazer funding has finished. However it is likely that there will be some changes in terms of service delivery as it is unlikely Camden will be able to secure the same levels of funding in the future.

A joined up approach should continue to be considered for Housing Options and wider Housing Needs services. The service has been well received by the Trailblazers customers.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

Cross borough communication has increased as a direct result of being a part of the Trailblazer project. This has meant that approaches and ideas have been openly discussed with other local authorities.

The Job Centre Plus element of the Trailblazer was severely delayed by technical hitches with the computer point in the housing office. To date there has not been any outcomes data with which to monitor the effectiveness the computer point has had with housing clients.

Croydon

Background

Broadening Horizons, Croydon Council's Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer, aims to provide access to education, training, and employment advice for people in housing crisis. Broadening Horizons is a new standalone initiative of Croydon's Housing Options service.

The Broadening Horizons project sits within Croydon Council's Housing Options service which itself is within the Adult Services and Housing Department. The Broadening Horizons team has three members of staff; a project co-ordinator and two careers information advisors. Broadening Horizons started engaging clients from May 2009.

Broadening Horizons works in partnership and receives referrals from within Croydon Council e.g. Support Needs Assessment and Placement service (SNAP), Housing Options and Advice, and tenancy services. The Broadening Horizons team also receives referrals from three YMCA hostels, Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT), Westminster Drug Project, Croydon Churches Housing Association, Croydon Employment Support Services, and Croydon Reach Programme. In turn, Broadening Horizons makes referrals to a range of training and employment providers including Job Centre Plus, South London Learning Consortium, and Croydon College.

The Trailblazer programmes

The Broadening Horizons team works with a number of internal and external partners to provide education, training and employment advice to local people in housing need. For example, the team:

- offers clients pre-arranged appointments and drop-in at Croydon Council's main housing reception office and its local district offices
- provides outreach services at two YMCA hostels for half a day per week to provide their users with advice

- holds a series of personal development workshops at CALAT's Croydon High Street Centre

Careers information advisors provide in depth one to one meetings to explore education, training and employment needs and to provide a personal action plan for each client. Clients can meet with the careers information advisors as many times as they wish for advice and support to receive a variety of information and guidance, including signposting to suitable courses or job opportunities, interview preparation, and CV writing assistance.

In the second year of the Enhanced Housing Options programme Broadening Horizons had planned to establish a work experience placement scheme to offer clients without strong employment histories the opportunity to do two days per week of voluntary work over an eight week period. The placements were to be with the Broadening Horizons team, Learning Curves (a Next Step provider) and the local library service. It was hoped that these work placements would strengthen the clients' CVs and make them more employable. However, changes in contract conditions and administrative systems (for the placements) meant this scheme could not go ahead.

Key successes

Broadening Horizons has successfully developed a unique offer of employment, education and training advice to provide tailored support and advice to clients who have not traditionally accessed information, advice and guidance. Intensive one-to-one personalised support is provided over a long period and is available at local hostels.

The Broadening Horizons team successfully engaged with and provided information advice and guidance to 175 people in housing need between May 2009 and October 2010. Of the clients Broadening Horizons supported: 13 moved into voluntary work; 58 progressed into further training; and 23 progressed into employment within six weeks of completing further training. The series of personal development workshops attracted 20 clients and these individuals were helped to increase their confidence and employability skills.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

Recruiting skilled and experienced staff – the project manager has struggled to identify people with the appropriate skills to recruit as careers information advisors; in March 2010 31 people applied for a vacant post, but only six could be shortlisted, and only two of these had suitable skills and experience.

As a result of Broadening Horizons being set up as a standalone employment, education and training project with its own team, it has been difficult to integrate its work with that of the Housing Options service.

A significant number of clients referred to Broadening Horizons were not ready to engage in education, training and/or employment advice as they felt they needed to resolve their housing issues before they could consider anything else. Hostel

residents were more willing to engage as they were settled in their accommodation and able to consider employment and training opportunities.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

The project manager very quickly and successfully developed an outreach service with the local YMCA hostels, providing employment, education or training advice and support to hostel residents. She also set up an effective working relationship with the local training organisation CALAT to provide complementary services to a wider range of clients and used resources jointly.

Croydon's local management is less strong, in that the project manager was very experienced in employment, education or training advice and support but was relatively new to housing and this meant it took her some time to fully understand the environment of housing policies and processes in which she was working.

Greenwich

Background

The Trailblazer funding has been integrated with funding from Supporting People and the borough's own resources to provide the Enhanced Housing Options service. A range of improvements have been made to Housing Options service.

The Trailblazer programmes

There are three core strands to the Enhanced Housing Options work in Greenwich:

ESTABLISHING AN INTEGRATED YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

An integrated young people's 'one stop shop' service where housing options and support staff work with other specialist services for young people, including social workers, employment and training advisers, substance misuse workers, primary care trust and mental health professionals was developed and opened in 2009. This includes a 'triage assessment' which involves the young person in identifying the services that they need at the point of contact. There is also a sexual health clinic offering screening, advice and free condom service. The service is focused for clients aged under 18 and care leavers. Over 18s are required to go to the mainstream housing options service, rather than the one stop shop.

A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING OPTIONS PLUS SERVICE TO VULNERABLE ADULTS

The housing options service for vulnerable adults in housing need has been developed and enhanced. It operates through outreach and partnership arrangements, aiming to reach people before the point of crisis and to provide a range of options and advice. This includes a multi agency team supporting ex-offenders and people with a substance misuse history to achieve sustainable housing solutions. The enhanced housing options team are also working directly with other services including prisons and the probation service to improve referral procedures and benefits advice for people leaving prison.

The services for vulnerable adults have also been expanded to include employment, education or training support, and to deliver access to private rented accommodation with support, as well as coordinating referral and move on arrangements to supported accommodation services

UPGRADING THE HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE

This included improving information on Housing Options through the Council's website, to address needs around housing, financial and debt advice, employment and training and health. Home Employment Connections were commissioned and a new site set up pointing homeseeker clients into information about employment opportunities.

Key successes

THE INTEGRATED YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

The service focussed on addressing immediate housing needs first, primarily through interventions to prevent homelessness. Young people and their families are offered support to avoid becoming homeless, and are linked with the employment, education or training service, and to training and education opportunities.

THE HOUSING OPTIONS PLUS SERVICE TO VULNERABLE ADULTS

This has been successful at engaging a highly vulnerable client group and helping them to make changes to their lives.

The work has brought about a cultural shift in the housing department's understanding of its role. Although there are few immediate benefits to people's housing options by improving their job prospects, the housing department now feel that it is a valid use of their resources to be helping residents to find meaningful activity in their day:

"Previously it was all about maximizing people's benefits, not maximizing their employment possibilities"

Upgrading the Housing Options service

Large numbers of clients access the choice-based lettings website and it is known that many of them click for further information about work and training opportunities.

Once established, costs for maintaining the improved website are minimal

Key challenges and lessons learned

THE INTEGRATED YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

A flexible approach is required to deal with differences between agencies in terms of age limits for clients in terms of who is eligible.

THE HOUSING OPTIONS PLUS SERVICE TO VULNERABLE ADULTS

The client turnover has not been as high as hoped firstly because the clients are a long way from the workforce and in need of long-term on-going support, and secondly because of the current economic circumstances meaning that it has become much harder even for the work-ready to find jobs.

The council remain keen to continue this strand of work though it remains to be seen whether this will be viable in a climate of growing financial pressures.

UPGRADING THE HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE

Home Employment Connections experienced technical difficulties in getting the website to work. The council advertised the new service to homeseekers whilst there

were still some technical problems, meaning that some people clicked on a link to register that they would like to make an appointment with a jobs advisor, but this information was not passed on to the jobs advisors.

There is no means of knowing how many clients actually gain employment from the information on the website.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

Establishing successful partnership working has been a key feature of much of the Greenwich Trailblazer's work. Setting up the joint working arrangements for the young people's integrated service had taken considerable time and effort. Different working cultures between agencies had to be addressed. Co-location of services is dependent on continued financial input from the different partners which is a concern in the current financial climate.

There is, however, evidence of service improvement as a result of partnership working. Procedures have been streamlined and integrated so that young people no longer need to repeat information to each agency they are working with. Information is shared between agencies with the consent of the young person, which appears to have been successful. Other agencies initially saw housing staff as gatekeepers and themselves as enablers, advocating on behalf of their clients, but learned to work more collaboratively and appreciate the constraints on the council. A focus on the Every Child Matters framework helped to bring agencies together.

Contracting out the provision of employment related information proved more complex than originally envisaged. Difficulties and delays were caused by requirements for corporate branding of the Home Employment Connections site. The council feel that a reduced version of the service could be carried out more cost-effectively in-house, simply making links between the housing and the employment bits of the council's and other websites.

Islington

Background

Islington's Enhanced Housing Options service has three main strands which are supported by Trailblazer funding. All strands build on previous Housing Options work. Trailblazer funding provides opportunities to link existing services offered by the Housing Aid Centre, the Regeneration and Community Partnership and the Choice Based Lettings scheme together in order to enhance the life chances of the most vulnerable residents through better housing and employment.

The Enhanced Housing Options interviews now include advice on employment and training opportunities. This strand also includes employing an outreach employment liaison officer on one of the most deprived estates.

The Trailblazer is also encouraging under-occupation moves by employing an additional under-occupation officer and extending the 'Homeconnections' Choice Based Lettings scheme to include private rented sector homes and developing a portal on the bidding system that advertises jobs, so those looking for housing can look for employment at the same time.

Islington are working with three main partners:

- Peabody Housing Trust, sub-contract the position of outreach employment liaison officer
- Homeconnections the company that supplies the choice-based lettings system
- Regeneration and Community partnerships, a department within Islington Council that manage Islington's employment and training programme

The Trailblazer programmes

OUTREACH WORK ON A DEPRIVED ESTATE

A part-time outreach employment and liaison officer is employed in partnership with the Peabody Trust. The outreach officer provides training and employment advice to tenants on a large Kings Cross housing estate. The service targets hard to reach tenants who might not otherwise engage with local services available to them; and works with them on a one-to-one basis to access employment and training opportunities.

UNDER OCCUPATION OFFICER

The council has employed an additional under-occupation officer to assist people to move and to identify under occupiers who have not yet applied for a housing transfer. The aim is to increase the number of under-occupation moves and the number of under occupiers on the transfer list.

The under-occupation officer has been working at the front line level with many of the registered social landlords who operate in the borough of Islington. He lets the

registered social landlords know what stock is available, in terms of both under occupiers and over-crowded households. By using housing benefits records (those widely available and not bound by data protection) he has been able to compile a list of under occupying households.

EXTENDING CHOICE ACROSS TENURE (PRIVATE SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES)

The aim of this strand is to expand Islington's choice-based lettings scheme to include private rented sector homes with approved landlords. The strand aimed to increase the number of housing applicants using the choice based lettings website therefore maximising the signposting opportunities for information on employment and training opportunities. The idea is to move towards a seamless approach to delivery of housing options through choice-based lettings in Islington.

HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT CONNECTIONS

The choice-based lettings provider has developed a portal that attaches itself to the existing bidding system, to identify people looking for housing who may also have unmet training or employment needs. The internet is widely available, 80 per cent of people use it for bidding so they can also see the tab for training and employment. It advertises entry level jobs. Housing and Employment Connections do not provide 'a service' but have joined up with the Regeneration team to provide new customers and the Trailblazer funding has been used to develop the portal. The Regeneration team is a department within Islington Council that provides employment services for Islington residents.

This scheme has now been developed further to include a direct on-line employment referral process so customers can self refer to the Regeneration team within the council and make an appointment directly with an employment advisor.

Key successes

There have been clear advantages from the provision of an employment outreach officer. The officer has found that instead of customers complaining about repairs or their benefits, as they might to a council employee, the outreach worker can say they are specifically there to offer information, advice and guidance about employment, education or training, delivering positive outcomes for tenants

The employment of an additional under-occupation officer has resulted in 166 households downsizing over the past year and of these 150 (16 were mutual exchange) released properties to overcrowded households who in turn released their properties. For every under-occupation move 2.5 people moved as a consequence, equating to a total of 350 people being helped into suitable accommodation.

Work with private landlords to access additional housing opportunities has been well received by those landlords who have engaged with the service. The service went live in August 2010 and since then has had over 100 applicants bidding for private rented properties

Key challenges and lessons for the future

It took longer for the construction of both web portals than Islington had originally anticipated. This was because of unforeseen technical hitches. However, now both web-sites are up and running they will be able to continue into the future without significant further funding.

The employment of a part time employment outreach officer did not work out in the first instance, which delayed this part of the work for some months. Sub-contracting to an agency with experience of this type of door step work should resolve the problems. It is unlikely this strand of the Trailblazer work will continue after the funding runs out.

The employment of an additional under-occupation has led to positive, hard outcomes and it is hoped that Islington Council will fund the post after Trailblazer funding has run out.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

The management of this Trailblazer project has been effective, particularly with the with the under-occupation scheme. Islington have been asked by other local authorities to share information and provide good practice.

Partnerships have been forged both internally with the Regeneration department which deals with employment and with registered social landlords regarding under-occupation schemes. The internal partnership has proved effective, prior to Trailblazer funding there was little joined up thinking between the two. Since then the benefits have included data sharing and referral opportunities

Now the websites are active both should run smoothly, the technical hitches were not because of the management of the project.

Kettering

Background

Kettering's Trailblazer services are largely add-ons to the existing housing options services. Four separate strands of work offer services and support to specific client groups. A Trailblazer manager, largely funded from the council's core funding, spends 60 percent of her time on the Trailblazer programme.

The Trailblazer programmes

LIFEPLAN

The Lifeplan scheme offers one-to-one support on a flexible basis to people who are out of work. It aims to connect customers into training, employment and volunteering opportunities and also to improve health and well-being. The Trailblazer funding pays for one full-time LifePlan advisor.

EXPANDED HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, EX-OFFENDERS AND PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Housing Officers provide outreach services in prisons, day centres and hospitals. They work with staff from these venues to train them (in housing options), but also do some work directly with groups of clients. The work has evolved over the past two years and now involves substantial partnership working and setting up improved systems for referrals and addressing the housing needs of clients from with mental health institutions, prisons and the probation service. Work in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council has also developed a Young Person's protocol which has clarified the respective roles of Children's and Housing services in respect to homeless 16 and 17 year olds.

HOMEMOVE

Homemove is a downsizing scheme targeted at existing council tenants who are under-occupying their homes, aiming to increase the numbers who downsize and thereby to use the available housing stock more efficiently. It started in July 2009, taking over some clients who were already registered for downsizing under the council's previous scheme. Applicants are given "points" which they can use to choose from a menu of types of assistance offered to help them move. These include assistance with packing, post redirection, the hire of a skip and financial incentives. Medical needs for moves are also given priority.

The Trailblazer funding has paid for one full-time Homemove worker for the first eighteen months of the scheme, but she has recently been replaced by a part-time worker, with the funding saved meaning that the scheme can be continued until April 2013. The Trailblazer scheme also funds the incentives and practical assistance offered to downsizing tenants.

TENANCY TRAINING COURSES

Several types of tenancy training courses have been run with the Trailblazers funding. The Move-on, Move-in course is targeted at young people (under 25) taking on their own tenancy for the first time. It gives prospective tenants the opportunity to gain life skills to sustain their tenancies and enhances their self-confidence. The New Opportunities New Skills course is aimed at older vulnerable tenants and applicants. Courses are often based in neighbourhood centres or the YMCA.

During 2010 new courses were developed for particular client groups such as those with mental health problems. They found it beneficial to run courses for specific client groups rather than grouping people with very different needs together. The work has been developed to offer training to other agencies such as hostel staff to enable them to deliver the tenancy training to their own clients.

Key successes

LIFEPLAN

The success of the Lifeplan scheme was very much reliant on having found the right person for the post through a rigorous recruitment process.

The scheme was very popular with clients who felt it was helping them get their lives back on track. It helped them engage with other services and some of them started part-time courses. Money saved from the Homemove scheme and other under-spent budgets within the Trailblazer funding has been diverted to the scheme to allow for continued funding until April 2012.

EXPANDED HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, EX-OFFENDERS AND PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

This has improved communication with other agencies who praise the work. As a result these agencies are more likely to work co-operatively with the housing department rather than to advocate for their clients' rights (e.g. in relation to homelessness legislation).

Much of the work has gone beyond local authority boundaries (including through a new sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme). Prisons take people from a wider area and neighbouring authorities have benefited from improved communication, referral systems and training of prison staff.

Funding was obtained from Supporting People for 2010-11 to further develop this strand of work. Now that systems have been set up, contacts made and training material produced this strand should continue with core funds.

HOMEMOVE

The practical and emotional support provided by the scheme was particularly valued by downsizing tenants, and the feeling that there was someone who understood their needs.

TENANCY TRAINING COURSES

The ability to evaluate what is working best and adapt the courses over time to meet needs and tailor them to specific client groups has proved invaluable.

Kettering have been successful in developing training materials and resources and training staff from other agencies about housing so that other agencies can take forward this strand of work with their own clients. They have also worked with Amber to establish an accredited course, the Amber Practical Housing Units, delivered by partner organisations.

Key challenges and lessons learned

LIFEPLAN

Lifeplan was more effective when it focused on those who were ready to make changes to their lives. Its continuation would require new funding. Systems were needed for moving clients off the worker's caseload or to refer them to other agencies when they were either no longer in need of help, or had shown not to be ready to make any progress. Clients valued home visits but this had cost and time implications for the worker meaning that the caseload remained small. Outreach work based in an area with high deprivation has also difficult to get off the ground, though they remain hopeful that this may yet develop.

EXPANDED HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, EX-OFFENDERS AND PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Outreach work carried out by Housing Options staff in settings such as prisons can be time-consuming. No further funding beyond April 2011 has been found for this strand of work. The council are looking into absorbing some aspects of it into their core work.

TENANCY TRAINING

The target client group for these courses was a vulnerable one, and some had difficulties in attending a six week course consistently. For young people, one to one support to encourage them onto the courses, check up on them and deal with any difficulties they have was found to be vital to success. It proved difficult to attract sufficient clients onto some courses – establishing the best time of day for different client groups helped address this issue. Maintaining attendance was also a challenge, particularly with the less “hands on” aspects of the course. Careful design of the order of the sessions helped address this issue.

HOMEMOVE

The Homemove scheme has not moved as many tenants as hoped – 17 in the first year against a target of 26 and a baseline figure of 11 per year before the scheme started. Applicants are not currently awarded high enough priority on the choice-based lettings system to bid successfully for properties, especially if they have no existing health needs. Alterations to the allocations system may address this issue.

Many of the tenants registered were older people who did not have access to the internet. This required staff input to help them bid for properties.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

The four Trailblazer programmes ran quite separately, though there were some referrals between the tenancy training courses and the Lifeplan scheme. Delays in getting started were largely due the time needed for staff recruitment rather than difficulties getting partnerships established. Initial plans to roll out the Homemove service to housing association clients proved difficult as the council failed to get the housing associations to engage with the scheme.

A greater involvement from partners was needed for the other two schemes. These two projects have increasingly involved the Trailblazer staff going out into other agencies to train their staff to offer better housing advice to their clients, something that has been well-received throughout.

Newham

BACKGROUND

Using stock more effectively – the adapted property register and ‘Moving On’ support team.

This Trailblazer responded to the widely acknowledged need to make better use of accessible and adapted housing stock to meet the needs of disabled people in Newham. Disabled clients had remained on the housing register for a prolonged period of time, while accessible property had been let to people not assessed as needing it. This reflects the inadequate information held about disability adaptations and disabled housing registrants needs, as well as the lack of suitable stock,

Using stock more effectively seeks to ensure that adapted and accessible properties are occupied by disabled clients and that they are able to bid for such housing. This is being achieved through three core activities: classifying stock for disability suitability; reviewing the medical housing register; and supporting people to make appropriate bids for properties. The team works with a variety of partners within the local authority including housing, planning, access advisors and social services. Other partners include Health Authority staff, Newham Homes, housing associations and other third sector partners (e.g. advocacy organisations).

THE TRAILBLAZER PROGRAMMES

The Using stock more effectively team have been working since August 2009. They set up an advisory board with partners from within the local authority and third sector. Better communication is helping to identify adapted and adaptable properties within Newham’s stock.

The team are creating a new register of adapted and adaptable properties (following the Mayor of London’s Accessible Housing Definitions). This information will then be made available to disabled people to help with bids in Newham’s existing Choice Based Lettings scheme. The data will be held on the East London Lettings Company’s database and will capture all social housing stock (Newham Homes and housing association stock) - all partners will have access to a means of accurately recording and sharing information regarding properties.

The team also are providing ‘fast track’ assistance to assess properties and advise about potential tenants when appropriate vacancies arise. Once suitable properties are identified, disabled clients with emergency priority can be made a direct offer. Those with lower priority can be advised and assisted to bid for the accessible properties. It is hoped that through this process more wheelchair standard, accessible and adapted properties will be used to house disabled people. Access to a surveyor means that the adaptability of a property can be ascertained so prospective tenants can be advised, and major and minor adaptations can be ‘fast tracked’ if necessary before someone moves into the property.

A home-visiting ‘Move On’ caseworker offers advice and proactive support for clients to facilitate moves to more suitable accommodation (across tenures). Practical

support includes signposting and providing information on housing options, benefits advice, support and assistance in arranging a move and giving advice on bidding and assisting clients to move from under-occupied properties.

Initially the caseworker was managed by the Senior Caseworker Support Manager, and is now managed by the Trailblazer Occupational Therapist. The caseworker's role has changed significantly over the past six months and the main emphasis now is as Project Manager for the Accessible Housing Register, collecting and co-ordinating stock data collection. Local housing associations are being encouraged to collect stock data for the register and advised the Trailblazer Occupational Therapist when they have a void accessible property so it can be used appropriately. These details are then added to the register of adapted properties, and the aim is to start using the Accessible Housing Register categories for all social housing stock in 2012. The team are also seeking to encourage the recycling of adaptations rather than the constant changes and removals currently in action.

Key successes

There has been progress with categorising council properties and the information is being stored ready to upload into the system used by Choice Homes.

There has been contact between developers, both with Newham's regeneration team and registered social landlords and the Trailblazer Occupational Therapist has had input into numerous large properties which have been designed to be accessible and these have been let to appropriate families.

The number of disabled clients with emergency priority who have been housed has increased. This has happened through the Trailblazer Occupational Therapist having contact with other Occupational Therapists attached to clients, and enabling housing to have more specific information about applicant's mobility requirements. Work has been done with the housing register team and now people's needs are categorised as advised in the Accessible Housing Register good practice guide, i.e. in a way that is compatible with the stock categories and so that people will know what to bid for to meet their access needs.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

Currently the team have collected lots of data but have not been able to up load and use it in such a way that it feeds directly into the choice-based lettings property adverts. The Choice Homes system is being developed to hold this information for Newham and other boroughs and the system should be ready in March 2011.

Although the project, and particularly the technical side has taken a long time to get up and running, Newham see what they are trying to achieve as valuable. Once the accessible register is fully operational it will save time, and improve the use of scarce resources by automatically flagging up suitability properties.

Compiling a comprehensive adapted and adaptable housing property register is ambitious and time consuming. The team are currently undertaking a stock survey of a sample of properties in each building or street. The Digipen software has recently

started to be used for this purpose and both the Home Improvement Agency and Lettings at Newham have allocated staff overtime in order to gather this information. It is thought that it will take until the end of 2011 before the register is completed.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

There have been problems in setting priorities (between Newham and housing association stock), in attracting housing association interest and maintaining commitment to work together. Recently however, one large association has engaged and data on their properties should be ready to use soon.

The existing choice-based lettings provider is working on its software to incorporate property adaptations data. It is expected this will be available in March 2011 for use by Newham and other boroughs and registered social landlords.

Norwich

Background

LEAP (Learning Employment Accommodation Project) is a special service seeking to incorporate employment, education and training with accommodation opportunities in the private rented sector for single homeless people. At any one time 50 individuals were usually ready to move on from hostels but could not because of the lack of suitable accommodation. It was recognised that there was an over dependence on the social housing stock for hostel move on, even though only 58 per cent of hostel residents have a local connection to the city and were therefore eligible for social housing in Norwich. The council was therefore keen to develop its Private Sector Leasing Scheme to target hostel residents, but recognised the need to provide support to this group to enable them to address other difficulties such as offending backgrounds, substance misuse or a lack of financial resources associated with unemployment.

The Trailblazer programmes

A new specialist Worklessness officer sits within the Housing Advice Team, but the post holder carries out client appointments at one of the largest direct access homeless hostels in the area, as well as the City Hall offices. This post, as well as one post of a Private Sector Leasing Officer who gives post-move support to housed clients, is fully funded from the Trailblazer budget.

LEAP is founded on partnership working. The key partners include hostels (YMCA) and St Martins Housing Trust that refer to LEAP, as well as employment, education or training AIG and training providers who take referrals from LEAP. Clients can also self-refer if they hear about the project and think they would be suitable.

Key successes

- Development of new options for single homeless people, especially those without local connection and vulnerable people with support needs – for whom a simple advice service would not be enough.
- This clientele is generally regarded particularly challenging and hard to reach, so managing to successfully engage over 200 individuals who are, for one reason or another, homeless and at the risk of exclusion is a highly positive outcome.
- Ongoing support and the ability of the project workers to gain the clients' trust can be regarded essential for the project's success. LEAP's Worklessness Officer and Private Sector Leasing Officer are widely trusted, and this has greatly contributed to the project's ability to achieve such positive outcomes
- LEAP has helped nearly a hundred vulnerable homeless people to get in touch with employment, education or training information, advice and guidance and employability training providers and to access independent living, often for the first time in their life or following a considerable break from settled lifestyle. Feeling more in control of their lives, while simultaneously

feeling cared for and looked after as the holistic approach of the project dictates, has worked to boost the clients self-esteem and attitude toward life.

- LEAP has actively facilitated good practices for inter-agency collaboration in Norwich. As a result, the provision of services for particularly vulnerable clients has improved, and bidding for joint inter-agency funding may be a viable option in the future to ensure continuation of the services at the time when cuts in funding are likely to take place;
- The knowledge acquired from LEAP's operation will help the city council and other interested parties to improve future service design and delivery to the single homeless
- By October 2010, 221 clients were seen at least once. LEAP helped 83 of them engaged in work focused activity such as training or work placement. Of these, 42 were moved into accommodation, and 23 moved into employment.
- In its first 12 months of operation, LEAP housed 19 ex-offenders in private rented sector accommodation. When the project had been in place for 18 months, 11 of these 19 ex-offenders had successfully retained their accommodation and avoided re-offending.
- The project could be replicated in areas with a sufficiently large private rented sector where demand from high-income households does not exceed supply. Although LEAP is taking advantage of an existing Private Sector Leasing Scheme, this is not a necessary precondition as long as a suitably qualified housing officer can be found to oversee this aspect of the service. LEAP also relies heavily on the existing employment, education or training AIG and training providers. Where this type of provision is already available the key task would be to create links with the other agencies and establish functional and mutually rewarding referral systems with them, preferably with a follow-up element. This can be done by facilitating interaction and collaboration by networking events, and assuring that all parties benefit from the collaboration as has been done in Norwich.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

- Finding the right people for the job is of very high importance when working with challenging client groups. Problems in recruitment of a third project worker caused delays and resulted in demand for the service exceeding provision. To avoid having to compromise the quality of the service and the extent of support the clients are given, the project closed down temporarily for new referrals during 2010. This third appointment, when it finally took place in proved unsuccessful resulting in the need to reallocate duties and priorities and this may restrict the capacity of the project.
- The eligibility criteria for and delays in processing Housing Benefit, have been a challenge to the project. Individual advice and support need to be available to clients who depend on Housing Benefit to encourage and enable them to return to employment. If the client is on a low income, the awareness of how much better off they are (often only £20 per week) also creates a major barrier

to motivation to work. The benefits of employment other than money often need to be explained to the client as knowledge of these is scant.

- The changes announced in Comprehensive Spending Review to Welfare Allowance (Job Seeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit) will have future implications for the project. Because many of the clients are fairly far from being able to access the paid labour market as they enter the project, it is not uncommon for them to take over a year before becoming employable. If cuts are made to Housing Benefit after Job Seeker's Allowance claimants have claimed for one year it could threaten the affordability of Private Sector Leasing Scheme accommodation.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

The success of LEAP has in many ways exceeded all initial expectations in terms of numbers of clients engaged, housed and client satisfaction. This is largely due to the well-defined scope of the project, thorough planning and preliminary preparations that were carried out prior to the commencement of the service delivery. Partners were approached well in advance before the project commenced, and referral practices and procedures were developed together with partners. Special care and attention was paid to keep dialogue with partners open and honest, and to assure that partners benefit from the partnership with LEAP. A meeting where all local partners were invited was held to facilitate good relationships not just between the Trailblazer and its partners, but also between the partner agencies. These relationships are much valued by the partners and expected to be sustained in the future.

Flexibility of the project and the structure of the management enabled the frontline service delivery staff to engage with the management of the project, and this is believed to have been advantageous for the purposes of ongoing development of the project. An important factor facilitating LEAP's success has been having found the right people for the posts, training them as appropriate, and making sure they are at liberty to exercise a degree of flexibility over the project budget to make it possible to meet small costs in ad hoc basis.

Nottingham

Background

Nottingham City Council's Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme extends its current measures to prevent homelessness and reduce social exclusion. The programme is project managed by the Business Manager at Nottingham County Council from within the Housing Support and Partnerships team which sits in the Adult Support Health and Housing Department.

The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer services at Nottingham are located at the Council's Housing Aid office in the centre of the city. Other services co-located at Housing Aid include Framework Housing Association's employment brokers, Nottingham Housing Advice (formerly Shelter), Welfare Rights, NACRO, Sanctuary (women's aid), a mediation service and the fire service.

The Hostel Liaison Group is another important partner of Nottingham County Council. The Hostel Liaison Group helps communicate the work of the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme to other service providers, particularly those in the third sector.

Seven staff in total are employed with support from Trailblazer funding to deliver the programme, including: a private rented sector development manager and administrator, a private rented sector support worker, two employment brokers, a welfare benefits advisor, and a social exclusion worker.

Nottingham Council has a Choice Based Lettings system, HomeLink.

The Trailblazer Programmes

The key initiatives supported by Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer funding are outlined below:

- **Extended private rented sector bond scheme aka rent guarantee scheme** – broaden the existing scheme to include individuals with good track record of behaviour but who have greater needs by helping them to identify appropriate accommodation and sustain their tenancy. This scheme is supported by the Tenant and Landlord Accreditation Schemes where tenants with good references are matched with credible private landlords.
- **Supported Private Rented Sector Bond Scheme** – For individuals in supported accommodation who are outside the traditional Private Rented Sector Bond Scheme because of past behaviour e.g. drugs misuse etc. Tenants are interviewed, accommodation is identified for them, and they are supported to sustain their tenancy for three months. The support worker is jointly funded by Nottingham County Council and Framework Housing Association.

The aim of the Rent Guarantee and Supported Private Rented Sector Bond Schemes is to further enhance access and successful take up of sustained private sector housing options.

- **Employment Broker Service** – specialists undertaking one to one intensive training and employment support with people in housing need who traditionally don't seek support from services such as Working Links. Individuals are identified via the Housing Aid contact assessment which now includes a job ready section.
- **Welfare Benefits Service** – to help increase the take up of benefit advice and 'better-off in work' calculations a Nottingham Welfare Rights' worker is funded to spend two days per week at Housing Aid answering client queries and conducting 'better-off in work' calculations. An additional day per week is funded for the worker to follow up queries and representation for clients at the Welfare Rights office.
- **Life Coaching Experience** – a pilot project to help the long term unemployed e.g. ex-offenders and homeless people, move a step closer to training and employment by providing them with basic life skills. The individuals were identified by partners e.g. probation services, Job Centre Plus, hostels etc and via a recruitment event in the city centre. One of two phases has already been completed.
- **Social exclusion pilot** – the project has only recently commenced but will focus on a particular area of high rise flats in the city with a poor reputation where young men, many with mental health and drug misuse issues, have tended to be re-housed together. This has had a detrimental effect on the neighbourhood. A social exclusion officer is training community groups and service providers in the area to understand what support services are available for the male residents in question and help refer them to these services for support. In addition, the Local Area Partnership now receives referrals from housing providers of tenants who are at risk of homelessness and are using Future Jobs Fund employees to contact these tenants and help them engage with the necessary support services.

Key successes

Services are provided in one location – means that visitors and clients can easily access a variety of services including, housing, employment, and financial advice within the same building.

Access to and take up of properties in the private rented sector has increased - by homeless people as a result of the Rent Guarantee and Supported Bond schemes, and the supporting good tenant and landlord initiatives. This has led to a reduction in demand for temporary accommodation in the city and enabled the Council to build up better relationships with private sector landlords.

The Supported Bond scheme has resulted in more private landlords being willing to accept former hostel residents as tenants – by providing additional support to former hostel residents.

The Employment Broker scheme has provided personalised high quality support to hostel residents and other Housing Aid clients and helped them to access training and employment opportunities.

The Welfare Benefits service has been very effective in preventing homelessness by providing benefits advice and debt support to clients. This has extended its initial aim to support the Employment Broker scheme by offering 'better-off in work' calculations.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

The risk of housing vulnerable people in the private rented sector – by increasing access to the private rented sector where the best interests of vulnerable clients may not be as well addressed as if they lived in social housing.

Supported Bond scheme – success was slow to develop as it took longer than anticipated to encourage private rented sector landlords to participate and was then undermined to a certain extent by the introduction of a temporary supported housing diversion scheme which offered incentives to landlords and was therefore more popular.

Employment Broker scheme – only supported a relatively small number of clients and of these only a minority went into training or employment. The scheme provider suggested that client engagement and success rate would increase if clients were engaged after their housing issues had been resolved. Also, the scheme potentially duplicates services offered by other providers (Working Links also provides outreach employment and training support to the Salvation Army Hostel).

Life Coaching Experience - was less successful than anticipated and wasn't carried out again in year two of the programme because it was too difficult for the Council to track clients' outcomes over time and compare them with non-life coaching participants.

Relationship with Job Centre Plus – has been particularly limited and the Trailblazer has struggled to engage the organisation despite several attempts.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

Nottingham's local management is particularly strong in involving a number of non-statutory local specialists in homelessness, for example Hostel Liaison Group to design their services, and Hostel Liaison Group's consultation group to test the proposed services. They held quarterly meetings with their service providers to monitor performance and discuss any concerns and potential improvements.

Despite these underlying strengths, Nottingham's local management has suffered some weaknesses in that some of its service providers were less aware of the other activities the Trailblazer offered - one partner suggested that regular e-alerts about the different services and their impact would be an effective way to raise awareness.

South West London Learning Disability Homefinder Project

Background

The South West London Home Finder Project was established to try and meet the shortage of housing options available to those with a learning disability. Initially set up with seven south London boroughs – Kingston, Richmond, Wandsworth, Lambeth, Sutton, Croydon and Merton – the project was different from other, single borough based schemes, in that it provided a template that can be replicated amongst all the member boroughs. The joint partner in this project is Golden Lane Housing who were set up in 1998 by Mencap to focus on the housing needs of those with a learning disability. Golden Lane aimed to create a sustainable social enterprise to expand the range of choice of accommodation for people with learning disabilities.

In addition to the seven London local authority borough partners and Golden Lane Housing, the project built partnerships with many other departments and organisations including social services, Learning Disability teams across the boroughs, Broadway (a London based Homeless charity, who have helped to secure property for South West London Home Finder Project), various support providers across the capital as well as letting agents and private landlords.

The Trailblazer programmes

The project aimed to create a specialist housing and support service allowing people with learning disabilities to access the large pool of private sector rental properties across London.

The project's role was to support an individual to access accommodation by utilising existing private sector leasing schemes already operated by housing authorities and their partners. However the project recognised that not all housing departments were able to offer this service more widely than their current statutory housing duty because of a lack of accommodation. Furthermore not all applicants were suitable for or be able to use the service.

The project's objective was to assist people with learning disabilities to access the private rented sector directly by acting as a personal agent for the prospective tenants; supporting them to locate accommodation from agents/adverts; and carrying out assistive viewings and interviews with landlords. This involved Golden Lane taking on corporate leases from private landlords and sub-letting to tenants with a learning disability for a fixed period of time, allowing an independent living environment whilst still providing the housing related support required by the individual.

Key successes

Golden Lane successfully built a framework model whereby individuals with a learning disability were able to access the vast amount of property available in the private rented sector. By taking a corporate lease, Golden Lane was able to provide

stability for the landlord, whilst giving the tenant a safe and secure supported home in the community.

The initial seven boroughs involved in the scheme worked well to ensure a cohesive message throughout their teams. Referrals have been made from social services, commissioners and Learning Disability departments. The service has now been rolled out to all London boroughs.

The service took time to get established and had only 20 referrals up to February 2010 but by February 2011, had 159 referrals, 76 of which were active. A total of 21 people were successfully housed since 2009, and a further 35, where the service was not appropriate to their needs, were offered housing advice.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

Initially the project had difficulty connecting with private landlords who would be willing to let properties to those with learning disabilities. Golden Lane had to work hard to overcome their reservations and come up with ways of reassuring and convincing landlords that tenants with a learning disability can make good tenants.

Golden Lane teamed up with Broadway in 2010 as a way to secure property from landlords who had already agreed to tenancies with vulnerable people. There have been five people housed in a property leased to Golden Lane by Broadway since the start of the project.

It is highly likely that the project will continue after the Trailblazer funding has ended in April 2011. Golden Lane believe they have established a workable model that can be used throughout London and beyond.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

All partners involved with the project have been pleased with the management. Because this is a unique and evolving project, housing outcomes have taken longer to plan for than first anticipated. This has meant that most of the 21 people housed through the project were housed in the last eight months of the project; however this suggests that the model is now working, and can continue to build momentum.

Strategic working relationships have proved to be the keys to this scheme, with links to Broadway, local authority Learning Disability teams and social services providing the framework for a successful working model.

Tunbridge Wells and Rother

Background

The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers programme in Tunbridge Wells and Rother, known as Housing Options Money and Employment Support (HOMES) Project, operates across a county boundary (Kent and East Sussex), reflecting natural travel to work/school/public service mobility between north Rother and Tunbridge Wells.

The aim of the HOMES project is to provide enhanced housing options advice to clients in Tunbridge Wells borough and Rother district by funding additional welfare benefits/debt advice and employment/training advice services alongside existing housing advice services to provide a one-stop service under one roof.

The services provided under the HOMES project are available to all. However, some specific client sub-groups are targeted in both areas. These include young people in Rother, and young, vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Tunbridge Wells. The main external partners are the Citizens Advice Bureau and Royal British Legion, and two housing associations (Town and Country Group and Rother Homes, a subsidiary of Amicus Horizon).

The Trailblazer Programmes

The key elements of the Tunbridge Wells and Rother HOMES project are:

- The appointment of a part-time welfare benefit/debt advice project supervisor by Tunbridge Wells & District Citizen's Advice Bureaux at the Tunbridge Wells Gateway. The post holder carries out initial assessment/interviews and then refers clients on to volunteer advisers across the borough. The appointment of a part-time welfare benefit/debt advice project worker by Rother Citizen's Advice Bureaux with back-up and supervision provided within the Bureau. This adviser works closely with volunteer advisers who provide preliminary client contact services, enabling the Citizen's Advice Bureaux to provide a good level of service to meet demand throughout the district.
- The appointment of a full-time and a part-time community advisor by RBLI to provide employment and training information, advice and guidance (information, advice and guidance), one in Tunbridge Wells and one in Bexhill-on-Sea.
- Priority fast-track referral arrangements from the two councils' Housing Options Teams and Revenues and Benefits Services, and (for their tenants) from Town & Country Housing Group (TCHG) and Rother Homes, and from other agreed partners (e.g. other registered social landlords). The aim is for all clients to be seen with five working days.

Key successes

- By enabling Royal British Legion Industries and Citizen's Advice Bureaux to establish new posts, The HOMES project increased the capacity of both agencies, reducing the waiting periods and meaning that clients' situations do not have time to deteriorate whilst waiting for help. This was particularly valuable during the recession when demand for certain types of services, such as employment and debt advice, increased significantly. Quick access to advice services is also important when simple income maximisation measures can work to prevent further crisis such as the loss of home.
- The co-location with the Housing Options service and outreach surgeries has worked to improve accessibility, service capacity and increase referred clients' likelihood to follow through with the referrals.
- Close collaboration with partner agencies has made it possible for the Housing Options service to refer clients on to appropriate help to either prevent homelessness or to maximise their income and subsequently reduce the need for social rented accommodation.
- The new partnership arrangement has led to improved customer service and client satisfaction by enabling a more holistic and integrated approach to solving out the client's problems.
- A standardised multi-agency referral system and electronic diaries make it possible for advisers to book the clients in with other advisers while they are still with them. Data shared in the referral forms saves time as clients do not need to repeat the same information to different advisers.

Key Challenges and lessons for the future

- Problems with referrals and sharing of information were experienced in the early stages of the project. Dialogue with partners was needed to enable agencies to form a better understanding of roles and activities.
- Co-location of the services and implementation of referral practices are the key elements of the Tunbridge Wells and Rother Trailblazer. These approaches could in theory be applied anywhere between local organisations include a Citizen's Advice Bureaux (or similar) and an employment, education or training information, advice and guidance service; subject to some funding to set up networks and design referral procedures.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

The success of the HOMES project is largely due to funnelling of the additional funding to frontline service delivery with minimal spending on management. While the HOMES project and the grant is in principle managed by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, with the operational side in Rother being the responsibility of a Council employee at their end, no Enhanced Housing Options funding is used to contribute towards management. Close collaboration and establishment of good relationships between all partners, facilitated with co-location in some cases, have also minimised the need for overall management of the project. The absence of overall paid project

manager, however, means that the outcomes are not systematically recorded in a centralised manner and, for the purposes of this evaluation, data was collected individually from partner agencies. Even a part-time role for an overall manager could potentially enable the HOMES project to raise more awareness of its positive outcomes and help secure funding for the continuation of the project beyond March 2011.

West Dorset

Background

West Dorset's homelessness service returned in-house in November 2006 and was remodelled to provide comprehensive housing options. The decision to bid for the Trailblazer funding was partly based on the need for 'good practice' transferable to rural contexts. Exclusion, rurality and lack of opportunity especially for young people are at the core of the Trailblazer programme in West Dorset.

The Trailblazer funding in West Dorset is used to run a number of different programmes, including

- housing advice and employment, education and training information, advice and guidance for young people
- post-move support for older people
- rural outreach

In addition to the above, some funding was used to improve training facilities at West Rivers House in Bridport. The overall budget is managed by the West Dorset District Council, but the provision of services is carried out in close collaboration with partner agencies, including Ansbury, which delivers Connexions services across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, the YOU Trust working with homeless young people, Maximus Employment and Training (UK), which runs access to work schemes, Anchor Staying Put, a Home Improvement Agency, West Dorset Care and Repair, which helps older and disabled people lead independent lives, the Supporting People Team and Magna Housing Association (MHA), which owns 80 per cent of housing association stock in the District.

The Trailblazer Programmes

While some of the services provided under the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer programme add to the existing services, all of the four initiatives described below, are fully funded from the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers budget.

HOUSING ADVICE AND EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

This involves the employment of a full-time Young Person's Housing Adviser, funded from the Trailblazers budget. In addition to housing advice, the Young Person's Housing Adviser provides employment, education or training information, advice and guidance, works closely with housing providers and social services, and carries out outreach appointments with young people in a variety of locations including some outside the major towns.

The purpose of this post is to make Housing Options Service more approachable and suitable for your people, and to provide young people with the extra support that they may need to reach successful outcomes. The service is available for young people aged 16-19, and young adults with special needs up to the age of 25. The most

common actions include registering young people with choice-based lettings and helping them bid, mediation, and helping young people to move into supported housing, lodgings or private rentals. The Young Person's Housing Adviser has 35-40 ongoing cases at any one time. Clients require a lot of support, and engagement. Part of the Young Person's Housing Adviser job is to create links with housing providers and agencies to ensure that as broad a range of options as possible is available to clients. The Young Person's Housing Adviser has established an extensive network of contacts in the area, ranging from the Citizen's Advice Bureaux and housing providers to drug and alcohol and mental health services. Her background of working with Connexions, means that the Young Person's Housing Adviser occasionally provides employment and education advice or refers clients to these services.

POST-MOVE SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Under this initiative, an existing part-time Older Persons Housing Options Officer whose post has been funded by Supporting People was enabled to go full time (from three to five days a week) and extend the services available to help older people settle in after they move. The idea was to provide a longer term service, with support and guidance for up to six months following a move. The budget for this initiative is £24,000 pa, and the key partners are Anchor Staying Put, West Dorset Care and Repair, and the Dorset County Council Supporting People Team. The Older Persons Housing Options Officer works closely with the under-occupation team, engages with owner occupiers at risk of losing their homes as they approach retirement age or lose their jobs for other reasons, such as ill health.

RURAL OUTREACH

This project strand aims to improve outreach services across a large area with a scattered population. It started by commissioning a research project on rural housing needs and aspirations (completed November 2009), and used the research to develop a strategy for rural outreach and appoint a Rural Outreach Officer (April 2010). The key objective of the service is to make the Housing Options service more accessible and increase the take-up in rural areas and smaller towns. The Rural Outreach Housing Options Officer is also drafting a booklet to make information regarding a range of housing-related issues more accessible to rural populations and people with limited IT skills or internet access. Parish and district councillors and other agencies also receive information. Since the project commenced, links have been created with neighbouring South Somerset so that they may direct anybody who lives in West Dorset to the Rural outreach Housing Options Officer. By October 2010, over 190 clients had accessed the service.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT TO IMPROVE TRAINING FACILITIES AT WRH

Another initiative directed at young people is a training space and an IT suite at a young persons' supported housing project, to improve the training and education opportunities available in the area. The total budget for this project is £9,000, which included an allocation of £3,000 for maintenance.

Key successes

The additional funding made the provision of the new, much needed, services possible. The successes of the Trailblazer programme in West Dorset include:

- Improved accessibility of the housing options service in the area
- Improved scope and quality of the services available for specific (vulnerable) clients, such as older and younger people
- Improved partnership working and inter-agency referral

HOUSING ADVICE AND EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The service commenced in early August 2009 and by mid-October 2010, some 140 young people had accessed the project.

POST-MOVE SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Older people who know that support and help is available are more likely to consider moving house and less likely to reject it on the grounds that they could not cope. By October 2010, a total of 60 older people had been helped to move house and settle in a new home. Seven vacated family sized social housing

CAPITAL INVESTMENT TO IMPROVE TRAINING FACILITIES AT WRH

The refurbishment work was finished in early 2010, and the suite has been in use since, providing a valuable resource to agencies such as Maximus working in the area who have previously struggled to find facilities that would meet their needs especially in terms of IT provision and accessibility, and that would be large enough to run group sessions.

Key challenges and lessons for the future

The rurality of the region and the long distances present a challenge to service provision. Outreach is costly and the numbers of clients accessing any one service remain small in comparison to more urban areas. Low numbers of clients is not the same as low demand for services. The West Dorset Trailblazer has generated some valuable knowledge, not least in terms accessibility issues and the housing needs and housing advice needs of rural populations.

Strengths and weaknesses in local management (of projects and partnerships)

Working together with agencies that were well established in the area prior to the commencement of the Trailblazers project has meant that existing links and resources have been effectively utilised to provide as holistic and comprehensive support as possible. The project manager is keen to find alternative funding to keep the Young Person's Housing Adviser, Older Persons Housing Options Officer and Rural Outreach Housing Options Officer in post past March 2011. Funding towards

the salary of the project manager could have enabled more systematic outcomes monitoring to demonstrate positive impacts.

Appendix 3: Client tracking

A. Methodology for client tracking

In total, 474 Trailblazer clients were interviewed across the eight tracking areas. Table A3.1 shows the proportion of clients interviewed in each scheme.

Table A3.1: Client interviews

		Bournemouth	Bradford	Camden	Croydon	Kettering	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	TOTAL	Proportion of Eligible clients
Clients interviewed	Interviewed	59	61	68	71	44	30	60	81	474 ¹⁸	51.9%
Eligible clients not interviewed, by reason	In prison	0	2			2				4	0.4%
	In hospital/hospice	0				2				2	0.2%
	Refused	0	93 ¹⁹	6	5	17	9	1		131	14.4%
	Health difficulties	0	1			2		1		4	0.4%
	Language difficulties	0					3			3	0.3%
	No/incorrect contact details provided	0			26		2		64	92	10.1%
	Researcher failed to contact client	8	7	6	44	1	8	2	65	141	15.5%
	Other eligible client missed	0			2					2	0.2%
	Total eligible clients missed	8	103	12	77	24	22	64	129	439	48.1%
Total eligible clients		67	164	80	148	68	52	124	210	913	100%
“Clients” on Trailblazers’ databases, but not clients suitable for taking part in client tracking	Referred but never worked with		10		8	3		6	1	28	-
	Already ceased to be client		39	2		12		63		116	-
	Partner of existing client – not separate household					4				4	-
	Total unsuitable “clients”	0	49	2	8	19	0	69	1	148	-

¹⁸ This was the total number interviewed. Small numbers of clients did not answer all questions. The totals given throughout this annex therefore vary and relate to the number who answered that particular question.

¹⁹ All but three of these 93 were clients on the employment, education or training information, advice and guidance scheme in Bradford. We were unable to approach these clients directly to ask if they were willing to take part in the research and were instead reliant on the scheme staff member to ask if they were willing to partake.

Tracking areas initial interview record²⁰

Overall 52 per cent of eligible clients were interviewed. The proportion was over 80 per cent in some, but lower in Bradford in particular, where there were some difficulties in getting contact details. There are therefore some concerns that in Bradford our sample may over-represent those who had engaged well in the scheme and who the project staff had more opportunity to encourage to take part in the research.

Many of the clients, in Newham and Camden in particular did not speak English as their first language, but most households were able to find one adult member whose English was sufficient. In addition two clients were interviewed through interpreters in Camden, speaking Somali and Sylheti.

Table A3.2 shows the total number of clients interviewed by scheme, and also the length of time they were in the scheme. Just over half the clients interviewed had been in the Trailblazer scheme for less than three months, though some had been in the schemes for between three and 12 months.

Table A3.2: Length of time in scheme at time of initial interview

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Under 3 months	33	22	41	41	26	10	7	16	34	18	248
3-6 months	2	0	6	15	24	9	6	8	9	25	104
Over 6 months	0	0	7	12	14	6	6	1	16	37	99
Not known	2	2	5	0	7	0	0	5	1	1	23
Total	37	24	59	68	71	25	19	30	60	81	474

Of the 474 initially interviewed, 356 were re-interviewed after two months, and 277 after six months. Table A3.3 shows the interview numbers by Trailblazer scheme.

²⁰ The figures for Nottingham relate only to clients who joined the scheme by mid January 2010, by which time we had achieved the target of 80 interviews. For all other areas, the figures relate to the total number of clients on the scheme by March 31st 2010.

Table A3.3: Two and six month follow up rates

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Initial interviews	37	24	59	68	71	25	19	30	60	81	474
2 month interviews	21	16	44	60	51	23	19	18	45	59	356
	57%	67%	75%	88%	72%	92%	100%	60%	75%	73%	75%
6 month interviews	22	8	37	43	36	21	14	18	31	47	277
	59%	33%	63%	63%	51%	84%	74%	60%	52%	58%	58%

B. Trailblazer client tracking data

The initial profile of Trailblazer clients

The Trailblazer projects are diverse and hence so too were their client groups. Tables A3.4-7 show the profile of Trailblazer clients by gender, age group and ethnicity. For the purposes of our research a 'client' was taken to be a household. In cases where there were more than one adult member in the household, the details here relate to the profile of the person with whom we carried out the interview.

As can be seen from Table A3.4 the clients of some schemes were roughly evenly mixed between men and women²¹. Bradford – Openmoves, Croydon and Norwich all had more than two-thirds men, whereas Kettering Lifeplan and Camden had more than two-thirds women. Overall, 56 per cent of clients were men.

Table A3.4: Gender of clients²²

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Male	34	12	39	16	49	9	5	12	53	34	263
Female	3	12	19	52	21	16	14	16	7	47	207
Total	37	24	58	68	70	25	19	28	60	81	470

As shown in Table A3.5, only the Kettering Lifeplan scheme had a strong focus on a specific age group. Overall most Trailblazer clients were in the young to middle age groups, with the exception of the Newham and Kettering Homemove clients.

²¹ Some Trailblazers worked with households rather than individuals. The gender reported here is that of the person we interviewed.

²² Throughout this report, the totals presented represent the total who answered the question. The small numbers who did not answer a question have been excluded from the totals and percentages given.

Table A3.5: Age group of clients

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
16-24	13	8	10	9	17	0	13	1	23	33	127
25-34	11	4	14	21	15	0	2	5	17	20	109
35-44	11	5	19	25	21	4	3	3	10	15	116
45-54	2	6	9	10	14	7	1	7	8	11	75
55-64	0	1	4	2	3	6	0	7	2	1	26
65-74	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	1	7
Over 75	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	3	0	0	8
Total	37	24	57	68	70	25	19	27	60	81	468

The ethnicity of clients varied a great deal between schemes, with particularly high numbers of ethnic minorities amongst the clients of Camden, Newham, Croydon and Nottingham (Table A3.6).

Table A3.6: Ethnicity of clients

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
White - British	29	19	44	12	21	25	17	11	55	49	282
White - Irish	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	2	8
White - Other	0	1	4	6	2	0	0	0	1	4	18
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	8
Mixed - White and Asian	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Mixed - Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Asian - Pakistani	5	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	10
Asian - Bangladeshi	1	0	0	15	0	0	0	2	0	0	18
Asian - Other	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	5
Black - Black Caribbean	0	0	3	1	17	0	1	2	0	8	32
Black - African	0	3	2	18	12	0	0	8	1	11	55
Black - Other	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	1	0	8
Other Ethnic group	1	0	1	12	1	0	0	0	1	0	16
Not answered	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	5
Total	37	24	58	68	70	25	19	27	60	81	469

Client circumstances

HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD TYPES

Over the case studies, nearly half of Trailblazer clients were single person households. In all, 35 per cent had children, just over half of whom were single parents. The Camden scheme was unusual in targeting larger households; most Trailblazer clients elsewhere were smaller households.

In terms of tenure, there was considerable variation between the schemes, reflecting the differing services they were offering (Table A3.7).

Table A3.7: Tenure of clients

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Council	4	15	7	62	17	24	10	16	2	4	161
Housing Association	4	0	2	3	11	0	6	4	0	3	33
Private renting	4	0	17	2	13	0	0	3	2	66	107
Owner-occupation	7	3	2	0	4	0	0	0	3	0	19
Temporary	4	0	26	0	23	1	1	1	22	4	82
Informal homeless	14	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	11	3	33
Other	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	3	19	1	30
Total	37	23	57	67	70	25	18	28	59	81	465

As can be seen from Table 3.7, the Kettering Homemove and Camden schemes were directed at existing council tenants, whereas the Norwich, Nottingham, Croydon and Bournemouth schemes were focused largely on people who are not in social housing.

Clients' homes ranged in size from bedsits to homes with five or more bedrooms. Comparing the number of bedrooms to the number of people in the household gives a measure of overcrowding or under-occupation (Table A3.8)²³.

Table A3.8: Number of people per bedroom

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Less than 0.5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	1	8
0.5-0.99	1	4	2	0	2	14	3	6	1	18	51
1-1.49	29	15	45	3	54	5	8	10	56	51	276
1.5-1.99	4	4	6	4	6	1	4	3	1	4	37
2-2.49	1	0	1	19	3	0	3	6	1	3	37
2.5-2.99	1	0	2	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	9
3 or more	1	0	1	34	4	0	0	0	0	1	41
Total	37	23	57	65	69	25	18	28	59	78	459

²³ Note that this is a different measure from the bedroom standard often used in DCLG surveys.

As can be seen from Table A3.8, Camden clients were the most likely to be overcrowded (which is unsurprising given the remit of the project), as were some in Bournemouth, Croydon and Newham. The Kettering Homemove scheme was the only one here targeted at under-occupiers.

EMPLOYMENT

One of the key aims of the Trailblazer programme is to help people into education or employment. It is therefore unsurprising that nearly three quarters of clients overall (and a majority in every scheme) were out of work and in receipt of state benefits at the time of their initial interview, as shown in Table A3.9.

Table A3.9: Employment status of client

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Working full-time	0	0	3	5	2	2	1	0	5	3	21
Working part-time	0	1	4	4	5	1	0	1	7	7	30
Training or in education (16+ hours/week)	0	4	3	1	6	0	0	0	3	4	21
Retired	0	0	1	1	0	8	0	8	0	0	18
Not working - receiving benefits	34	15	44	42	55	14	17	21	37	64	343
Not working or receiving benefits - supported by partner	0	2	1	13	1	0	1	0	0	0	18
Not working or receiving benefits - other reason	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	7	3	17
Total	37	24	59	68	71	25	19	30	60	81	474

Only 10 per cent were in any kind of paid work, with an additional 4 per cent in training or education (more than 16 hours a week). Somewhat higher rates of employment were reported for partners of interviewees²⁴. Twenty-two per cent of interviewees who were living with a partner, 35 per cent of their partners were in employment. As can be seen from Table A3.10, overall 17 per cent of client households included someone (either the interviewee or their partner) who was in full or part-time work²⁵.

²⁴ The differential rates between interviewees and partners simply reflects the fact that we were more likely to interview the non-working partner who was around in the daytime.

²⁵ This figure does not include households where adult children or other household members may have been in work, even though the respondent and their partner were not.

Table A3.10 Numbers of households where the client or their partner was in either full or part time work

Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
1	4	11	23	10	3	2	3	12	10	79

Rates of employment were highest in Camden, reflecting the largely housing-based (rather than employment-based) nature of the Camden Trailblazer.

As shown below in Table A3.11, the benefits received varied considerably between schemes.

Table A3.11: Benefits claimed by clients²⁶

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
JSA	23	14	20	5	33	2	10	0	28	30	165
Income Support (ill health)	3	1	8	6	8	7	2	11	0	3	49
Income Support (caring for children)	1	0	6	24	3	0	3	4	0	26	67
Attendance allowance	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	4
Carers allowance	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	4	0	1	11
Disability Living Allowance	2	2	0	8	12	6	0	19	0	3	52
Employment and Support Allowance	3	0	7	0	6	2	0	1	7	6	32
Incapacity Benefit	3	1	5	5	4	4	1	6	4	1	34
Tax credits	2	7	10	31	10	0	2	2	1	28	93
Other benefits	0	0	3	2	2	1	0	5	2	2	17

²⁶ Some people were in receipt of more than one benefit. Housing benefit, state pension and child benefit have been excluded from this analysis.

In the Newham and Kettering Homemove schemes the largest numbers were in receipt of Incapacity Benefit and/or Disability Living Allowance, reflecting the high numbers of people who were in these schemes because of their medical needs. In Camden there were larger numbers of working households and people who were out of work because they were caring for children. Elsewhere, the largest numbers were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance.

Four per cent of clients overall were in education or training for over 16 hours a week and a further 14 per cent were doing some education or training for under 16 hours a week. Nine per cent were also doing some regular voluntary work each week.

As shown in Table A3.12, the majority of clients were looking for either full-time or part-time work, with the exception of those in the Kettering Homemove scheme (most of whom were retired or in ill-health) and Camden (most of whom were either already in work or caring for children).

Table A3.12: Whether client is looking for work or training²⁷

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Looking for education or training now	9	13	19	11	12	1	15	1	37	11	129
Looking for full time work now	30	18	21	7	40	1	5	1	38	37	198
Looking for part time work now	16	16	16	8	24	2	7	1	24	16	130
Looking for voluntary work	5	0	18	13	11	4	12	0	6	15	84
Looking for work/training in the future	5	11	6	2	11	0	6	2	15	7	65
Not looking for work/ training or happy in current job	0	0	12	31	3	18	0	28	9	25	126
Total	36	24	56	60	70	24	19	30	60	81	460

²⁷ The numbers do not sum to 100 per cent because people were allowed to give more than one answer.

VULNERABLE GROUPS

Those interviewed at two months were asked about particular vulnerabilities. Table A3.13 shows the levels who self-reported having been in local authority care as a child, being in contact with the probation services, having current contact with mental health services and having a learning disability.

Table A3.13: Whether clients are from a vulnerable group (clients interviewed at two months only)

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Ever in local authority care?	3	0	7	5	4	1	4	0	5	6	35
On probation within the last year	20	0	6	2	3	0	3	0	12	5	51
Has contact with mental health services	0	2	6	10	6	4	2	2	6	8	46
Has learning disability²⁸	0	0	6	4	9	6	1	0	1	3	30
Total clients	21	16	44	60	51	23	19	18	45	59	356

²⁸ Researchers reported some difficulties with collecting this information from clients. Some who caseworkers had stated had learning difficulties answered no, whereas others answered that they did have learning difficulties, in some cases appearing to mean specific difficulties such as dyslexia. We are therefore uncertain as to the accuracy of this data.

Trailblazer services

First contact with the Trailblazer services

As can be seen from Table A3.14, the ways in which people first come into contact with Trailblazer services varied hugely between schemes.

Table A3.14: How client heard of the Trailblazer service

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Always known about it	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	9
Saw poster/leaflet/advert	0	0	6	2	15	7	1	0	0	2	33
Referred by housing/HB office	1	4	19	14	24	6	3	0	21	19	111
Referred by another agency	36	1	22	10	12	3	12	0	35	21	152
Trailblazer contacted client	0	7	3	33	1	2	1	30	1	1	79
From website	0	0	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	3	10
Family or friends	0	12	2	2	2	6	2	0	3	27	56
Other	0	0	4	5	11	0	0	0	0	1	21
Total	37	24	58	67	70	25	19	30	60	81	471

Overall, most clients were referred either from within the council (such as the Housing Options team) or from another agency. Clients in Newham were contacted directly by the Trailblazer, and Camden and Bradford also contacted some of their clients directly, having established eligible clients from housing records or other agencies.

As shown in Table A3.15, most clients first made contact with the Trailblazer services in person, with some contacting first by phone.

Table A3.15: How first contact was made

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
In person	37	17	48	16	48	9	9	11	58	72	325
By phone	0	7	8	46	13	13	6	10	1	4	108
By email	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
By post	0	0	1	5	3	3	2	8	1	1	24
Other	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	4	9
Total	37	24	58	68	68	25	19	30	60	81	470

Clients were asked why they had first approached the Trailblazer service (Table A3.16).

Table A3.16: Why clients first approached Trailblazer service²⁹

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Was homeless	17	0	7	0	1	0	1	0	33	30	89
Worried I would soon be homeless	7	0	5	0	1	0	1	0	7	22	43
Wanted a home of my own	8	0	17	1	0	0	1	0	17	18	62
Wanted smaller home	0	0	1	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	23
Wanted larger home	1	0	3	64	0	0	1	0	0	1	69
Wanted council/HA home	2	0	21	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	27
Wanted private rented home	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Wanted to move to different area	2	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	8
Wanted home for disability/ health needs	0	0	2	0	0	19	0	0	0	0	21
Wanted advice on problems with landlord	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other housing issues	2	0	4	1	0	3	5	0	0	4	19
Wanted help finding job	3	22	12	12	49	0	4	0	31	8	141
Wanted help getting into training	1	8	15	22	25	0	13	0	29	1	114
Wanted help with debts	0	0	1	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	10
Wanted help with finances	0	0	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	8
Wanted other type of help	0	0	14	0	8	0	4	0	1	0	27
Total	37	24	58	67	65	25	19	0	60	80	435

As can be seen from Table A3.16, the reasons for approaching the Trailblazer service varied substantially between schemes, depending on their focus. Overall, wanting help finding work or training, or dealing with immediate housing problems

²⁹ Clients were allowed to give more than one answer.

and/or homelessness were the most common reasons. Relatively few people approached Trailblazer services seeking private rented housing, because they had problems with private landlords, or for general debt or money advice.

The types of Trailblazer services offered varied over the time clients were in the scheme (Table A3.17).

Table A3.17: Trailblazer services provided at initial contact, two months and six months^{30 31}

	Initial interviews	2 months	6 months
Personal support in finding job/training	64	32	19
Info on training and education	55	22	19
Referred to other agency for help with education or training	43	19	7
Job adverts via Job Point	32	1	0
Other help finding work or training	9	11	6
Placed on Housing register/CBL	87	5	4
List of landlords	23	3	3
Help finding temporary housing	30	2	0
Rent deposit scheme	61	2	3
Other help accessing housing	64	12	0
Benefits/better off in work calculations	29	2	6
Debt management	11	5	7
Referred to other agency for financial help	7	3	0
Help with downsizing/bidding	13	7	8

Looking for housing

Table A3.18 shows the number of clients who initially approached the Trailblazer service, or were put on the scheme because they were looking for housing, and the numbers who were still looking for housing after two and six months.

³⁰ Throughout this report, the analysis comparing clients at initial interview, two months and six months is based only on those who were tracked for the full six months. Percentages relate to the number who answered each question at each stage. There were small numbers of clients who were contacted at six months, but not at two.

³¹ Some clients were in receipt of more than once service at any one time.

Table A3.18: Whether clients were looking for housing

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Initial interviews	22	0	23	39	1	21	7	9	31	47	200
2 months	8	0	17	37	5	18	5	7	15	20	132
6 months	6	3	22	37	14	15	6	11	13	21	148
Total clients	22	8	37	43	36	21	14	18	31	47	277

As can be seen, the numbers looking for housing fell from 72 per cent to 48 per cent by the time of the two month interviews but did not fall significantly further after two months in any of the schemes.

In total, 28 per cent of clients who were looking for housing were looking to move because of health or mobility difficulties³². The large majority of these were in Camden, Kettering and Newham.

The large majority of Trailblazer clients who were looking for housing were seeking council housing (Table A3.19).

Table A3.19: Whether client was seeking council housing

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Preferred choice	4	1	12	36	10	15	5	6	11	17	117
Not preferred choice, but would consider it	1	1	2	2	3	0	0	0	1	4	14
Would not consider it	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Not sure/don't know	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	5	3	15	38	13	15	5	7	13	21	135

Somewhat lower numbers were seeking housing association properties (Table A3.20).

³² This includes mental health needs as well as physical needs.

Table A3.20: Whether client was seeking housing association housing

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Preferred choice	2	1	11	16	0	7	2	6	4	3	52
Not preferred choice, but would consider it	3	1	3	14	10	1	1	0	8	12	53
Would not consider it	0	1	0	6	2	6	2	1	1	2	21
Not sure/don't know	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	7
Total	5	3	15	37	12	15	5	7	13	21	133

The numbers shown in Tables 3.19 and 3.20 suggest that substantial numbers of clients in some areas at least either did not understand much about housing association housing, or had a preference for council housing instead.

Only a minority of clients preferred private rented housing, though nearly half were prepared to consider it as an option (Table A3.21).

Table A3.21: Whether client was seeking private rented housing:

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Preferred choice	1	1	4	1	3	0	0	2	3	6	21
Not preferred choice, but would consider it	3	1	7	7	5	0	0	2	4	10	39
Would not consider it	1	1	2	24	3	15	5	3	6	3	63
Not sure/don't know	0	0	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	2	10
Total	5	3	15	37	12	15	5	7	13	21	133

A smaller minority were considering owner-occupation (Table A3.22).

Table A3.22: Whether client was seeking owner-occupation

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Preferred choice	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
Not preferred choice, but would consider it	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	2	7
Would not consider it	5	2	11	37	7	15	5	3	13	7	105
Not sure/don't know	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	11	16
Total	5	3	12	38	12	15	5	7	13	21	131

The type of property sought varied considerably between schemes (Table A3.23).

Table A3.23: Type of property sought³³

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Bungalow	5	3	8	3	2	10	1	5	13	3	53
House	5	3	8	36	4	1	2	6	13	19	97
Flat (ground floor)	5	2	11	31	11	9	3	4	13	8	97
Flat (1st floor or above - no lift)	4	2	9	20	7	3	3	0	13	5	66
Flat (1st floor or above - with lift)	5	2	10	28	7	7	3	3	13	5	83
Maisonette (ground floor entrance)	5	2	7	35	2	1	2	2	13	4	73
Maisonette (1st floor or above - no lift)	4	2	7	19	2	1	2	0	13	5	55
Maisonette (1st floor or above - with lift)	5	2	7	27	2	1	2	0	13	5	64
Total	22	8	37	43	34	15	7	17	31	47	261

The majority of clients who were looking for new housing were not actively bidding for properties from their local authority's choice-based lettings system (Table A3.24).

³³ Clients were allowed to give more than one answer.

Table A3.24: Number of properties bid for since joining scheme (six month interviews), clients looking for housing only

Number of bids	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
None	4	2	16	18	14	5	3	8	8	11	89
1-10	1	0	4	5	0	6	2	2	5	3	28
11-20	0	0	1	5	0	3	1	0	0	1	11
21-30	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	5	10
31-40	1	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Over 40	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total	6	3	22	37	14	15	6	10	13	21	147

Overall, more than half the clients looking for housing were not actively bidding for properties. Clients who hadn't bid for any properties were asked why not, and table A3.25, below shows the answers given.

Table A3.25 Reasons why clients weren't bidding for properties^{34 35}

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Not high enough priority to get anything	0	0	0	10	0	0	1	3	0	14
Not registered on CBL system	0	1	5	0	0	1	0	2	1	10
Not eligible to apply ³⁶	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	2	8
No suitable properties have come up	0	0	2	3	4	0	1	0	1	11
Don't know how to bid/no internet access	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	6
Doesn't want social rented housing	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	5
Not ready to move yet	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
About to start bidding	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
Seeking a direct let (e.g. on medical grounds)	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	4
Wants to leave the area	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	4
Waiting to become eligible for larger/more suitable property	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	3	2	15	16	5	3	9	7	11	71

The large majority of clients who were seeking new housing had not been offered any properties by six months (Table A3.26).

³⁴ Croydon does not operate a choice-based lettings system and has therefore been excluded from this table

³⁵ Clients were allowed to give more than one answer.

³⁶ Mainly because of (previous) rent arrears or immigration status

Table A3.26: Number of offers of properties by six months (clients looking for housing only)

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
0	6	3	21	33	12	9	6	2	13	17	122
1	0	0	1	4	1	1	0	1	0	3	11
2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Total	6	3	22	37	14	11	6	3	13	21	136

Small numbers of client had rejected offers of properties (Table A3.27).

Table A3.27: Number of properties rejected

Number rejected	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
1	0	0	0	4	1	1	0	1	0	3	10
2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Total	0	0	0	4	1	2	0	1	0	4	13

Table A3.28, shows the reasons for rejecting an offer of a property. Most respondents gave more than one reason for rejecting a property.

Table A3.28 Reason for rejecting a property offered³⁷

Unsuitable for mobility difficulties	5
Wrong location	10
Too small	10
Other	14

³⁷ Clients were allowed to give more than one answer.

House movers

A total of 75 of the 277 tracked clients had moved to a new home during the six months since the initial interview with Norwich seeing the highest number of movers (Table A2.29)

Table A3.29: Number of clients who moved house between the initial interview and six month interview, by new tenure

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Council	3	0	0	5	1	1	2	0	7	2	21
Housing Association	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	3	0	3	13
Private renting	1	1	3	1	5	0	0	0	2	4	17
Temporary	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	7
Informal homeless	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	5
Supported housing	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	4	11
Total	5	2	10	8	9	3	3	3	18	14	75
Total number of clients	22	8	37	43	36	21	14	18	31	47	277
Proportion of scheme's clients who moved	23 %	25 %	27 %	19 %	25 %	14 %	21 %	17 %	58 %	30 %	27 %

As shown in Table A3.29 a range of tenure options were used by clients who moved house with council housing and private rented housing the most common options. No one moved into owner-occupation.

In total, 57 clients had already found a new home with the help of the Trailblazer service before their initial interview. Table A3.30 shows the numbers that moved by six months:

Table A3.30 Number of Trailblazer clients assisted to find housing

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Moved by initial interview	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	2	10	40	57
Moved by 2 months	0	0	1	4	1	1	0	1	5	2	15
Moved between 2 and 6 months	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	0	6
All movers	0	0	2	8	1	4	2	3	16	42	78
Percentage of all clients originally looking for housing	-	-	9%	21%	100%	19%	29%	33%	52%	89%	39%

Of the 78 clients who moved home by six months, 21 found their new home with the help of the Trailblazer service. Eight of these were in council accommodation, four in housing association dwellings, four in private rented housing and two in temporary housing.

As shown in Table A3.30, a total of 39 per cent of the clients who approached or were put in touch with a Trailblazer service because they were looking for housing had found new housing by six months. The large majority of these people were helped within a very short space of time after joining the service, often before we were able to interview them.

In addition, the Camden, Newham and Nottingham Trailblazers were offering assistance to households to remain in their own home with the help of furniture or adaptations to alleviate overcrowding or improve mobility around the home. Table A3.31 shows the different types of improvements to the home offered in these three Trailblazers.

Table A3.31 Improvements to clients' homes³⁸

	Camden	Newham	Nottingham	Total
Sofa bed	4			4
Bunk beds	1			1
Folding table and chairs	2			2
Wardrobe	2			2
Other furniture	6		3	9
<i>Other overcrowding adaptation</i>	1			1
Kitchen adaptation		1	2	3
Shower cubicle/low level tray/over bath		3	3	6
Handyman services		3	3	6
Specialist equipment	0	1	0	1
<i>Other disabled adaptation</i>	3	3	4	10
Total clients receiving improvements to home by 6 months	13	4	2	19

In total 19 clients had had improvements made to their home to reduce the impact of overcrowding or make it more suitable for their health needs by six months. The large majority of these improvements were made within two months of joining the scheme

Employment and training support

As shown in table A3.32 above only around one in ten Trailblazer clients were in work at the time of the initial interview. Of those who were tracked over the six months there was a marked increase in the proportion in full-time or part-time work (Tables A3.32-33)

Table A3.32: Economic status of Trailblazer client

	Initial interview	2 months	6 months
Working full time	14	18	37
Working part time	19	22	26
Training or in education (more than 16 hours)	9	8	6
Retired	14	12	12
Not working - receiving benefits	198	161	159

³⁸ Clients were allowed to give more than one answer.

Not working or receiving benefits - supported by partner	11	8	12
Not working or receiving benefits - other reason	9	5	8
Total	274	234	260
Total in work or training			
	42	48	69
As % of working age	16%	22%	28%

Table A3.33: number of working age clients in work (full time or part time)

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Initial interview	0	0	5	6	4	3	0	1	7	7	33
2 months	1	2	6	6	3	3	0	2	10	7	40
6 months	4	2	10	7	9	2	1	2	13	13	63

Client satisfaction

Clients were asked to rate the Trailblazer service overall on a scale of one to five.

As can be seen from Table A3.34 the large majority of clients were satisfied with the service they received with clients of the Kettering Lifeplan the most satisfied and Newham clients the least.

Satisfaction ratings, however, fell in every scheme over the course of the six months (Table A3.34)

Table A3.34: Client Satisfaction with Trailblazer Services

		Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Initial interviews	Very dissatisfied	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	5	1	2	12
	Quite dissatisfied	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	0	3	13
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	0	4	6	5	2	0	4	1	7	32
	Quite satisfied	11	2	16	12	12	7	3	5	14	13	95
	Very satisfied	4	5	14	22	18	11	11	2	15	21	123
2 month interviews	Very dissatisfied	4	1	3	3	1	1	0	4	0	1	18
	Quite dissatisfied	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	3	1	11
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	0	2	9	1	2	3	2	4	8	34
	Quite satisfied	2	2	12	16	5	0	3	1	12	8	61
	Very satisfied	1	2	9	12	7	15	8	1	12	16	83
6 month interviews	Very dissatisfied	10	2	1	2	0	3	2	2	2	3	27
	Quite dissatisfied	2	1	3	6	0	1	1	3	3	2	22
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	2	3	10	5	4	1	0	5	12	43
	Quite satisfied	4	1	7	12	5	5	2	1	8	11	56
	Very satisfied	5	2	6	4	4	4	8	1	12	19	65
Percentage dissatisfied at initial interview		18%	13%	6%	7%	3%	5%	0%	39%	3%	11%	9%
Percentage dissatisfied at 2 months		45%	20%	15%	10%	7%	11%	0%	64%	10%	6%	14%
Percentage dissatisfied at 6 months		55%	38%	20%	24%	0%	24%	21%	71%	17%	11%	23%

This table (along with all tables comparing clients at 0, 2 and 6 months) is based only on those who were tracked for the full six months. Changes over time cannot

therefore be attributed to which clients were interviewed at each stage. Many clients had ceased contact with the Trailblazer services in some areas, which could explain the higher numbers who were “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” at six months, but this can less easily explain the increase in dissatisfaction.

Clients were asked in their own words why they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the service. Reasons for satisfaction are shown in Table A3.35.

Table A3.35: Reasons for satisfaction with Trailblazer service (initial interviews)

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
Staff/keyworker helpful and supportive	2	4	24	21	14	14	9	7	10	15	120
Hopeful will improve housing	4	0	2	13	1	7	1	0	0	0	28
Hopeful will improve employment prospects	0	3	2	1	8	0	0	0	5	2	21
Has improved housing	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	7	14	25
Has improved employment prospects	0	0	2	0	7	0	0	0	2	1	12
Useful information provided	8	1	14	6	9	3	4	3	7	2	57
Someone available to contact for help	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	1	2	8
Feels that life is more sorted out now	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	7
Likes that the Trailblazer staff initiate contact	0	1	2	6	6	0	2	0	0	0	17
Has been referred to another agency who were helpful	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
Has had improvements made to home	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Has helped to manage finances	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Other	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	7

Table A3.36 shows how the reasons for satisfaction changed over the course of the six months.

39 Clients were allowed to give more than one answer.

Table A3.36: Reason for satisfaction, by time in scheme⁴⁰

	Initial interviews	2 months	6 months
Staff/keyworker helpful and supportive	120	37	66
Likes that the Trailblazer staff initiate contact	17	6	3
Someone available to contact for help	8	9	8
Has helped to manage finances	3	0	3
Has improved employment prospects	12	12	13
Hopeful will improve employment prospects	21	5	1
Has improved housing	25	15	17
Hopeful will improve housing	28	11	2
Has had improvements made to home	7	4	5
Useful information provided	57	13	10
Feels that life is more sorted out now	7	3	8
Has been referred to another agency who were helpful	3	1	1
Other	7	1	1

Reasons for dissatisfaction also varied by scheme (Table A3.37).

40 Clients were allowed to give more than one answer.

Table A3.37: Reason for dissatisfaction⁴¹

	Bradford - Openmoves	Bradford - EET IAG	Bournemouth	Camden	Croydon	Kettering - Homemove	Kettering - Lifeplan	Newham	Norwich	Nottingham	Total
No contact/difficulty making contact	5	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	1	6	18
Trailblazer help isn't needed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Trailblazer unable to help	5	4	6	6	1	0	0	2	6	4	34
Promised help that didn't materialise	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	7
Has waited too long for housing	1	1	2	16	0	9	1	3	1	0	34
No help with managing finances	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	4
Housing provided is unsuitable	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
Incorrect or unhelpful advice provided	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Passed between different services	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Dislike staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	5
Total	15	6	10	27	2	12	7	6	9	21	115

They also varied over time (Table A3.38).

41 Clients were allowed to give more than one answer.

Table A3.38 Reason for dissatisfaction by time in scheme⁴²

	Initial interviews	2 months	6 months
No contact/difficulty making contact	9	30	18
Trailblazer help isn't needed	3	4	2
Trailblazer unable to help	6	9	34
Promised help that didn't materialise	7	13	7
Has waited too long for housing	40	21	34
No help with managing finances	3	2	2
No help getting into work or training	1	1	0
Training opportunities have not helped find work	1	2	0
Housing provided is unsuitable	2	1	4
Passed between different services	3	1	2
Dislike staff	7	4	1
Incorrect or unhelpful advice provided	5	2	4
Other	6	3	5

Overall, the reasons for dissatisfaction tended to focus on two key issues: a lack of contact with from the Trailblazer service, or difficulties in getting in touch, and frustration at a lack of progress in finding new housing.

Those who expressed dissatisfaction with the service at the initial interviews were more likely to have ceased contact with the service by the time of their two and six month interviews.

⁴² Clients were allowed to give more than one answer.

C: Client tracking qualitative findings

Bournemouth

This is an employment focused Trailblazer service targeting hard to reach groups.

CLIENT PROFILE

The target group comprised probationers, those at risk of homelessness, supported housing residents wanting to live independently, rough sleepers, people with mental health issues and families, especially young parents.

Actual clients included all of these although because of the regular outreach surgeries at the YMCA (a Supported Housing “dry house”) there was a particular focus on ex-alcoholics. Other clients included people returning to the UK from abroad, people suffering from family breakdown or domestic violence.

OUTCOMES

Most clients did not stay engaged with the Trailblazer service and had ceased contact by the time of the six month interview. This was mostly because their problem had been solved (such as having found a flat, got a job, or started a training course) but in some cases it was because they had come to an end (e.g. people were bidding on the choice-based lettings until eventually they hope to get a flat, but no further need from the Trailblazers).

There were more work/training outcomes than housing outcomes via the Trailblazer service, although quite a few people found their own housing such as moving in with partner or into a hotel. Work/training outcomes included volunteering, which in some cases led to relevant training and so eventually the prospect of employment.

Some clients fell by the wayside:

‘I drank and took drugs in a dry house so they threw me out.’

Others did not consider the service to be useful to them:

‘I am intelligent; I don’t need any more help.’

Client views on services

Overall, the vast majority of clients felt that the support the service had offered to them was both holistic and personalised. This aspect of the service was praised by nearly all the clients interviewed:

‘[Trailblazers staff] did a great job...it means so much to meet someone who can tell you what you want and need to know’

High levels of satisfaction were recorded even when direct help had not yet been offered. Many clients felt that the meetings with the advisor had helped their situation in terms of raising awareness of other services:

'I went there wanting advice on one issue. From explaining this to [the Trailblazer representative] they were able to identify issues I had not noticed or considered about my situation. They have given me a completely different perspective.'

The impact of initial meetings was often subtle and personal. The service was seen to help the clients with a general reorientation, be it adapting to a more difficult financial situation or making the move to more independent living.

“Richard” was an alcoholic who became homeless after he was asked to leave his former residence at a ‘dry house’ for consuming alcohol on the premises. He spent the winter homeless, with the exception of Christmas, which he spent with his mother. In late December 2009 he approached the YMCA for help.

At the YMCA Richard’s situation had stabilised. He focused on recovering from alcoholism and attended three one-to-one relapse prevention sessions a week. According to Richard, *‘everything has been really good this time’*. His YMCA key worker told him about the Trailblazer service and asked if he would be interested in any of the options it offered. While Richard did not feel ready to look into housing or employment just yet, he was interested in the confidence classes and signed up.

Richard thought that the Enhanced Housing Options representative offered a ‘really well presented service’. He was particularly impressed that the Enhanced Housing Options representative could ‘keep the session interesting and could handle a group of young men’. He hoped that once he finishes these classes he would have the physical and mental health to move out of the YMCA and start a horticultural course.

By the two month interview Richard had finished the classes and hoped to start a course in September.

At the final interview Richard had moved out of the YMCA into the private rented sector: ‘You can’t swing a cat in the room and I’m at college and I need a desk to study at but can’t fit one in. I took it under duress, my last place you could only stay for two years so I had to move out.’ Housing Options had shown him how to bid on the choice-based lettings system so he was hoping to find a council flat. Meanwhile he was doing a counselling course and hoped to get a work placement soon.

“Susan” was referred to the Housing Options link workers from the Children’s Centre as she was interested in employment and training. She was offered a course in GCSE English. She wanted to do voluntary work in a school as she thought this will eventually get her a job. Her son had behavioural issues so she was looking to work in a special needs school.

By the two month interview Susan was doing English and was due to start maths and science in shortly. She had applied to two schools that had no vacancies for volunteers but was waiting to hear whether she would get to work with them. Her son was now in play school and his behaviour was much better.

At the final interview Susan said that the link worker had called last week to see how she was getting on with training and voluntary work: “She has been very helpful and has given me so much information, not just about obvious routes into teaching at a

special needs school but has helped me explore other options such as admin.” Susan was about to start voluntary work in a special needs school and then to do a teaching assistant course at Bournemouth College: “All of this has come about because of the help from the housing options service. It would be good if the service was more well know. Also the name, perhaps it should not have ‘housing’ in it as it is misleading – it makes you think they just do housing issues”.

Bradford

The client tracking in Bradford included clients from two distinct programmes: the Employment Education and Training Information Advice and Guidance outreach service and Housing Advice for Probationers.

Initial tracking interviews were carried out with a total of 61 clients; 24 from estate outreach employment, education or training information, advice and guidance service and 37 from probationers’ housing advice projects.

HOUSING ADVICE FOR PROBATIONERS

The purpose of the project is to provide advice on housing options, with the aim of either helping people to avoid or resolve homelessness.

CLIENT PROFILE

The clients accessing the probationers’ housing advice project were all referred to the service by their probation officers because they were either homeless or in otherwise precarious housing situations. The vast majority were sofa-surfing or living temporarily with friends or family. A few were referred to the service because they were at risk of losing their Private Rented Sector or hostel accommodation because of rent arrears or other problems. Very few of the clients were in employment, education or training at the time of the initial interview, and the vast majority were on Job Seeker’s Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefit. Because of the way in which the probation services in Bradford are structured, with female offenders (other from those with substance misuse issues) having their own separate probation services, the vast majority of the probationers referred to the housing advice project were male. Approximately a third of the clients had current or past substance misuse issues, and many also had mental health issues.

OUTCOMES

Most clients saw little change in either their housing or employment status over the course of the six month tracking period. Problems to do with staffing led to severe disruptions of the service in the winter and spring 2010, and this has undoubtedly influenced the project’s ability to generate positive outcomes. The findings from the client tracking exercise for this specific project should therefore be approached with caution, as the sample only includes clients who engaged with the service in its early stages (before the end of March 2010).

Of the clients included in the tracking sample, the best outcomes were achieved in instances where a person was in urgent housing need and was helped to access hostel accommodation, or where a client living in Private Rented Sector accommodation sought advice on mediation and dealing with rent arrears. Some positive outcomes also resulted from situations where a client had been helped to register with the choice-based lettings system and they had been successful in bidding for a property independently. Data from the six month follow up interviews, however, suggest that most of the clients had been placed in a low band and were able to bid only for very limited selection of properties and/or had been actively bidding but unsuccessful.

CLIENT VIEWS OF SERVICES

Many people from the target client group would have welcomed and needed more concrete help and support in sorting out their housing issues, and project providing mere advice is not sufficient in its scope and hence not well suited for such vulnerable clientele. This issue, however, was recognised in summer 2010, and the service was restructured as new adviser was appointed.

Like many other probationers referred to the housing advice project, “Mike” had a fragmented housing history with long periods of homelessness and short stays in hostels.

When first contacted, Mike was staying with his parents where he had been since his release from prison in summer 2008, even though his relationship with them was strained. Two months later he was still living with them, sleeping on the sofa. He was hoping to get a place of his own, but had not yet been registered in the choice-based lettings because the system had been closed for a while due to restructuring. He had been unable to find paid work in spite of having received some training while in prison, but was hoping to start an employability training programme which included a work placement.

When contacted again at six months Mike had been finally registered for choice-based lettings, but had decided to stay for now with his parents. This decision was influenced by his parents’ poor health as well as his own fears of being able to afford living on his own. Although he had successfully completed the 13 week long employability training programme he was still unemployed, and thought this was because he was still on probation and employers were wary of probationers.

ESTATE OUTREACH EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The employment, education or training information, advice and guidance project targets social tenants in need of assistance getting into work or training, but is open for all people regardless of their tenure. An employment, education or training adviser delivering advice and support in recruitment and selection processes, accessing vacancies, interview techniques, confidence building and CV writing runs drop-in surgeries with clients in three different outreach locations once or twice a week. One-to-one advice appointments can be pre-booked for afternoons.

CLIENT PROFILE

The tracking sample of the estate outreach employment, education or training information, advice and guidance clients included a mixture of people who had been contacted by the service because they were unemployed and living in social rented housing managed by Incommunities and people who were having difficulties in finding work and had heard about the service via friends or family. With the exception of some students who had accessed the service hoping to get help in finding part-time work or full-time work for the summer holidays, all clients were unemployed. Most had been out of work for over six months, were desperate to get back to work, and many had been applying for a number of jobs with little success. The age range varied a lot and although most of the clients were on Job Seeker's Allowance and therefore engaged with the Job Centre Plus, many feel that they had been left largely on their own and were not getting sufficient support.

OUTCOMES

The vast majority of the employment, education or training information, advice and guidance clients who took taking part in the tracking exercise reported that the availability of the service had given them a lot of positive energy and hope. They also appreciated the one-to-one approach and personalised service they received, which was largely made possible by lower client numbers than was initially expected. Emotional support and encouragement they received from the advisor was much appreciated and frequently highlighted as the factor that made the Enhanced Housing Options service different from other public sector provision in a very positive way. Positive feedback was also given on specific ways in which things were done, such as the way in which the first adviser printed out job adverts and lay them down on the tables for the clients to browse as they came in. This was appreciated particularly by people who were not confident with computers.

CLIENTS' VIEWS OF SERVICES

In the two and six-month follow up interviews, the negative effects of disruptions to the service because of staffing problems were reflected in client satisfaction with the service. Most clients remained unemployed and many had stopped going down to see the advisor because they had been preoccupied with other problems or annoyed because they had gone several times but nobody had been there. Dissatisfaction was particularly high among clients who had approached the service because they were hoping to get help in accessing training or education. Some clients had however managed to find employment independently or via the Job Centre Plus or friends, and several of these people thought that the help they had received from the service with their CVs and interview skills had contributed to this successful outcome.

“Tom” was in his late twenties, with a fragmented housing and employment history and no formal qualifications apart from the first part of a forklift license. He heard about the estate outreach employment, education or training information, advice and guidance service from a friend who lived in a social rented flat and had been invited to go down to a consultation. Tom himself approached the service of his own initiative, as he had not worked since 2008 and was desperate to get back to work.

When contacted again two months after the initial interview, Tom was no longer in contact with the service even though he thought he had received good advice on interview skills his CV, and the service had ‘helped him get on the right path’. For the past month or so he had been actively looking for work on his own and had even had a few interviews. He had eventually found a part-time cleaning job close to home, and this had boosted his confidence that he would eventually be able to find a full-time position. He had also been referred to New Deal by the Job Centre Plus, and was getting one-to-one help and advice in job search every two weeks under that scheme so didn’t really think he needed the Trailblazer service anymore.

At six months Tom was still on Job Seeker’s Allowance, but had started a 13-week employability training course via Job Centre Plus and was about to start a 12 week full-time warehouse job in addition to his part-time cleaning job. Whilst happy about finally finding employment Tom was keen to find a part-time office job or some volunteering opportunity in an office environment, as his long-term ambition was to get an office job with progress prospects.

Camden

The Camden Pathways for All team identifies overcrowded tenants from their housing register and offers help, advice and information about employment, education or training, income maximisation, benefits advice, space saving furniture and advice about health and wellbeing.

CLIENT PROFILE

Clients were all overcrowded Camden social housing tenants. The majority interviewed were desperate to move out of their current accommodation although some knew this would be unlikely for some time, particularly those with children under the age of five. Not all clients rely solely on benefits and not all are out of work.

OUTCOMES

In the main, clients tend to be signed off from the Pathways for All team after about six months. During this six month period the team engaged on a one-to-one basis with the client and worked through all options available to them, be that income maximisation or help with referring to Camden Working (a free service for Camden residents looking for employment or training) or supplying space saving furniture etc. In a few cases this has led to clients' housing points being increased as a change of circumstances had not previously been registered with the housing department.

Over the course of the six months a few clients moved to larger accommodation either through bidding via choice-based lettings or by moving into the private rented sector.

Numerous clients were helped with space saving furniture or other items to improve the quality of their lives over the six month interview period. Items included sofa beds, washing machines, wardrobes, foldaway beds, bunk beds and book shelves.

A few clients had started training courses, particularly English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) courses, or were on the waiting list to start a course when a place became available. However, in many cases overcrowded tenants did not feel in a position to look for training or employment until their housing situation was settled. Moreover some families did not have enough points to bid for larger properties, particularly those with young children. Where this is the case Pathways for All suggest alternatives:

'She has helped with paying for a security card for my husband, has helped me to enrol on a course in September and is helping my husband look for a job. She is hoping to get us a cooker as we don't have one. Also she has advised us to bid on a one bed ground floor flat which we have points for, even though we need a two bed. A ground floor flat would be so much better as we are on the 15th floor of a tower block with a baby and five year old.'

Client views on services

Clients on the whole were very positive about the help and advice they were receiving from the Pathways for All team. In some cases the Pathways for All caseworker had accompanied the client to Camden Working in order to apply for training or employment.

Not all Pathways for All clients wanted space saving furniture or help to access education, training or employment. Some clients were already in employment or attending training courses. English language courses were attended by many clients and/or their partners. Of those who turned down extra help who were not in employment, education or training the main reasons were because of having young children at home or because their main priority was to move house. Once they moved or the children were of school age they felt they would be in a better position to pursue other areas of their lives.

One client who had moved since the initial interview was full of praise for the way Pathways for All had treated her situation and was now ready to start looking for employment:

'I came from the position of owning my own home and losing it so this whole process was new and they treated me on a humane level, as a human being and there was empathy with what was going on and what I was going through. They really understand, every time I pick up the phone to call her, if she is not there she always calls me back and she made me so aware of the process. She really kept me going, I would not have got this service or time from people from Citizen's Advice Bureaux or anywhere else.'

"Mary's" two sons had previously been living with foster parents while she was in rehab but they had recently come to live with her. Until her sons came to live with her one bed flat had suited her needs. She was in the process of getting the care order lifted and was in touch with a solicitor at the local legal centre to facilitate this. The two boys aged eight and 12 had the bedroom whilst she slept on the sitting room floor. She was hoping that a housing solicitor at the same legal centre would be able to put a case to the council to ask for a two bedroom flat. Since her Pathways for All caseworker made contact in January 2010 she had been given a sofa bed and helped to access some training. Pathways for All had also arranged for a surveyor to come round to look at the windows which did not open because the frames were warped.

After two months, the surveyor has visited the flat and found rising damp. At the six month interview Mary had still not moved but had had her points maximised which meant she could now bid for properties. She was hopeful with the extra points it would not take long to find somewhere more suitable to live. Mary went on from her one day training course to do a four day a week work placement which she was really enjoying. She was still waiting for the dispersal of the care orders.

“Sanjay” lived at in a four bedroom flat with his wife and five children. They had lived in this property since 1999, but would have preferred a six bedroom property. Sanjay’s wife suffered from depression and this was exacerbated by the people living in the downstairs flat who banged on their ceiling with a stick when they heard any noise from above. The flat was situated in a large Victorian property and Pathways for All had recently sent a surveyor round to see if one of the bedrooms could be partitioned to make another room to give his daughter some privacy (she was sharing a bedroom with her parents). Even though the surveyor had said that partitioning the bedroom was possible the family was still keen to move because of the problems with their neighbour. At the time of the six month interview the family were still waiting to hear when the room would be partitioned.

Croydon

Croydon’s Broadening Horizons assists people in housing need to access employment, education and/or training.

CLIENT PROFILE

The overwhelming majority of clients approached for support in finding employment and/or training. Of the people interviewed, eighty-three per cent were under 44, 88 per cent of them were male, and 64 per cent were of black, Asian and minority ethnic origin (the largest ethnic group of the interviewees was black Caribbean, 33 per cent). In terms of vulnerabilities, six of those interviewed at six months had a learning disability and four were in contact with mental health services.

OUTCOMES

The vast majority of the Broadening Horizons clients interviewed at six months still considered themselves to be service users. Only two of them said they had left the service and this was because it couldn’t help them address their issue:

‘I wasn’t able to get council housing through them.’

A small number of the clients interviewed at six months had been assisted by Broadening Horizons into employment and training opportunities:

‘They identified an IT course for me.’

‘They helped me improve my CV which then helped me get a job through a JCP contact.’

‘They’ve helped me get some voluntary work in an office for a couple of hours per day.’

A couple of other Broadening Horizon clients had found themselves work since first interviewed but without the help of the service.

Some were also assisted with housing issues:

“I was living at a YMCA hostel but had been in and out of hospital. When I was in hospital I got into arrears and Broadening Horizons helped me with the paperwork to appeal (against the arrears) and look for other housing. (The Project Coordinator) called me when I was in hospital to see if I was okay.”

Clients who had not maintained regular contact with the programme appeared to have had other priorities which have got in the way of working with Broadening Horizons:

“I had a health scare (so haven’t been in contact).”

“I’m now focussing on moving out to less cramped accommodation (rather than on training or employment).”

Client views on service

The majority of Broadening Horizons clients were very satisfied with the service they had received. Many positive comments about Broadening Horizons related to the support they had received:

‘They are trying to get me back into study and work and are trying very hard to find something to suit me.’

‘They have been absolutely fantastic giving me advice on what to do. I’ve been (to see them) five or six times.’

They were also positive about the approach of the staff:

‘They are friendly and helpful.’

‘The level of contact suited me.’

‘They are always available.’

When asked what improvements could be made to the Broadening Horizons service, the majority of clients interviewed couldn’t think of any. Only three clients made any suggestions, all of which were different to each other, and comprised:

‘Longer opening hours.’

‘More contact – a phone call once per month would’ve been nice.’

‘Promote the service more i.e. in schools, with flyers, on the council website and in radio adverts.’

“Monique” was a single mum of two children in her late twenties and living in a housing association property in Croydon. She had been on benefits for a while but wanted to get a full time job. However due to the challenging economic climate she was struggling to find a job. Monique found out about Broadening Horizons from Croydon Council’s website. She approached the service to help her find a job and found the advisor she met with very helpful as they took the time to explain everything to her, and made her feel comfortable and confident. She went on to meet with her Broadening Horizons advisor on several occasions. The advisor helped her to fill in job application forms and run through mock interviews with her and even found a job opportunity for her at Croydon Council. Although Monique got an interview for this position, she was unfortunately unsuccessful. Broadening Horizons then provided financial support for her to do an English Language course.

Kettering

The two Kettering Trailblazer schemes in which clients were interviewed were the LifePlan and Homemove schemes.

LIFEPLAN

The Lifeplan scheme offers one-to-one support on a flexible basis to people who are out of work. It aims to connect customers into training, employment and volunteering opportunities and also to improve health and well-being.

CLIENT PROFILE

Clients were referred into the LifePlan scheme from a variety of sources including SureStart, probation, the Safer Communities initiative and the YMCA. Some came after having attended a tenancy training course if it seemed that they were in need of on-going support and others were also referred from the Housing Options service. Most were social housing tenants and aged under 25.

Nearly all LifePlan clients were unemployed and looking for help getting into work or training and with general life skills

CLIENT OUTCOMES

Of the 14 clients tracked over the six months five were helped into training or education within the first two months and four of these were still studying at the six month interviews. No further clients accessed education opportunities between two and six months, though this may be due to the timing in the year that courses tend to run; several were waiting to start courses in the September, shortly after their six month interview. The courses were generally part time and covered basic literacy, numeracy and vocational qualifications such as childcare. It proved more difficult for clients to enter paid work in the current economic circumstances. Only one client did this during the six month period, a job she found without assistance from Lifeplan. However there was some evidence of clients becoming more work-ready. Four were

in voluntary work at six months, and the number who stated that they were looking for work now (rather than at some point in the future) increased.

Some Lifeplan clients also made progress in other aspects of their lives such as avoiding reoffending, parenting and controlling alcohol use. The Lifeplan worker typically referred her clients to other agencies for help with these kinds of issues, in some cases accompanying them to appointments and dealing with complications when they found services difficult to access.

CLIENT VIEWS ON SERVICES

The support offered from Lifeplan was holistic and personalised. The clients overwhelmingly liked the LifePlan advisor and felt strongly that it was her who was helping them, rather than any generic “service”. They often contrasted this to the kinds of involvement they had had with other agencies where they felt less sense of personal involvement:

‘I suffer from depression.... [The Lifeplan worker] has helped me to get back on track. She's made me see that things are not too bad forever. I'd been to [local college] before but I was nervous about it and didn't start a course. She referred me back there. It's good to have someone to talk to about it, to ask you how you are getting along.’

‘She doesn't talk to me like a number but seems genuinely concerned.’

Overall, most of the Lifeplan clients were very happy with the help they were being given and had clearly formed a good relationship with the Lifeplan worker, describing her as like a friend or a “big sister”. They appreciated the flexibility with which she could respond to their needs, and also the fact that she would put in effort on their behalf in between meetings and would come back to them having followed up issues for them:

‘If she says she'll do something, she does it.’

Over the six months a few clients found the intensity of support they received reduced, possibly because the Lifeplan worker was becoming overstretched and focusing on those who were making most effort themselves. In some cases clients were confused as to whether they were still on the scheme as no contact had taken place, nor any discussion on leaving the scheme. The large majority however remained very positive about her role and scheme overall.

“Jake” was referred first by his probation officer to the Move in Move on course (another Trailblazer scheme). He completed this tenancy training course and moved into his own flat with his girlfriend, “Tara”, and was referred to Lifeplan for further support in paying bills and maintaining the tenancy. The Lifeplan adviser was able to work with both him and Tara and Jake started an IT course and Tara one in childcare. The Lifeplan also helped Tara to complete her CRB registration and find a work placement at a local nursery. Jake then encountered difficulties proving his existing qualifications as he’s lost the certificates but the Lifeplan worker helped him to get copies. After a couple of months they were in less regular contact with Lifeplan as they were both getting on well on their courses, but remained in touch by text messages and felt they were still able to ask for further help if they should need it.

By six months Jake had been referred by his probation officer into some voluntary work as a handyman carrying out repairs for elderly and disabled people, a type of work he enjoyed. He and Tara remained in occasional contact with Lifeplan though and received further help when they had difficulties with getting repairs done to their flat.

HOMEMOVE

The Homemove scheme is targeted at clients who are under-occupying their homes and wish to move to a smaller home.

CLIENT PROFILE

Most people joined the scheme after seeing an advert in the council tenants’ magazine or receiving a letter about it. Some also heard about it through word-of-mouth or from adult children and a few were already on the housing register for downsizing when the Homemove scheme came into operation. Most were in the over 50s age group without children, though there were also some younger clients with health needs.

The motivation in joining the scheme for most clients was in moving somewhere more suitable for their declining mobility. These people were happy to have a smaller property, though this was generally a secondary motivation:

‘I saw the leaflet about it that they sent round. I’d never heard of a scheme like this before that. I’m finding it hard to get upstairs as my hip is getting gradually worse. Sometimes I have to sleep downstairs on the settee.’

There were smaller numbers who joined the scheme simply because they wanted to move somewhere smaller. A few people mentioned feeling a sense that it would be nice for a family to have their home:

‘We have a 3 bedroomed house. I think it would be nice to give this one to a family. We don’t need this much space. We think it would be a good idea to move now whilst we are still young enough and

we can. It gets harder to move as you get older.'

The offer of practical assistance such as the help packing, and even quite small things like having post re-directed was an incentive for many people to join the scheme. Financial incentives were only mentioned by a small minority of tenants.

CLIENT OUTCOMES

Of the 21 clients tracked for the full six months, one had in fact moved through the Homemove scheme prior to the initial interview and a further two moved through the scheme during the six months we tracked them. In addition one other tenant moved into sheltered housing.

All but one of the remaining 17 were still on the scheme after six months, most having been bidding unsuccessfully for properties. Those who moved were both tenants with medical needs for moving giving them greater priority for housing.

CLIENT VIEWS ON SERVICES

The support offered from the Homemove advisor was appreciated by some on the scheme, especially those who had already moved or whose needs had been extensive. Initially, those without any pressing need to move were generally content to wait in their current housing for the time being until they could secure a move via Homemove and were appreciative of having someone who they felt understood their needs. However, over time they became frustrated at their lack of success in bidding successfully for properties.

For some older tenants, thinking about moving and making decisions every week on which properties to bid for could be quite stressful and this effort felt wasted as they repeatedly failed to receive any offers. A few clients were confused about how the system worked and believed that the more they bid they higher up the list they would go. Many were unaware where they were on the list and so were unable to make a realistic appraisal of the likely chances of being offered a property.

“Susie” and “Doug” first heard about the Homemove scheme from their children, who were concerned about them managing on their own. They were still living in the three bedroomed council house where they had brought up their family but the children had all long-since left home. Susie was having difficulties getting about the house and had already had a walk-in shower and stairlift fitted but still found she was struggling with the steps at the front door and with getting about the house. Susie and Doug registered for the Homemove scheme and were pleased to find that the Homemove advisor could bid for them for properties as they didn’t know how to use computers.

They started bidding for properties every week but without success. The Homemove advisor helped them get their needs re-assessed but this was still insufficient to enable them to receive any offers. By six months had still received no offers and were increasingly frustrated that they were sitting in a family-sized home that they were sure there must be families in need of, and yet were unable to move to a suitable smaller home.

Newham

Newham’s Using Stock more Effectively project was set up to address issues regarding the efficient use of accessible and adapted housing stock in meeting the needs of disabled clients. This was part of a broader project reviewing the classification of clients and properties with the aim of ensuring that clients were placed on the right lists, adaptations considered where possible and priority given for moving where this was needed.

CLIENT PROFILE

The project has a range of objectives, some of which relate to stock improvements rather than specific clients. The clients who were tracked were drawn from the review of the Accessible Housing Register (people registered for adaptations to meet physical needs) and the Medical Needs Register (people registered for rehousing because of medical needs). All such clients were contacted by the Senior Occupational Therapist or the ‘Move On’ caseworker to assess their needs.

OUTCOMES

Of the 18 clients interviewed at two months, two had moved since the initial interview. One had bought their own property as they felt the Trailblazer was taking too long finding somewhere suitable whilst the other had moved to an adapted property found by the Trailblazer and was very happy with the new home. One further client had moved home by six months. This person bid for her property with the help of social services and the Occupational Therapist.

As the majority of clients had had long term problems, the initial meetings with Using stock more effectively staff were generally interpreted as being part of a long process of interaction with Newham Council. The majority of clients were still in touch with the Occupational Therapist or caseworker at the six month interview. However, those

clients who had not had any contact with the service were unsure why contact had stopped.

CLIENT VIEWS ON SERVICES

Clients who were given information about options and possible services to access reported that they had a clearer idea of how they could change their situation. For some, simply having face to face contact alongside the advice was seen as a positive outcome. A recurring theme in many satisfied clients' accounts was the relief that they had been contacted by someone from the council and that help is received:

'I have not been contacted for so long but she looks in her file and tells me what I can have or could have! She gets back to me and other people don't! This is the best thing'

'They are excellent but there is only so much they can do. My father is in a small room and they have given us an electrical frame to help him stand so we don't hurt our backs. They have given general information and a new wheelchair and cushions.'

Though the personalised approach was seen as positive by many clients, several dissatisfied clients suggested that Using stock more effectively staff overlooked the intricacies of their situation with the solutions offered. For some clients this would mean being taken to view inappropriate properties or adaptations being seen as a quick and pragmatic, yet ultimately unwanted, solution to their situation:

'My problem is that I need to get out of this house! I can't live here. No amount of adaptations will help me. I can't get in or out of the property. There are two flights of stairs and no lift... I can't get to the toilet, what will some grab rails do? It is not enough!'

At the sixth month interview this client had yet to have any help. However, it transpired that the client was in rent arrears and as such would not be offered anything until the arrears have been cleared. The client felt he needed help with his finances.

"Jane", who was in her late 40s, placed herself on the medical housing register after suffering a stroke in 2007.

Initially very keen to stay in her current home, Jane recalled that by the summer of 2009 she had regained much of her mobility. However by the autumn of 2009 Jane described her condition as relapsing and her mobility declining. She now accepted that her condition meant she should move and did not want to stay in her current home.

In January 2010 Jane's ex-husband contacted her claiming he wanted to try and help her. She did not want his help and felt that the sooner she moved to a more appropriate property the sooner she would be able to exert her independence.

Jane's first meeting with a Using stock more effectively representative was at the

beginning of 2010, when she was contacted because she had been on the emergency medical housing list for a long time. The purpose of the meeting was to assess the suitability of fitting adaptations to her property. The outcome of the meeting left Jane disappointed. Instead of adaptations, she thought she needed to find a new home which was better suited to her needs. In March she was visited again but this time the meeting focused on rent arrears. By September Jane was feeling very frustrated; she wanted help to sort out her rent arrears but felt this had not been forthcoming. Until her rent arrears were cleared she would not be able to move.

Norwich

The Learning Employment Accommodation Project (LEAP) is a special service seeking to incorporate employment, education and training with accommodation opportunities in the private rented sector for single homeless people. Clients who have been housed through the project are provided ongoing help and support regarding employment, education and training opportunities as well as housing related matters.

Initial tracking interviews were carried out with 60 LEAP clients in January-March 2010. Forty five of the initial interviewees were contacted again at two months, and 30 at six months.

CLIENT PROFILE

The majority of LEAP's clients are single men, many of them with vulnerabilities, such as an offending background, substance misuse, or mental health problems. Approximately half of the clients who were included in the tracking sample were on Job Seeker's Allowance at the time of being referred to the scheme, and some 12 per cent on Employment and Support Allowance. At the time of the initial interview (which did not always take place immediately after the initial contact with the service), a few had part-time job(s), and some had started their training courses. Although most of the clients in the tracking sample had some housing related issues and were either homeless or at risk of becoming so, some clients approached LEAP or were referred to it simply to get help in accessing employment, education or training information, advice and guidance, training or volunteering opportunities.

OUTCOMES

Most clients are referred to LEAP by the Housing Options service or one of LEAP's key partner agencies, such as local hostels, advice agencies or Connexions. The clients often remain engaged with the agency that referred them to LEAP at least until moving into settled housing, and LEAP stays engaged with clients that have been referred on to information, advice and guidance agencies and training providers. Subsequently, it is not uncommon for a LEAP client to be simultaneous engaged with LEAP and two of its partner agencies. For example, one may be referred to LEAP because they live in a hostel, and LEAP may then refer them on to BITC for employability training while before moving them on to Private Rented Sector

housing. Because the referral agencies select the clients they refer to LEAP based on their assumed suitability, the proportion of referrals resulting in successful outcome (client re-housed in Private Rented Sector) is fairly high.

The nature of the project means that clients often stay engaged with LEAP for a while before any significant changes in their housing situation take place. In general, LEAP clients are referred to a training or information, advice and guidance provider within the first few weeks following the initial meeting. The initial tracking sample also included 20 people who had already been housed in the Private Rented Sector via LEAP at the time of the first interview, as well as people in more precarious housing situation. During the first two months of tracking seven others were helped to access housing on the Private Rented Sector via the scheme with one further client finding accommodation by six months.

Client views of services

At the time of the initial interview, the vast majority of the clients were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they had received from LEAP. While satisfaction dropped among those clients whose housing situation had not improved by the six-month-follow up interview, satisfaction remained high among those clients who had been successfully housed.

Many of those who had not yet been housed at the time of the initial interview saw LEAP as bringing them hope that their situation will eventually improve. During the course of the six months tracking, clients who had been helped to access training, employment, employability training, voluntary work and/or housing frequently remarked that LEAP had helped them to take control of their lives, and led to increased self-esteem, self-confidence and quality of life. Many felt that the project had helped them to turn their lives around completely:

'I couldn't speak higher of it. There is an awful lot of support, especially in the early stages.'

'I'm a lot happier, and a lot more independent.'

'He [the adviser] was excellent, as good as his reputation.'

'[It] gave me that extra bit and stopped me thinking going to prison all the time. I've got something to lose now.'

'All the people I've met so far have helped me if they can. There didn't used to be anything like this. Things like this are a step forward.'

“Tony” had been battling with substance misuse issues since he was 17, and had a volatile housing history and patchy employment history. Due to his drug use he had lost two council rented properties in the past, and had extensive experience of sofa-surfing, rough sleeping and hostels. Drug-related mental health issues had rendered him unable to work most of his adult life.

After he came off drugs in early 2009 and went to live in a hostel, Tony was

referred to LEAP. Because he has always been interested in cooking, LEAP referred Tony to college, where he started a NVQ level 2 cooking course. In addition to his training course he volunteered teaching young people cooking skills, and held a part-time job. Without LEAP, Tony thought this wouldn't have been possible: 'If it wasn't for them I would have started this course and got kicked out. This is the first time in over 16 years that I've actually finished something. This is the first time I'm not on benefits and I don't want to go back there.'

When contacted again at six months, Tony was still living in the accommodation he had acquired via LEAP and working full-time at the same place where he previously volunteered. He had finished his NVQ2 and was looking forward to starting NVQ3 in the autumn.

"Matt" left his parental home at the age of 18 after his mother, who suffered from alcoholism and mental health issues, tried to kill herself and the disruptive home environment was making life increasingly difficult for him. When the Housing Options services referred him to LEAP he was already on a training course and he was soon housed by the project.

After living by himself for a year, during which he finished his training course and was helped to get on a BITC 'Ready for Work' programme, Matt decided to move in with his girlfriend. They managed to get a Council flat just before he started his new full-time warehousing job. At the time of the initial interview Matt's girlfriend was also in employment, and they were planning a holiday abroad. Matt said he had continued to keep in touch with LEAP for the security it gave him to know that there were people he could turn to if things went wrong: 'I've had an amazing year. A year ago I was going from place to place, now I've got a job, a flat. If a year ago someone had said I'd be in this situation I wouldn't have believed them.'

When contacted again at six months, Matt had just returned from his holiday, was living in the same house, happy and settled. Working full-time he was saving up to buy a car and was just about to take his driving test.

Nottingham

Clients from two separate schemes in Nottingham were tracked: the Rent Guarantee and Bond schemes, and the Employment Broker scheme.

RENT GUARANTEE AND BOND SCHEMES

The overall aim of Nottingham's Rent Guarantee and Bond schemes is to increase access to and sustainability of private rented sector housing. The initiatives extended the client eligibility criteria of existing schemes to increase accessible for individuals who have traditionally experienced difficulties in accessing the private rented sector.

This could have been as a result of their past history, for example drug misuse, high rent arrears, or no previous rental experience.

CLIENT PROFILE

A significant number of the Rent Guarantee and Bond scheme clients interviewed are young people who had previously been living with their family or friends but wanted a place of their own. They included a number of young single mothers who had recently had babies and wished to establish a home of their own for their new family. Many of these clients had found out about the service from family or friends.

Quite a few of the interviewed clients were asylum seekers who had previously been granted refugee status. As a result of their new status these individuals had become ineligible to remain in the reception centre or NASS accommodation and were required to find their own accommodation. It appears that many of these individuals were referred to Housing Aid by support organisations linked to the asylum centres, for example Refugee Forum.

OUTCOMES

Most clients were helped early on after contacting the service and by six months the majority no longer consider themselves to be clients of the Trailblazer as their housing needs have been met. However, many said that if their housing situation changed for the worse they would definitely go back to the Trailblazer for support and advice.

'They helped me get my house and I haven't needed them since.'

'Happy with initial help for Bond scheme but no real need to keep in contact.'

'Would go back to them (if needed any help).'

A minority of the clients had recently been back in contact with the Trailblazer for help and support to renew their tenancy with their private landlord after the initial sixth month agreement had come to an end.

'They will act as the 'middle man' to the landlord if needed.'

The Rent Guarantee and Bond schemes have been successful in resolving the housing issues of all of the clients interviewed by housing them in the private rented sector. Some of the Rent Guarantee and Bond scheme clients also received financial and benefits advice from the Trailblazer.

For many clients, being housed by the Trailblazer in private rented accommodation brought much stability to their lives and this enabled them to improve other aspects of their life such as getting into training:

'I'm planning to start college in September on a beauty therapy course.'

'I'm planning to go to college in September to retake my GCSEs.'

'I'm due to start a nursing course in September.'

Some clients however, were still seeking a move to live in social housing rather than the private rented sector as they believe the rent would be less expensive or the properties larger.

CLIENT VIEWS ON SERVICE

The vast majority of clients were pleased with the service they had received from the Trailblazer. Most were housed by the Trailblazer in the private rented sector within six weeks:

'Very polite and helpful.'

'Very speedy process.'

Some clients' issues weren't addressed as quickly as others which led to some dissatisfaction:

'Could have resolved issues faster.'

"Sonya" was in her late teens when her mother asked her to leave home. She heard about Housing Aid from her friends and went to the office to find out if they could help her find somewhere to live. Housing Aid signed Sonya onto the Rent Guarantee scheme and helped her find a private sector property. After settling into her new home, Sonya decided to give up her part time job as a cleaner and start a full time social work course at college. By the six month interview she had found out that she had secured a place on a university course to continue her social work studies.

EMPLOYMENT BROKER SCHEME

The Employment Broker service aims to increase access to employment, education and training services for individuals in housing crisis who are less likely to approach traditional agencies. Clients can engage with the services through the Housing Aid office (a single gateway for housing options and advice in Nottingham) and the Employment Brokers also approach hostel residents who have been housed in temporary accommodation by Nottingham City Council.

CLIENT PROFILE

Most clients were referred to the scheme by other agencies such as housing associations, the Job Centre Plus and the probation service. One client had been signposted to the scheme by the Bond scheme section of the Trailblazer, which she had originally approached because her redundancy meant she was at risk of homelessness.

OUTCOMES

Only one of the six clients interviewed at six months still considered themselves to be a regular client of the Trailblazer. Three had left because their needs had been met, one of their needs had changed so they were no longer seeking support, and one because they felt their needs hadn't been met.

Three of the interviewees have moved into employment (two full-time and one part-time with the hope of increasing hours to full-time): one had found a job themselves as a care assistant; the Employment Broker scheme signposted another to Working Links who helped them find a caretaker position and the Employment Broker had identified a Future Jobs Fund post for the third interviewee within the Trailblazer's Housing Options office as a Gateway Advisor.

In some cases the two strands of work of the Nottingham Trailblazer worked together to resolve clients' difficulties. Some of the Employment Broker scheme clients also received assistance and support from the Trailblazer to resolve housing problems: One client had previously been living in a housing association property but their funding came to an end and the Trailblazer was able to identify temporary accommodation for them. Another who needed both a new job and a new home was put in touch with the Employment Broker scheme the Trailblazer provided her with a bond to secure another private rented sector property.

Two out of the three Employment Broker scheme clients who had not found employment or training opportunities, suggested this was a result of other difficulties in their life taking priority:

'Housing is currently the priority (for me).'

'(I'm) in remission from cancer so I'm concentrating on getting better.'

Client views on service

The majority of the Employment Broker scheme clients were satisfied with their experience:

'Very good service.'

'Competent, helpful (staff).'

'Helped me out when I needed it.'

One client was less satisfied with the service but put this down to the member of staff they dealt with:

'It's down to the individual worker how you get treated and what support you receive.'

Only two suggestions for improvement were received from the Employment Broker scheme clients we were still able to track at six months. The comments relate to increasing the publicity of such schemes and ensuring regular contact with clients:

'Make services more noticeable through advertising more.'

'Have more contact with clients and make more information available to them.'

“Sarah” approached Housing Aid in November 2009 as she’d been made redundant, could no longer afford to pay for her privately rented home, had to move out and had nowhere else to live. The Housing Aid advisor not only provided her with a bond to secure another private rented property but advised her to contact the Trailblazer’s Employment Broker scheme for support and advice regarding her employment options. The Employment Broker advised Sarah to look at Future Jobs Fund opportunities. In June she started a full-time Future Jobs Fund job as a Gateway Advisor at the Trailblazer’s Housing Options office. Also when her former landlord incorrectly demanded rent from her, the Trailblazer intervened on her behalf and resolved the misunderstanding.

Appendix 4: Value for Money Analysis of Individual Schemes

The objectives – and a health warning

In this annex we attempt a preliminary value for money assessment of three of the individual Enhanced Trailblazer schemes. In making this assessment it should be remembered first that the schemes were not set up specifically to enable detailed value for money assessments – so data are often limited; second, that many of the schemes were expected to generate soft outcomes (e.g. improving life skills) rather than easily identifiable success or failure; third many were intended to lead to additional take up of other programmes and therefore the positive outcomes could be associated with these other programmes as well as the Enhanced Trailblazer schemes; and fourth the counterfactual is unobservable.

Three Trailblazer schemes – Kettering, Nottingham and Norwich - were selected from the 15 case studies for this value for money analysis. They were selected on the basis of:

- availability of data on the scheme costs
- availability of data on outcomes. All three were tracking areas which increased the amount of data available, although we also made use of their own outcomes data
- having the types of outcomes that could be reasonably readily valued in terms of monetary benefits to the public purse

The objective was twofold (i) to clarify a possible approach to assessing value for money across the wide range of activities and potential outputs and outcomes that the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers programme had supported and (ii) to illustrate the kinds of saving of public money that could be made from the particular interventions. It was not to pick a representative sample of success and failure or to attempt an overall evaluation. The three case studies are to be read solely as exemplification. In particular the valuation of outputs and outcomes involve many assumptions which can readily be questioned. This annex can in part be seen as an exercise in clarifying these assumptions and so enabling policy makers to make different assumptions if they feel these to be more appropriate

Probably the most important benefit of this exercise is simply to identify the range of costs, outputs and outcomes. The values put on the benefit side in particular are subject to many uncertainties and potential double counting with other programmes. A next step might be to undertake some sensitivity analysis of benefits using different probabilities of success.

The vast majority of the savings that are identified in money terms reflect savings to the Exchequer because either lower benefits are being paid or tax is being received. As such they represent value for money in public expenditure terms. The objective is

not to undertake a more fundamental cost benefit analysis which would be based on real resources rather than public expenditure.

Another important caveat is that because the Enhanced Trailblazers often chose to use the money for a number of different projects there are costs which cannot be readily allocated between these projects.

Finally, these assessments are being made only part way through the projects – so while the costs have mostly been captured, many of the outputs and outcomes have not yet occurred.

The next section gives some general calculations that have been drawn on throughout the analysis. The details of estimated costs and benefits in each of the three examples then follow.

Calculations to use across Trailblazers value for money

This section gives the calculations that have been used in the analysis below

Benefits of entering employment

The jobs most likely to be entered by Trailblazer clients would be classified as Elementary Occupations. Data from the 2009 annual survey of hours and earnings suggests that the average weekly for such jobs was £322, or £16,744 annually^{43,44}.

It can therefore be estimated that each person entering employment would be paying £3,266 in tax and national insurance contributions⁴⁵.

Savings from moving off benefits

Table A4.1 and A4.2 show benefit levels for out of work households.

Table A4.1: Benefit levels for single people (2010-11)⁴⁶

Benefit	Weekly amount	Annual amount
JSA/ESA (single over 25, income based)	£65.45	£3,403
JSA/ESA (single 18-25, income based)	£51.85	£2,696
ESA enhanced disability premium	£13.65	£710
IB – long term	£91.40	£4,753
IB – short term lower rate	£68.95	£3,585
IB – short term higher rate	£81.60	£4,243

43 <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/ashe1109.pdf>

44 A single person or couple without children on this income would not be entitled to any tax credits

45 <http://listentotaxman.com/index.php>

46 http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/ssa/benefit_information/benefit_rates.htm#dep_inc

Table A4.2: Benefit levels for families

Benefit	Weekly amount	Annual amount
Single parent JSA/ESA (over 25, income based) & family premium	£82.85	£4,308
Couple JSA/ESA & family premium	102.75	£5,343
Tax credits per child	£44.23	£2,300

The jobs most likely to be entered by Trailblazer clients would be classified as Elementary Occupations. Data from the 2009 annual survey of hours and earnings suggests that the average weekly rate for such jobs was £322, or £16,744 annually^{47,48}. Table A4.3 shows the tax credits that would be paid on an income of £16,744⁴⁹:

Table A4.3: Tax credits paid to households in work with an income of £16,322

Benefit	Weekly amount	Annual amount
Working tax credit	£36.10	£1,877
Child tax credit – per child	£44.23	£2,300

Therefore total benefits received whilst out of work and whilst working full time for an income of £16,744 are as follows:

Table A4.4: Benefits and tax credits claimed in and out of work

Family type	On JSA	In work
Single parent, one child	£6,608	£4,177
Single parent, two children	£8,908	£6,477
Couple, one child	£7,643	£4,177
Couple, two children	£9,943	£6,477
Couple three children	£12,243	£8,777

Most Trailblazers clients, if out of work would be eligible for full housing benefit. Tables A4.6-8 show the *average national housing benefit amounts for different housing tenures*.

47 <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/ashe1109.pdf>

48 A single person or couple without children on this income would not be entitled to any tax credits

49 <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/payments-entitlement/entitlement/income-examples.htm>

Table A4.6: Average national Local Housing Allowance for private rented housing⁵⁰:

Size of property	Average weekly HB max	Annual
Bedsit	£69	£3,588
1 bed	£107	£5,564
2 bed	£139	£7,228
3 bed	£164	£8,528
4 bed	£201	£10,452
5 bed	£260	£13,520

Table A4.7: Average national Housing Benefit Rate for local authority housing⁵¹

Size of property	Average weekly rent	Annual
1 bed	£59.03	£3,070
2 bed	£66.56	£3,461
3 bed	£73.22	£3,807
4 bed	£87.59	£4,555
5 bed	£98.99	£5,147

Table A4.8: Average national Housing Benefit Rate for housing association housing

Size of property	Average weekly rent	Annual
1 bed	£68.49	£3,561
2 bed	£75.27	£3,914
3 bed	£79.53	£4,136
4 bed	£92.64	£4,817
5 bed	£102.66	£5,338

Very few households with these levels of housing costs on an income of £16,744 would be eligible for housing benefit. They would also pay tax (Table A4.9)

50 <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/local-authority-staff/housing-benefit/claims-processing/local-housing-allowance/impact-of-changes.shtml#ic>

51 <http://www.dataspring.org.uk/outputs/detail.asp?OutputID=233>

Table A4.9: Tax payable on earnings of £16,744

Income	Tax ⁵²
£16,744	£3,266

WORKED EXAMPLES

Single, under 25 council tenant moving from JSA to work = £3,266 (tax) + 2,696 (JSA) + £3,070 (HB) = £9,032

Single parent council tenant in two-bed home with two children moving from JSA to work = £3,266 (tax) + £8,908 (JSA + tax credits) + £3461 (HB) - £6,477 (tax credits) = 9,158

Single parent in two-bed Private Rented Sector home with two children moving from JSA to work = £3,266 (tax) + £8,908 (JSA + tax credits) + £7,228 - £6,477 (tax credits) = £12,925

Couple with three children in three-bed Private Rented Sector moving from JSA to work = £3,266 (tax) + £12,243 (JSA + tax credits) + £8,528 (HB) - £8,777 (tax credits) = £15,251

Therefore assume broad averages of:

Singles in council housing: £9000 per person

Singles in Private Rented Sector: £11,000

Families in council housing: £9,000

Families in Private Rented Sector: £14,000

HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION

2003 calculations on the cost of homelessness estimated the cost of hostel accommodation at £400 per person per week⁵³. Average wage increases mean that this figure would be inflated to around £480 in 2010, or £24,960 per year.

REOFFENDING

The value for money analysis of the Supported People programme estimated a reduction in the costs associated with re-offending of £10,327 per person who was accommodated and supported, compared with likely outcomes and costs when not so (Ashton et al, 2009⁵⁴)

52 Assumed an individual under 60 not in receipt of any special tax allowances.

53 Kenway, P and Palmer, G (2003) *How Many, How Much? Single Homelessness and the Question of Numbers and Cost* Crisis and the New Policy Institute

54 Ashton, T, Hempenstall, C and Capgemini (2009) *Research into the financial benefits of the Supporting People programme, 2009* (CLG)

The three illustrative examples

Kettering

There were four distinct strands to the Kettering Trailblazer's work.

Programme	Activity	Provided previously?
Lifeplan	Support to young people (mainly tenants) who are out of work	Not by housing dept
HomeMove	Downsizing scheme and budget – incentives and/or removal costs	Pre-existing downsizing scheme, but no support and little publicity
Tenancy Training courses	Tenancy training courses	Additional courses run with Trailblazer funding
Outreach work =	Temporary staff to cover front line housing officers to undertake outreach work in prisons, hospitals, etc	Some previously done unfunded or from other sources, Trailblazer funding enabled it to go further.
Project management	Project Manager	No – staff member was previously working on other projects

This analysis of value for money takes each of these strands of work separately but first considers the overhead costs that relate to the scheme overall.

PROJECT OVERALL COSTS

Component	Calculation	Average cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Project management	60 per cent of time spent on Trailblazers, times £30,000 per year	£18,000	Local authority
	£7,300 increment on project manager's salary	£7,300	Trailblazer*
Publicity	£5449 in Y1 only	£1,816	Trailblazer
Staff training	£1000 in Y2 only	£333	Trailblazer
Staff transport	£334 in Y1, £0 in Y2, £500 budgeted in Y3	£278	Trailblazer
Accommodation for tenancy training courses	Estimate £10/hour for 60h/year	£600	Voluntary sector hostels, etc
Trainers for courses	Estimate two thirds of training done by external agencies = 40h/year times cost of £10/h salary (mix of professionals and volunteers deliver training)	£400	Vol/stat sectors – fire service, Red Cross etc
Estimate of total cost		£28,727	

Notes – have assumed no additional office costs for employing the extra people and no extra management costs for managing the project manager. This appeared consistent with the qualitative evidence provided by managers. Room costs are based on advertised rates for church halls and equivalent accommodation – many types of accommodation would have higher costs

It has been assumed that these project overall costs are borne equally by the four separate strands of the Trailblazer’s work. An alternative assumption would have been to treat these costs separately and to include them only in an overall evaluation of the four Kettering projects together.

***The Trailblazer project funding came from the following sources:**

Source	Amount	Percentage of total
CLG Trailblazer funds	£320,000	91.2%
CLG recession grant	£5000	1.4%
Council’s core funds	£25,963	7.4%
TOTAL		100.0%

Lifeplan

COSTS

Set up costs

Component	Calculation	Who bore the cost?
Software	£6949 actual cost	Trailblazer

Component	Calculation	Average cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Proportion of project overall costs	25 per cent of project overall costs	£7,182	As detailed above
Lifeplan advisor	£23,000 per year (salary including on-costs)	£23,000	Trailblazer
Car allowance	£1,650 per year	£1,650	Trailblazer
Promotional material	£1,139 in Y1, £170 in Y2, budget of £1500 in Y3	£936	Trailblazer
Software maintenance	£0 in Ys1 and 2, budget of £783 in Y3	£261	Trailblazer
Accommodation to meet clients	£10/day for space in sure starts, community centre times 50 days/year	£500	Statutory sector (LA) mostly
Total costs		£33,529	

Savings

Component	Calculation	Number of clients/yr	Average benefits per year	To whom the savings accrue
Clients move into work	Assume all 5 of these got a job one year earlier than would otherwise have done. Most clients are single, under 25 and council tenants. Using data in tables A4.1-9, this gives an estimated saving of £9,032/client.	5	£45,160	DWP
Clients become more work-ready by getting on course	Estimate 30 per cent of these clients get job 1 year earlier than otherwise would. Most clients are single, under 25 and council tenants, so using data in tables A4.1-9, this gives an estimated saving of £9,000/client.	32	£96,000	DWP
Total			£141,160	

Other benefits not monetised:

Clients benefit from a better quality of life, self-esteem, tenancy sustainment, improved health from having gained employment and reduced re-offending.

Homemove

Costs

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Proportion of project overall costs	25 per cent of project overall costs	£7,182	As detailed above
Homemove advisor	£25,000 per year (salary including on-costs)	£25,000	Trailblazer
Car allowance	£1,650 per year	£1,650	Trailblazer
Staff training	£205 in Y1	£68	Trailblazer
Promotional material	£525 in Y1, £2000 in Ys 2 and 3	£1508	Trailblazer
Budget for removal costs and incentives	£1,528 in Y1, £8,042 in Y2 and budgeted £8,000 ⁵⁵ in Y3	£5,917	Trailblazer
Total costs		£41,325	

⁵⁵ The original budget was £23,000 but the council consider this likely to be more than is needed. There was an original contribution of £15,000 from the council's funding for the Homemove's predecessor scheme, but it is now likely that this money could be used elsewhere, so it has not been taken off the £23,000 that was originally budgeted here.

Savings

Component	Calculation	Number of clients /yr	Benefits per year	To whom the savings accrue
Reduced care/adaptation costs carried out on less suitable housing	17 households moved in one year, against a baseline figure of 11 downsizing each year previously. Assume half of these saved the costs of adaptations of £2000 each	6	£6000	Social services/LA housing dept
Tenants delay a move to sheltered housing	Assume 1 out of the 6 who move each year are subsequently able to delay a move to sheltered housing by 1 year because they are now able to get about their home better. Care costs assumed of £750/wk ⁵⁶	1	£39,000	Social services/LA housing dept
Larger homes available for overcrowded households	Cost of building 1 new 3 bedroomed home (at £130,790 each) each year, instead of building a 2 bedroomed home (at £92,144 each) ie a saving of £38,646. Assume this house has a life expectancy of 100 years, so it costs £386 per year to have the extra room. Assume each downsizing saves 10 years of under-occupation by one bedroom. Therefore saving is 60 times £386 ⁵⁷	6	£23,188	HAs & Tenants get better quality of life
Total			£68,188	

Other benefits not costed:

- improved quality of life of overcrowded families now in larger homes
- improved quality of life of older/disabled households now in more suitable homes
- savings to local authority (and potentially DWP) if any of the larger homes freed up enabled them to rehouse a family from temporary accommodation or the private rented sector more quickly

⁵⁶ <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/docs/res/il/better-outcomes-summary.pdf>

⁵⁷ There may also be a potential loss of rent from building a two bedroom property rather than one with three bedrooms. However, as the large majority of downsizers were in the older age groups and in receipt of housing benefit, this saving would be largely offset by a comparable increase in housing benefit, so has not been included here.

TENANCY TRAINING COURSES

Costs

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Proportion of project overall costs	25 per cent of project overall costs	£7,182	As detailed above
Catering	Y1 - £980, Y2 - £2000, Y3, £2000	£1660	Trailblazer
Training material from Amber	Y1 - £1,050, Y2 - £500, Y3 - £5000	£2183	Trailblazer
Training events for tenants	Y2 - £660, Y3 - £1000	£553	Trailblazer
Incentives, tutors, room hire, taxis	Y1 - £500	£167	Trailblazer
Total costs		£11,745	

Savings

Although there are data on the number of clients taking up the training, there is a lack of data on actual outcomes. The following outcomes could be expected to occur from this type of work, but are not quantifiable from the available information.

Component	Recorded number of clients/yr	To whom do the savings accrue?
Reduced fire risk	42	Fire dept/LA housing dept
Improved DIY knowledge and tools	38	Tenants/LA housing dept
Reduced risk of dying due to first aid knowledge	38	Unknown
Greater tenancy sustainment due to budgeting skills	38	Various
Improve employability due to computer skills	15	DWP

OUTREACH WORK

Costs

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Proportion of project overall costs	25 per cent of project overall costs	£7,182	As detailed above
Staff cover to undertake outreach work	Y1 only - £6000	£2000	Trailblazer
Agency staff	Y2 only - £8000	£2667	Trailblazer
Total costs		£11,849	

Savings

Component	Calculation	Number of clients/yr	Benefits per year	To whom the savings accrue?
Reduced homelessness by people leaving institutions	31 in first year assisted into accommodation. Assume half of these otherwise end up in hostel with cost £24,960 per year (see above)	15.5	£386,880	LA, various
Reduced re-offending by ex-prisoners who are in stable housing	Estimated saving of £10,327 per offender who is housed and supported (see above). Assume half of the 31 would otherwise be homeless or in insecure housing	15.5	£160,068	Criminal justice system and victims of crime
Total			£546,948	

Other benefits not monetised

- reduced costs of homelessness and temporary accommodation for ex-offenders who are now helped into the Private Rented Sector
- reduction in homelessness among ex-prisoners from outside of Kettering who also benefited from the housing advice whilst in prison
- reduced costs of repeat homelessness from improved tenancy sustainment of prisoners after release
- reduced costs of crime from ex-offenders who commit less crime due to having a stable home
- reduced costs of no-shows at Housing Options appointments as a result of texting clients to remind them

- other costs associated with homelessness such as ill-health⁵⁸

Nottingham

There were five distinct strands to the Nottingham Trailblazer's work which have been considered here:

Programme	Activity	Provided previously?
Rent Bond and Guarantee Schemes	Expand access to these schemes to enable more people to take up and sustain private rented sector options	Yes but on a more limited level
Supported Bond Scheme	Help individuals who have previously lived in supported accommodation to move into and sustain private rented accommodation by providing 3 months of tenancy support	No
Employment Broker Service	Provide an intensive training and employment support service for tenants in temporary accommodation	No
Welfare Benefits Service	Answer queries about finances and debts and conduct 'better off in work' calculations	No
Social Inclusion Pilot	Develop a community outreach service to ex-service users to improve wellbeing, reduce worklessness and increase access to housing options advice	No
Apprenticeship	Provide a training and work experience opportunity for ex-homeless people moving onto re-settled lives	No

In addition, there was a Life Coaching project but this was not in operation during the first year of the Trailblazer, so it has been assumed to have incurred neither costs nor benefits. There was also an Apprentice scheme linked to the Trailblazer work but incurring no direct costs operating via the Future Jobs Fund so this too has been assumed to incur no direct costs or benefits attributable to the Trailblazers work here.

PROJECT OVERALL COSTS

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Project management	£15,000 of salary (remainder of time funded by LA but not spent on Trailblazer)	£15,000	Trailblazer*
Marketing and Publicity	£7,300 total over 2 years	£3,650	Trailblazer
Mentoring materials and support for LAs	£5,000 total over 2 years	£2,500	Trailblazer
Total		£21,150	

NB – have assumed no additional office costs for employing the extra people and no extra management costs for managing the project manager.

58 See <http://www.homeless.org.uk/node/2395>

It has been assumed that these project overall costs are borne equally by the five separate strands of the Trailblazer's work listed above.

*The Trailblazer project funding came from the following sources:

Source	Amount	Percentage of total
CLG Trailblazer funds	£325,000	91.5%
CLG recession grant	£30,000	8.5%
TOTAL	£355,000	100.0%

RENT BOND AND GUARANTEE SCHEMES

Costs⁵⁹

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Proportion of project overall costs	20 per cent of project overall costs	£4,230	Trailblazer
F/t development manager	£20,000 salary in Y1; £30,000 in Y2	£25,000	Trailblazer
P/t development officer	£14,000 salary in Y1; £21,000 in Y2	£27,500	Trailblazer
Total costs		£56,730	

⁵⁹ £10,000 was set aside to cover lost deposits, but there has been very little call on this fund so it has been included as a cost here.

Benefits

Component	Calculation	Number of clients/yr	Benefits per year	To whom do the savings accrue?
Clients move on from hostels	259 clients rehoused in first year. Of those we tracked, 10 per cent were previously living in a hostel. So estimate 26 clients/ year move from hostels 1 year earlier than would otherwise have done. Hostel costs: £480/person/wk ⁶⁰	26	£648,960	LA SP funds & Housing Benefit budget
Reduced re-offending by clients now in stable housing	Tracking data suggests 8 per cent of clients were in contact with probation services. Total of 259 clients per year. Estimated saving of £10,327 per ex-offender	20.7	£213,975	Various
Clients enter paid work	Tracking data showed increase in proportion of clients in work by 6 months from 15 per cent to 28 per cent. Therefore estimate that 13 per cent of the 259 clients entered paid work as a result of more stable housing conditions. Mix of families and singles, in Private Rented Sector so average saving of £12,500 per client	33.7	£420,875	DWP and HMRC
Total			£1,283,810	

Other benefits:

- improved quality of life and health for housed clients, with consequent savings for the NHS
- housed clients now more able to look for work
- supported Bond Scheme

⁶⁰ The average of 1 year assumes an average level of additionality; some clients remain in hostels for up to two years, whereas others may otherwise have moved out very quickly without the Trailblazer service. The average of 1 year assumes an average level of additionality; some clients remain in hostels for up to two years, whereas others may otherwise have moved out very quickly without the Trailblazer service. According to estimates by hostel staff, the average time spent in a hostel before moving on to settled accommodation (not back into homelessness) is approximately one year.

Costs

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Proportion of project overall costs	20 per cent of project overall costs	£4,230	Trailblazer
F/t PRS Support Worker	£25,000 salary, 50 per cent of which paid by Framework HA in Y1 only. Remainder plus some overheads paid by Trailblazer	£38,150	Trailblazer
		£6,250	Framework HA
Supported Bond contingency fund	£4,800 in Y1; £6,000 in Y2	£5,900	Trailblazer
Total costs		£54,530	

Benefits

Component	Calculation	Number of clients/yr	Benefits per year	To whom do the savings accrue?
Clients move on from hostels	20 clients rehoused and supported in first year. Most of these were moving from supported housing such as hostels. Estimate 70 per cent moved on from hostels. Hostel cost: £480/person/week	14	£349,440	LA SP funds & Housing Benefit budget
Total			£349,440	

Other benefits:

- reduced costs of re-offending, but number of ex-offenders within client group not known
- improved quality of life and health for housed clients

EMPLOYMENT BROKER SERVICE

Costs

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Proportion of project overall costs	20 per cent of project overall costs	£4,230	Trailblazer
2 f/t Employment brokers	£66,000 over two years from	£33,000	Homelessness fund
	Remainder of £127,500 costs (mainly salaries) over 2 years	£30,750	Trailblazer
Customer support budget	£7000 per year towards costs of training or attending interviews	£7000	Trailblazer
Total costs		£74,980	

Benefits

Component	Calculation	Number of clients/yr	Benefits per year	To whom do the savings accrue?
Clients move into work	13 clients supported into work in first year. Assume all 13 got work 1 year earlier than would otherwise have done. Assume mix of PRS and social housing and mix of families = £10,750/client.	13	£139,750	DWP and HMRC
Clients become work-ready	20 clients helped into employment-related training in first year. Assume 50 per cent of these go on to get paid work 1 year earlier than would otherwise have done. Same client mix as above = £10,750/client	10	£107,500	DWP and HMRC
Total			£247,250	

Other benefits:

- improved quality of life and finances for clients moving into work
- benefits to employers who are helped to find workers

WELFARE BENEFITS SERVICE

Costs

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Proportion of project overall costs	20 per cent of project overall costs	£4,230	Trailblazer
F/t Welfare Benefits Advisor	£23,250 salary in Y1; 31,000 in Y2	£27,125	Trailblazer
Total costs		£13,355	

Other costs

- Possible increase in DWP expenditure if benefit take-up is improved

Benefits

Component	Calculation	Number of clients/yr	Benefits per year	To whom do the savings accrue?
Clients move into work	20 better off in work calculations undertaken in first year. Assume 10 per cent of these get into work as a result – one family and one single so saving a total of £14,729	2	£14,729	DWP and HMRC
Total			£14,729	

Other benefits:

- improvements to quality of life for those who manage their finances better, or claim additional benefits to which they are entitled⁶¹
- reduced costs of homelessness if tenancies are sustained as result of the advice

⁶¹ The value of this improvement is likely more than to offset the additional cost to DWP when distributional weighting is taken into account

SOCIAL INCLUSION PILOT

Costs

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Proportion of project overall costs	20 per cent of project overall costs	£4,230	Trailblazer
F/t Social Exclusion Worker	£28,000 salary in Y2 only	£14,000	Trailblazer
Total costs		£18,230	

Benefits

None during first year which was spent setting up partnership arrangements. It is currently too early to identify benefits during the second year.

Norwich

Programme	Activity	Provided previously?
LEAP (Learning Employment Accommodation Project)	LEAP (Learning Employment Accommodation Project) is a special service seeking to incorporate employment, education and training with accommodation opportunities in the private rented sector (PRS) for single homeless people.	No

Project overall costs

Component	Calculation	Cost per year	Who bore the cost?
Overall project management, recruitment and management of project workers	20 per cent of Housing Adviser Team Leader	£6,500	LA
	20 per cent of Private Sector leasing Team Leader	£6,500	LA
Marketing and Publicity	Production of promotional DVD	£1,000 over the course of three years	Recession Fund
	Leaflets, banners, client satisfaction	£600	Trailblazer
Mentoring materials and support for LAs	Meetings and seminars with other LAs	No additional costs, staff time already costed	Trailblazer
Worklessness Officer	Salary per annum	£28,000	Trailblazer
Private Sector Leasing Officer	Salary per annum	£23,000	Trailblazer
Staff on costs	Office, electricity, IT, stationery etc. for Accommodation officer and Worklessness Officer	£48,000	Trailblazer
Staff training	Prince2 Project Management training course (Worklessness Officer)	£700 (£2,000 over three years)	Recession Fund
Car usage		£260	Trailblazer
Training costs	43 clients completing training or work placements in a year. Assume 50 per cent of the training opportunities are existing large-scale provision, i.e. places in courses that would run ahead regardless of numbers attending, and 50 per cent (21.5) are training opportunities where provider funding dependent on client numbers or discretionary grants used to pay for training. Cost of training/placement £750/client. These estimates are based on partnership agency interviews with employment, education or training providers in Norwich.		Trailblazer (£15,000)
		£16,125	DWP (£1,125)
Cost of resolved homelessness among sofa-surfers / people not making use of hostel provision (informal homeless becoming eligible for HB)	18 previously homeless clients are helped to access accommodation on PRS and will therefore be eligible for HB. All clients are single, 50-50 per cent split between bedsits and 1 bed flats. Average weekly cost of £88/client)	£82,368	DWP
Customer support budget	£ per year towards bus passes/transport for clients and support for discretionary grants for	£1,500	Recession Fund

	textbooks		
Total		£214,553	Various

Benefits

component	Calculation	Number of clients/year	Benefits per year	To whom do the savings accrue?
Clients move on from hostels	36 clients rehoused in first year. 50 per cent of them were previously living in a hostel. So estimate 18 clients/ year move from hostels 1 year earlier than would otherwise have done. ⁶² Hostel costs: £480/person/wk	18	£449,280	LA SP funds & Housing Benefit budget
Clients completing employability training and work placements	43 clients helped into employment-related training in first year. Assume 50 per cent of these go on to get paid work 1 year earlier than would otherwise have done. All clients are single. Of those tracked, 40 per cent were under the age of 25. 50 per cent live in one bed flats and 50 per cent in bedsits (overall split for those housed via LEAP). Annual savings from HB, taxes and Job Seeker's Allowance on average £10,962/client.	22	£241,168	DWP and HMRC
Clients enter paid work	14 clients supported into work in first year. Half of these moved into employment without attending formal training first. ⁶³ Assume same client and housing type profile as above. Annual savings from Job Seeker's Allowance, HB and taxes average £11,000/client.	14	£151,000	DWP and HMRC
Reduced re-offending by clients now in stable housing	19 (49 per cent) of the 36 clients who were housed in the first year were ex-offenders. Six months later, 12 of them (63 per cent) remained settled and had not re-offended. Estimated saving of £10,327 per ex-offender.	12	£123,924	Various
Total			£965,348	

62 The average of 1 year assumes an average level of additionality; some clients remain in hostels for up to two years, whereas others may otherwise have moved out very quickly without the Trailblazer service. According to estimates by hostel staff, the average time spent in a hostel before moving on to settled accommodation (not back into homelessness) is approximately one year.

63 The qualitative data from clients tracking interviews suggests that the main barrier to employment for otherwise employable people living in hostels is their homelessness (lack of permanent address and/or the cost of living in a hostel if in paid employment) and that none of them were able to gain employment whilst homeless. The changed employment status can therefore be regarded as a direct result of being accommodated via LEAP.

Other benefits:

- tax take from landlords arising from lower vacancy rates in the private rented sector
- improved quality of life and health for housed clients
- housed clients now more able (and more incentivised) to look for work
- improved quality of life and finances for clients moving into work
- benefits to employers who are helped to find workers
- reduced costs of homelessness and reduced repeat homelessness if tenancies are sustained as result of the advice and support
- better service to present and future clients following improved referral practices between local actors (Housing Options, employment, education or training information, advice and guidance providers, hostels) engaged with the Trailblazer

Appendix 5: Commentary on Trailblazer monitoring

Purpose of the Monitoring Exercise

The primary aim of the monitoring exercise was to enable the evaluation team, and thus CLG/DWP, to assess the extent to which the Trailblazers were achieving the objectives that had been agreed for the Enhanced Housing Options initiative. There were two sets of objectives:

- Those that reflect the objectives as determined by CLG/DWP
- Those that the Trailblazers have set for their own Enhanced Housing Options programmes, as agreed with CLG/DWP, the Regional Resource Advisors and/or the evaluation team

The importance of monitoring the extent to which the Trailblazers have achieved, or are moving towards achieving, these sets of objectives does not lie solely in the contribution that such monitoring can make to the national evaluation. In encouraging and assisting participating organisations to monitor their own progress in respect of national and local objectives, the exercise should also enable Trailblazers both to inform local stakeholders and Government, through regular meetings with the Regional Resource Advisors, and demonstrate to them the progress that they are making.

Given the variety in Trailblazers' Enhanced Housing Options programmes the underlying purpose of the monitoring exercise was not, and couldn't be, one of comparing the relative 'success' of different Trailblazers. The main aim was to provide information which will help to identify those aspects of the Enhanced Housing Options initiative from across the Trailblazers which appear to have achieved the objectives set nationally and locally, and to what degree, so that lessons can be drawn as to what appears to work and why, and in what circumstances. This will provide important good practice information for local authorities in developing wider housing activities and initiatives.

The monitoring exercise was not a standalone activity, but part of the range of methods employed in the evaluation to enable a greater understanding of outcomes and the processes that give rise to them, and to provide an input into the assessment of value for money of the Enhanced Housing Options programme.

The chosen indicators

In respect of the four national objectives for the Enhanced Housing Options initiative, the first step was to identify measures that reflect those objectives, in whole or in part, tempered by an appreciation of what it is feasible and reasonable for the evaluation team and the Trailblazers themselves to collect in the way of quantitative information.

The evaluation team then assembled a set of indicators which bore on these objectives and which sought as far as was possible to capture the variety of the

Trailblazers' Enhanced Housing Options activities. After a series of discussions with CLG and consultation with the Trailblazers, the list of indicators was finalised as is shown in Table 1 below, in which each of the individual evaluation indicators shown seek to represent in quantitative form some of the key elements of the national objectives.

As many Trailblazers are undertaking Enhanced Housing Options programmes and activities which have specific local objectives, either in addition to or in place of the national objectives, and which are intended to achieve outcomes that are not well reflected in the evaluation indicators, the evaluation team also asked Trailblazers:

- To indicate which of the evaluation indicators **did not** reflect, or were not relevant to, their Enhanced Housing Options activities as agreed with CLG/DWP
- To provide the team with information as to which measures the Trailblazers were intending to use to reflect their progress in respect of their local objectives

Before considering the data collection process in more detail, it is important to note that it is not the aim of this part of the evaluation to monitor in detail the progress of each of the individual Trailblazers. The (relevant) evaluation indicators are intended to reflect the progress of the Trailblazers as a group, with achievements in relation to local objectives demonstrating the progress that is being made as a result of the independence and discretion given to them - an important feature of the Enhanced Housing Options initiative.

Table a5.1: Indicators Reflecting the National Objectives of the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer Initiative

Indicator	Description	Definition
CLG Objective: Meeting Housing Need with a Wider Range of Solutions: More Effective Use of the PRS		
Evaluation indicator 1	Reduction of homelessness	Number of cases prevented/resolved. P1E (Published Indicator)
Evaluation indicator 2		Number of applicant households found eligible for assistance. P1E (Published Indicator)
Evaluation indicator 3	Number of new PRS lets	Number of households accessing new or different PRS property while clients of the Enhanced Housing Options or as a result, wholly or in part, of Enhanced Housing Options activity or intervention. These will include lets through choice-based lettings, where these operate in the Trailblazer and include PRS properties.
Evaluation indicator 4	Total number of accredited PRS landlords	Applicable where the Trailblazer has an accreditation scheme. When first reporting on this indicator please also indicate the number of accredited landlords as at 1 st July 2009
CLG Objective: Using Stock More Effectively: Reduction of Overcrowding and Under-occupation		
Evaluation indicator 5	Number of households downsizing	Number of Enhanced Housing Options clients who, while a client of the Enhanced Housing Options and/or as a result of

		Enhanced Housing Options activity, move to a smaller property but do not become overcrowded as a result. If Trailblazer funding has been used to enhance existing downsizing services rather than to establish a new service, please indicate the baseline level (number of households downsizing in the period 1 st July-30 th September 2009).
Evaluation indicator 6	Property adaptations to mitigate overcrowding	Number of minor property adaptations, small extensions or other small works intended to alleviate overcrowding that have been arranged by the Enhanced Housing Options or undertaken for Enhanced Housing Options clients. If possible, please distinguish between private and social rented properties.
Evaluation indicator 7	Number of overcrowded households in the Trailblazer area	This will be as measured/identified by the local authority (or local authorities). Please identify the measure of overcrowding used – e.g., statutory, bedroom standard or census indicator
CLG Objective: Tackle Worklessness: Helping People into Employment		
Evaluation indicator 8	Number of better –off-at –work calculations undertaken	Number of better-off-at-work calculations undertaken with clients of the Enhanced Housing Options, whether or not carried out by Enhanced Housing Options organisations themselves
Evaluation indicator 9	Number of households accessing ‘other’ services	Number of households who are Enhanced Housing Options clients in which at least one person has been referred to or helped to engage with services OTHER THAN Housing Options DIRECTLY RELATED TO Housing Options USING AND EMPLOYMENT/TRAINING/EDUCATION with a view to facilitating access to employment or employability-related services, including training and education. These services might include services such as counselling, child care, child guidance, money advice, Citizen’s Advice Bureaux and social, medical and addiction services.
Evaluation indicator 10	Number of households successfully moving directly into employment	Number of households who are Enhanced Housing Options clients in which at least one person has been helped to move successfully, or has been referred to other agencies who helped them to move successfully, directly into paid employment (full time or part time)
Evaluation indicator 11	Number of households helped to move into voluntary work, employability training, other employment related training or education	Number of households who are Enhanced Housing Options clients in which at least one person has been helped to move, or has been referred to other agencies who helped them to move, into voluntary work, employability training, other employment related training or education
Evaluation indicator 12	Number of households successfully moving directly into employment and/or into employability training, voluntary work, other employment related training or education	Number of households who are Enhanced Housing Options clients in which at least one person has been helped to move successfully, or has been referred to other agencies who help them to move successfully, directly into paid employment (full time or part time) or voluntary work PLUS the number of households who are Enhanced Housing Options clients in which at least one person has been helped to move, or has been referred to other agencies who help them to move, into employability training, other employment related training or education
Evaluation indicator 13	Benefits take up and employment rate	Overall employment rate. NI151 (Published Indicator)

Evaluation indicator 14		Number of working age people on out of work benefits. NI152 (Published Indicator)
Evaluation indicator 15		Take up of in work benefits. Published data
CLG Objective: Improve Customer Service: Accessibility, Satisfaction and Staff Training		
Evaluation indicator 16	Number of households accessing the Enhanced Housing Options service for the first time	Total number of households accessing the Enhanced Housing Options service for the first time (i.e., 'new users), including, where possible, such households who do so in person, via phone, mail or via website, where new users can be identified. When first reporting on this indicator please also indicate, if possible, the number of households accessing the Enhanced Housing Options service for the first time in the period 1 st July-30 th September 2009.
Evaluation indicator 17	Satisfaction of clients/users of the service	Percentage of clients/users of the Enhanced Housing Options service rating the service as good, very good and excellent or the equivalent of these, where known. Please indicate on what basis (e.g., through a survey) this is measured. If the method of measuring client satisfaction is a <i>tenant</i> satisfaction survey rather than a survey of all clients approaching the services, please specify this.
Evaluation indicator 18	Staff training	Number of hours training or number of training events organised for Enhanced Housing Options staff. Please indicate how this is being measured.

Collecting the monitoring information

The intention was that in most cases individual Trailblazers would collect the information in respect of the evaluation indicators that were relevant to them on a quarterly basis. The exceptions are the five evaluation indicators – numbers 1, 2, 13, 14 and 15 marked in green in Table 1 above – which draw on published information and will be collected by the evaluation team although individual Trailblazers may have collected this information for their own purposes.

To facilitate the collection of data relating to the relevant evaluation indicators, the team designed an Excel spreadsheet which enabled the Trailblazers to enter the appropriate information. Among other features, the spreadsheet gave participants the opportunity to identify clients who are part of the PSA 16 groups and other vulnerable groups that are pertinent to the Trailblazers' activities.

In respect of data on local objectives, two rather different approaches have been taken. First, the case study Trailblazers, and particularly those taking part in the client tracking exercise, have quite extensive contact with members of the evaluation team. This means that for this group it is possible to clearly identify local objectives and to work with and support these Trailblazers in their work of data definition and collection.

Second, those Trailblazers which are not case studies but which have set local objectives that are not reflected by the evaluation indicators have been asked to submit data on progress towards these in a form, and at intervals, which most suit

the nature of their Enhanced Housing Options work and their existing reporting and monitoring arrangements.

The process of data definition and initiating data collection has been a comparatively lengthy one. Since there was no explicit data collection requirement in the brief for those bidding for Trailblazer status, it appeared that relatively few participants had data collection procedures in place at the start of the evaluation. This necessitated a dialogue with CLG/DWP on the appropriate evaluation indicators and then, second, to refine and explain these, consultation, often in one-to-one telephone or e-mail discussions with Trailblazers.

The team also arranged a Workshop on data collection in December 2009 at LB Camden to enable Trailblazer representatives to explore data issues, to learn from each other and to listen to presentations from two of their number who were relatively advanced in identifying monitoring needs and in the introduction of data collection procedures. Representatives of 18 Trailblazers attended what was generally agreed to be a very valuable event and which had the additional benefit of allowing a further, final refinement of the evaluation indicators.

In January 2010 all Trailblazers were circulated with a copy of the final Excel spreadsheet, the equivalent of Table 1 above and a revised explanation of the nature and rationale for the data collection exercise. This was followed in mid-March by a reminder of the need to provide information, with a further reminder in May. Trailblazers were also asked to submit information to the team on a quarterly basis for July-September/October-December 2009, where available.

Limitations on data collection

It soon became clear that some Trailblazers were experiencing a number of difficulties in relation to the data collection exercise. First, there are capacity constraints either because they are relatively small in terms of the staff resources that can be reasonably (and regularly) devoted to data collection and/or they do not have existing monitoring arrangements that can be readily adapted to collect the sort of information that was required.

Secondly, some Trailblazers reported difficulties with monitoring outcomes because they have been introducing activities in a phased manner over the first part of the evaluation period while in others the initiative appears to have been more or less in place at the very start of the period.

The third difficulty for some Trailblazers is that it was difficult to distinguish sensibly between those aspects of the Housing Options service that have been 'enhanced' under the Enhanced Housing Options programme and other 'unenhanced' aspects of the Housing Option service.

The final 'limitation' was that some Trailblazers are concerned that in taking part in the monitoring exercise their performance may be unfavourably 'exposed' in comparison with the performance of others. To counter this concern, the team and, we believe, the Regional Resource Advisors stressed that the evaluation is not comparative, that there are no externally determined indicators of 'success', and that

would take account of the change in economic circumstances that have occurred since the start of the Enhanced Housing Options initiative.

Progress with data collection

The Team began to receive data on the evaluation indicators from Trailblazers in January 2010. By May 2010, 16 out of the 42 Trailblazers have begun to use the Excel spreadsheet to provide quarterly data to the evaluation team.

In addition, twelve Trailblazers provided the evaluation team with monitoring information that they have collected in relation to their own, local objectives e.g. on numbers of clients receiving information, advice and guidance (AIG) and numbers referred for money advice.

By June 2010, it was too early to infer from the numerical data being assembled the degree of progress that Trailblazers were making in relation to their diverse goals. It did seem to be the case, however, that for those aspects of the Trailblazers' programmes that had been introduced by that date that the number of clients engaged had increased over the previous quarter. Furthermore, the number of projects that had been implemented had increased since January 2010 so that we expected the volume of information to increase over the remainder of the evaluation period.

In July 2010, following a change of Government, a decision was taken to curtail the evaluation with the final report brought forward to October 2010. In the light of this, the evaluation team was advised that the monitoring exercise should be discontinued from July 2010⁶⁴.

This change in priorities meant that we could not use the monitoring exercise to provide the analysis we had planned, although some of the data that had already been received was used in conjunction with other survey and qualitative data to contribute to the value for money calculations for a sample of Trailblazers. It also seems that for some Trailblazers at least the monitoring exercise helped improve their analytical capacity and provided evidence for sustaining the Enhanced Housing Options services locally.

64 Although client tracking and prearranged case study interviews continued until September 2010.