

Helping Homeless People

**Delivering the Action Plan for
Prevention and Effective Response**
Homelessness Monitoring Group Third Report – April 2006 Appendix



**one
scotland**
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

RAG STATUS REPORT

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LEGISLATION (Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 24 and 25)

(3) Expansion of priority need	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Homelessness Team, Scottish Executive
<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation has been taken forward into legislation via sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003. These sections were commenced in January 2004 via S.S.I. 2003/609. • Homelessness Monitoring subgroup on 2012 planning established – Spring 2005. • Research commissioned from Tribal HCH on abolition of priority need published April 2005. • Local authorities requested to provide information on progress against homelessness strategies and to complete pro-forma relating to current and anticipated future levels of homelessness applications, lettings, support needs and wider housing need by end May 2005. • Analysis of pro-forma returns completed by Tribal HCH August 2005. • Consultation on Ministerial statement – August –October 2005. • Three regional seminars for elected Members held September & October 2005. • Ministerial Statement on Abolition of Priority Need published 21 December 2005, as required by legislation. Statement is available online at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/12/21133010/30107. Technical annex and an analysis of the responses to the consultation have also been published. • Statement sets out action which has been, is and will be taken by Executive and local government to abolish priority need by 2012 and sets out interim objectives, including target for local authorities to half the proportion of households assessed as non-priority need by 2009. 	
<p>Action required & by whom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All partners to take forward action to deliver interim objectives outlined in Ministerial statement. • Scottish Executive to issue guidance on options for achieving 2009 target and template for assessing progress. 	
<p>Key Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of Tribal HCH research on abolition of priority need - April 2005. • Ministerial statement on abolition of priority need published December 2005. 	

- Local authorities to aim to reduce proportion of non-priority assessments by 50% by 2009.

(4) Revision to operation of intentionality

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contact: Homelessness Team, Scottish Executive

Progress to date:

- Recommendation has been taken forward into legislation via sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003. Sections not yet commenced.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Unit at the Scottish Executive is funding 3 local authorities to take part in intensive intervention and supervision demonstration models for troubled and troublesome families (“Breaking the Cycle” projects). The Unit is also funding Aberdeen City Council and North Ayrshire Council to take part in information sharing demonstration models around anti-social behaviour. Projects will be operational shortly.
- Ann Rosengard Associates have been commissioned to carry out research to inform the implementations of sections 4-6 of the 2003 Act.
- Intentionality subgroup of the Homelessness Monitoring Group established Spring 2005.
- Ministerial statement on Abolition of Priority Need sets out key issues to be addressed in guidance on implementation of the provisions and gives timetable of not before 2007.

Action required & by whom:

- HMG to make recommendations as to timetable for implementation of intentionality provisions during 2006, informed by outcome of research project and deliberations of subgroup.
- Scottish Parliament to commence sections 4, 5, and 6 of 2003 Act.

Key milestones:

- Research into support needs of homeless families to be published Spring 2006.

(5) Suspension of local connection	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Homelessness Team, Scottish Executive
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation has been taken forward into legislation via section 8 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003. Section not yet commenced. • Tribal HCH research on operation of the power to modify local connection rules published in April 2005. • Ministerial commitment to suspend local connection in 2006. • Review of HL1 commenced – Autumn 2005. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Executive, HMG and Homelessness Stats User Group to ensure that monitoring processes are in place to support the legislative change. • Scottish Parliament to commence section 8 of the 2003 Act. • Scottish Ministers to consult on and make a statement setting out criteria by reference to which powers under section 8 will be exercised. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribal HCH research published April 2005. • Consultation on implementation of local connection provisions to commence – Spring 2006. 	

(24) Court action on repossession orders	
RAG status: Green	Delivery contact: Homelessness Team, Scottish Executive
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation has been taken forward into legislation via section 12 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003. Section 12 commenced July 2004 via S.S.I. 2004/288. • Guidance to Sheriff Clerks/Deputes issued by Scottish Court Service in June 2004. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring to be considered by Scottish Executive 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 12 brought into force July 2004. 	

(25) Requirement to notify local authority of proceedings for possession.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Homelessness Team, Scottish Executive
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation has been taken forward into legislation via section 11 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003. Section not yet commenced. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Executive to consult on and develop form of notice and how it is to be given (to be prescribed in Regulations). Scottish Executive to develop guidance on action to be taken by local authorities as a result of notification. Scottish Parliament to commence section 11 of 2003 Act. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Executive to consult on section 11 during Summer 2006. 	

CULTURE & TRAINING (Recommendations 1 & 33)

(1) The objectives of increasing homeless people's control and extending their choices, and achieving the effective participation of people affected by homelessness in the development of future policy, practice and service delivery should be widely promoted and given practical effect in all activities directed at tackling homelessness.

RAG status: Amber Delivery contacts: SE Homelessness Team, Communities Scotland R&I

Progress to date:

- Involvement principles have been promoted in all relevant Executive guidance related to homelessness, particularly guidance on local authority homelessness strategies, Health and Homelessness Standards and the Supporting People programme. The importance of the practical application of these principles has been stressed in feedback on homelessness strategies to local authorities.
- Communities Scotland published a summary of its findings from 5 pathfinder inspections in a themed report on homelessness published in June 2005. This indicated that 3 authorities had developed exit surveys to capture feedback from service users and two of these were being actively implemented. One authority had funded a broader consultation process with homeless people but beyond this it was found that authorities did not collect an use feedback from homeless people to understand their views on the quality of services provided. Inspection reports for three councils have been published since then: one council made good use of feedback from homeless people to help it improve services; one council has still to fully develop effective ways to gather and use homeless people's views of its services; and one council has ways to gather views from homeless people, but is not yet making best use of the information it obtains.
- Communities Scotland Learning Connections team have funded a 2 year Pathfinder project 'Homing in on Literacy' in Perth & Kinross to help mainly young tenants sustain their tenancies by improving their literacy and numeracy skills. The project has succeeded in working with some hard to reach homeless young people and has raised awareness of meeting the needs of the client group via short films by the young people involved.
- HMG has agreed as part of its remit, 'to monitor the level and impact of involvement of people directly affected by homelessness at a local level and within the Monitoring Group'.
- HMG subgroup on Awareness Raising and Good Practice established & has overseen research by Chartered Institute of Housing on "Knowledge, Views and Understanding of Homeless People". Research due to be published Spring 2006.
- Revised Code of Guidance published May 2005.
- Communities Scotland currently consulting on their Regulation and Inspection Framework for Housing. Consultation seeks views on how the agency should enable the views of service users to influence its selection of organisations for inspection.
- Peer review pilots carried out by the Scottish Housing Best Value Network have included service users in the review teams.

<p>Action required & by whom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subgroup on Awareness Raising and Good Practice to consider further work required. • Communities Scotland, through its inspections, will continue to report on the effectiveness of councils' approaches to involving homeless people in their services.
<p>Key milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Code of Guidance published May 2005. • Communities Scotland published a themed report on findings on homelessness in Pathfinder inspections in June 2005.

(33) All service providers, statutory and voluntary, should ensure that they are promoting values, attitudes and behaviour which deliver responsive and personalised services. They should ensure that staff are supported and trained in serving people affected by homelessness. Training should cover, as appropriate, the definition of homelessness, risk assessment techniques to help ‘first to know’ agencies respond effectively, joint working with other agencies, support packages, consultation techniques and how to help and empower people experiencing homelessness to find appropriate solutions. Joint training approaches should be pursued. The training programmes run by Scottish Training on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (STRADA) partnership should include coverage on serving homeless people.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contacts: Homelessness Team, SE; STRADA

Progress to date:

- A series of events have been held in order to promote culture change. These have sought to raise awareness, understanding and engagement with the new homelessness agenda.
- HMG subgroup on Awareness Raising and Good Practice established.
- STRADA modules have been developed with the Task Force recommendations in mind, e.g. drugs, alcohol and housing. Between March 2002 and June 2005 STRADA have trained 677 housing staff on the Drugs, Alcohol and Housing module. In addition, STRADA have also provided bespoke courses designed for housing and homeless related issues to 143 staff during the same period. Discussions underway on provision of central funding for STRADA to cover costs of training for housing and homelessness staff.
- CIH commissioned to undertake research on “Knowledge, understanding and views of homeless people”.
- *National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland: A Plan for Action 2005-2012* published by the Scottish Executive in 2005.
- The Foyer Federation have received Scottish Executive funding to develop the Outside In project in Scotland – this involves learning programmes for homeless people and the staff supporting them in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Action required & by whom:

- Subgroup on Awareness Raising and Best Practice to consider further work required following on from CIH’s research into knowledge understanding and views of homeless people. An event to publicise and discuss the results of CIH’s work will be held in Spring. General public awareness of homelessness will be measured through Scottish Social attitudes survey later this year and ARBP will shape development of this aspect of the survey.
- Scottish Executive Homelessness Team to explore funding for STRADA to cover costs of training for housing and homelessness related

staff.
Key milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publication of CIH research – Spring 2006.

HOUSING POLICY (Recommendations 6-12)

(6) Guidance on the preparation of local housing strategies under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 should make homelessness a priority, and this should be reflected in the allocation of resources by Scottish Ministers.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Communities Scotland
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness was identified as a key national housing priority to be addressed in the first round of Local Housing Strategies (LHS) submissions. • All 32 Local Housing Strategies (LHS) have now been assessed by Communities Scotland; the assessment shows that links with homelessness strategies were generally good. • The information contained in LHS, along with a range of other information including research from Heriot-Watt University, has informed the Executive's proposals for investing £1.2 billion in affordable housing over the next three years. • Consultation on Strategic Housing Investment Framework (SHIF) launched 17 March 2006; contains proposals to change the way funds for housing investment are managed and distributed, with increased emphasis on Local Housing Strategies. The consultation includes a specific question as to how management and distribution should reflect the implications of the 2012 target. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland to take account of consultation responses on the SHIF in determining how housing investment funds are managed and distributed. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next round of LHS 2009 	

(7) If current research confirms the usefulness of lead tenancies, this should be actively pursued by Communities Scotland using resources from their development programme.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Communities Scotland
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An independent evaluation, commissioned by the Executive, of past and present Lead Tenancy Schemes (LTS) has been completed. • Communities Scotland is liaising with SFHA regarding a number of proposed improvements to guidance on LTS in light of research findings, specifically: introducing clearer guidance on the standards which properties must meet; more flexibility on the categorisation of clients housed; more clarity on ‘exit route’ arrangements for individual tenants and at the end of the lease period; scope to align tenancy conditions as closely as possible with those for RSL owned stock; and updating the allowable grant levels. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland to discuss role of lead tenancies in context of greater access to private rented sector. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation published. 	

(8) Local authorities should assess the local availability of affordable housing for young people seeking their own accommodation for the first time. Housing strategies should include proposals to address any shortfall.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Communities Scotland
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first round of Local Housing Strategy submissions provide only a partial picture of housing need among young people seeking their own accommodation for the first time (this is because of local variation in the local housing needs assessments undertaken). • In their LHS, 15 councils identify a need for affordable housing generally (i.e. not just for young people) while a further 3 are currently undertaking revised local housing needs assessments and have yet to identify the need for affordable housing generally. In 8 of the remaining 14 LHS, evidence suggests that there may nevertheless be local pockets of shortage for affordable housing generally. 	
Action Required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities Scotland taking forward Local Housing Need Assessment Proforma project, a local affordable housing needs proforma which will be completed by local authorities and revisited with them on a regular basis. Development work to take place late summer, with training on proforma completion for local authority staff with LHS responsibilities provided in the autumn. It is expected that proformas will be returned to Communities Scotland for assessment before Christmas, allowing them to form part of the 2007 update of LHS. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending Review 2007 • Local Housing Need Assessment Proforma project launched – Autumn 2006. • Next round of LHS 2009. 	

(9) All local authorities should provide access to rent guarantee / deposit schemes by 2004. The Executive should issue national guidance on such schemes based on lessons learned from local pilots; local authorities should also receive initial funding to enable schemes to be set up.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contacts: National Rent Deposit Forum Officer (Scotland)

Progress to date:

- Funding provided to local authorities to deliver recommendations of Homeless Task Force (£20 million in 2005-06); many local authorities have used this resource to develop schemes.
- An independent evaluation of rent deposit guarantee schemes in Scotland, commissioned by the Scottish Executive, was published in September 2003 and has been widely disseminated.
- Due to a small number of schemes currently being redeveloped not all local authorities are currently offering access to a rent deposit scheme. This is in contrast to Spring 2005 when all authorities offered access.
- Lisa Allan appointed in July 2004 as National Rent Deposit Forum Development Officer (Scotland) – funded by the Scottish Executive. Following NRDF's decision to cease business at end April 2006 arrangements are being put in place to continue the work of the Scottish Development Officer. The Development Officer provides advice and support to all established and developing schemes, by providing support services in Scotland, e.g. networking meetings, training, research, responding to queries and disseminating information.
- The Development Officer has carried out 2 audits of rent deposit schemes, the most recent in March 2006. The 2006 audit revealed that schemes are in different stages of development, with most well established but some still in strategic form. All schemes receive local authority funding and some receive assistance from voluntary organisations in the form of underwriting. Over 1100 bonds were issued by schemes in 2005 and all schemes offer wider services such as tenancy and landlord support and help and advice with welfare benefits.

Action required & by whom:

- Development Officer to produce Good Practice Guide on Rent Deposit Schemes -
- Scottish Executive and Development Officer to agree programme of engagement with local authorities not currently offering access to a scheme to ensure service becomes available.

Key milestones:

- Survey of schemes completed January 2005 and March 2006.
- Good Practice Guide to be published

(10) A national framework for furnished tenancies should be drawn up, with appropriate funding, by Communities Scotland. A national furniture grant scheme and furniture re-cycling network should be established. We propose a target of 1,000 additional furnished tenancies a year for 5 years, at which point further need should be assessed.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contact: Scottish Executive Homelessness Team

Progress to date:

- Grant of £3m per annum over the period 2003-06 has been made available through Communities Scotland to fund achievement of 1302 additional tenancies in 2003/04, 1329 in 2004/05 and 1523 in 2005/06. Communities Scotland has prepared a national framework for furnished tenancies, completed design of the furniture grant scheme and issued guidelines to local authorities.
- On the basis of feedback, Communities Scotland has made some changes to guidance such as including washing machines amongst the 'essential' electrical goods covered by the grant.
- The 1,000 tenancies a year target is expected to be achieved during the course of the three year scheme.
- A national furniture co-ordinator (Linsay Chalmers) was appointed in March 2003 and is developing links between furniture recycling projects and homelessness strategies. A furniture re-cycling website (www.morethanfurniture.com) was launched early in 2004.
- National mapping exercise completed by end of 2004 by national furniture co-ordinator.
- Review of national framework for furnished tenancies carried out in January 2006; decision taken by Monitoring Group to continue the furniture grant scheme for financial year 2006/07. Operation of the scheme to be considered further during course of the year to ensure it is meeting the Task Force's objectives in the most effective way.

Action required & by whom:

- Scottish Executive to review operation of furniture grant scheme and report to HMG in June 2006.

Key milestones:

- Appointment of national furniture co-ordinator March 2003.
- Furnished tenancies scheme in operation 2003/04
- Furniture re-cycling website launched early 2004
- National mapping of furniture re-cycling projects December 2004.
- Review of national framework for furnished tenancies carried out – January 2006.

(11) The number and quality of accommodation offers to homelessness applicants should be monitored by Communities Scotland.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Communities Scotland, R&I
<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities Scotland monitor the number and quality of accommodation offers through their cyclical inspections of local authority homelessness services. Inspections look at the level of allocations to homeless people compared with the level to other applicants and in the context of the number of people applying as homeless and in priority need. Inspections also look at the type of and location of lets. The level of analysis that is possible is largely determined by the quality of information held by each local authority; inspections have found that the collection and use of outcome information was limited. Communities Scotland published a summary of its findings from pathfinder inspections in a themed report on homelessness published in June 2005. This noted that two local authorities (of the five involved in the pathfinders) treated homeless people equally with other applicants in terms of the number, quality and location of houses offered. One authority made lets available quickly but limited choice for homeless people, one restricted access to homeless people through a quota system and one council could not demonstrate what outcomes were (in this area it was also found that significant numbers of homeless people did not get access to appropriate housing). Inspection reports for three councils have been published since then: one council allocates around one in ten of permanent lets to homeless people, limits choice for homeless people and does not always consider their needs fully; one council was treating homeless people to whom they have a duty to provide permanent housing equally with other applicants in the number of houses they are offered, but restricted choice and was poor at accessing accommodation held by RSLs; and one council allocated houses to a high proportion of people it found to have a priority need, but was not always clear why it bypassed homeless people for particular houses and they are more likely to get lower demand houses. Communities Scotland currently consulting on the Regulation and Inspection Framework for Housing; consultation ends June 2007. 	
<p>Action Required & by whom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland to collate information collected through data returns and inspections to form picture of trends in the allocation of housing to homeless people – this should also take account of any relationship with the provision of temporary accommodation. Report to be made to HMG once sufficient data available. Scottish Executive to commission wider research and to consider guidance on allocations policies as set out in the Ministerial Statement on the abolition of priority need. Homelessness Monitoring Group to offer advice on the basis of the report submitted to them. 	

Key Milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection regime commenced - 11 councils have been inspected and 8 reports have been published. • Communities Scotland published a themed report on findings on homelessness in Pathfinder inspections in June 2005. 	
(12) Future guidance on choice-based letting schemes should incorporate arrangements to prevent homeless people being disadvantaged.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: SE Affordable Housing and Housing Management Team
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice Based Letting schemes were addressed in the Executive's allocations guidance issued in April 2002 which made clear that any allocation system had to reflect statutory requirements to give reasonable preference to homeless applicants. • The Executive is engaged in UK research into the longer-term impact of choice based lettings systems which will include examination of two Scottish case studies. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive to consider this recommendation further in the light of any representations from landlords and other interested bodies and issues arising from Communities Scotland's regulation and inspection process. Taking account of the outcome of the research mentioned above, the Executive to consider as a matter of high priority the development of specific guidance for any landlords wishing to implement choice-based lettings to ensure any such scheme is introduced effectively and consistently within the overall context for delivering CHRs. It is envisaged that such guidance would provide advice on suitable models to achieve this. • Homelessness Monitoring Group to consider international evidence on the implications of CBL schemes for homeless people and Communities Scotland's reports on landlords operating CBL schemes. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations guidance issued 2002. • UK research to report April 2006. 	

BENEFITS (Recommendations 13-17 & 29)

(13) The Scottish Executive should pursue with the Department for Work and Pensions how to meet the general need for more information about the operation of the benefits system in Scotland and for research into the impact of benefits policy on homeless people in Scotland.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: SE-DD
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive has liaised with DWP but no definite action has been agreed. Officials from DWP and Jobcentre Plus have attended a meeting of the Homelessness Monitoring Group to discuss work relevant to the Task Force's recommendations and have also provided information subsequently. Welfare Reform Green Paper <i>A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to work</i> recognises that there are significant differences between the social housing sectors of the UK devolved administrations which will need to be taken into account in any future roll-out of the Local Housing Allowance to social housing or consideration of any other options to support greater choice and responsibility. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Executive to reflect recommendation in response to consultation on Welfare Reform Green Paper. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welfare Reform Green Paper "<i>A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work</i>" published January 2006; consultation closes 21 April 2006. 	

(14) The Department for Work and Pensions should be asked (a) to review the adequacy of welfare benefits payable to 16-24 year olds generally and to the young homeless people specifically, (b) to pursue ways of making agencies involved in helping homeless people more aware of the full scope of community care grant provision, (c) to consider making an adjustment to the regulations to permit applications for community care grants to be made prior to the offer of a tenancy, (d) to review whether the overall provision through the Social Fund is helping vulnerable and homeless people in the best way, (e) to consider making homeless people, and people resettling from temporary into permanent accommodation, a priority for funding , and (f) to review non-dependant deductions.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contacts: (a) Benefits Reform Division, DWP; (b)–(e) LPPD Social Fund Division, DWP; (f) Housing Support Division, DWP

Progress to date:

(a) Welfare benefits to 16-24 year olds

- In Budget 2003 the Chancellor announced a review of financial support for 16-19 year olds to ensure all young people have the support and incentives they need to participate in education and training after the age of 16 – whether in school, college or the workplace. *Supporting Young People to Achieve*, the report of the review (available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/financialsupport), sets out a number of changes designed to improve the financial support system for 16-19 year olds. The first changes will be introduced from April 2006, with the coming into force of regulations and changes to guidance that introduce significant changes to benefits paid for, or to, young people.

(b) Awareness of community care grant provision

- Full information on the community grant scheme is available on the DWP intranet; DWP review communication and publicity regularly.

(c) Adjustment of community care grant regulations

- DWP advise there is no requirement that a tenancy must have been granted before a community care grant is awarded, although the decision maker must have evidence of the applicant's future circumstances when determining the nature, extent and urgency of the need being applied for.

(d) & (e) Overall provision of Social Fund & prioritising homeless people

- The needs of homeless people will be factored into ongoing consideration of the Social Fund though specific outcomes can in no way be guaranteed.

(f) Non-dependant deductions

- Although no formal review of non-dependant deductions has taken place, DWP is currently looking at the rules for non-dependant deductions with a view to simplifying them. This is part of wider ongoing work to try and simplify the HB/CTB rules to make them easier to understand, administer and less prone to fraud and error. In the past, changes have been considered but reform is very expensive and any change to non-dependant deductions in the near future is likely to be incremental rather than a radical change

Action required & by whom:

(a) Welfare benefits to 16-24 year olds

- DWP to implement first tranche of changes from *Supporting Young People to Achieve* from April 2006, comprising:
Child Benefit and Income Support: Changes to Child Benefit and income-related benefits (Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit which will remove the distinction between education and unwaged training; result in more young people achieving their qualifications rather than dropping out at 19 due to financial pressures; improve the levels of financial support available; and provide genuine choice of post-16 learning options. Further detail is available at www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit.
Jobseeker's Allowance: Revised guidance for decision makers to improve and simplify the JSA claims process, particularly in relation to the estrangement & hardship exemptions.
Guidance for parents and young people: Distribution of Learning and Skills Council's guide: *Financial Help for Young People*, produced in collaboration with DfES, DWP and HMRC. The guide is available online at www.direct.gov.uk/youngpeoplefinance.
- DWP to take forward longer term aim of jointly (with HMT, HMRC, DfES & the devolved administrations) devising a radically simplified financial support system for 16-19 year olds which will support post-16 choices and transitions; deliver decent minimum income levels; and be accessible
- Scottish Executive & HMG to ensure this work takes account of developments in Scotland and the Task Force recommendations.

(b) Awareness of community care grant provision

- Scottish Executive & HMG to consider whether further awareness raising required.

(d) & (e) Overall provision of Social Fund & prioritising homeless people

- DWP to take account of these recommendations in ongoing consideration of reform of the Social Fund.

(f) Non-dependent deductions

- DWP to consider non-dependent deductions as part of ongoing work to simplify Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

Key milestones:

- Publication of *Supporting Young People to Achieve* Report March 2004.
- Introduction of regulations and changes to guidance on benefits for, or to, young people – April 2006

(15) The Scottish Executive should play a full part in monitoring the operation of the broader definition of single room rent and should provide evidence to the DWP of any problems that persist, both in the single room rent arrangements and in the wider measures in place to restrict rents.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contact: Scottish Executive; DWP

Progress to date:

- ‘Pathfinder’ projects for the reform of Housing Benefit in the private rented sector are in place, including Edinburgh and Argyll & Bute. The pilots involve the payment of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which is a flat rate payment based on the number of occupiers and location rather than the current arrangement of a payment linked to the rent of the individual property. LHA has a shared room rate which is slightly more generous than the single room rent. Pathfinder projects have a two year life and are due to be completed and evaluated in Summer 2006.
- Welfare Reform Green Paper “*A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work*” published in January 2006; paper states that introduction of LHA is a central element of Housing Benefit reform. Green Paper is out to public consultation until 21 April 2006.
- The Scottish Executive is in discussion with DWP on the use of the LHA approach in the social rented sector. Single room rent is a factor in that context.
- DWP published research on single room rent in June 2005, available at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2005-2006/rrep243.pdf>. In the longer term DWP are looking at how the policy on the Single Room Rent and shared rate of LHA should be developed.

Action required & by whom:

- Scottish Executive and the Homelessness Monitoring Group to maintain contact with DWP on single room rent and feed in evidence where appropriate.
- Other organisations to feed in evidence to the Executive to support liaison with DWP.

Key milestones:

- Research on single room rent published June 2005.

<p>(16) Local authorities' homelessness strategies should incorporate standards for dealing with housing benefit claims and targets for improvements. Local authorities' performance in delivering these standards and targets should be monitored by Communities Scotland, in collaboration with Audit Scotland, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Benefits Fraud Inspectorate. When housing stock is transferred from a local authority to a registered social landlord, care should be taken to ensure that this does not have any adverse effect on housing benefit administration</p>	
<p>RAG status: Green</p>	<p>Delivery contact: Scottish Executive Homelessness Team, Communities Scotland, Audit Scotland, DWP, Benefits Fraud Inspectorate</p>
<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment process for homelessness strategies has checked whether standards and targets for dealing with housing benefit claims are incorporated within the strategy. This was a weakness in many of the original strategies and was therefore highlighted in feedback to local authorities, who are now being required to address this. • In March 2002 the Department for Work and Pensions issued national Performance Standards for housing benefit administration. In April 2005 the Performance Standards were revised to focus more clearly on outcomes and the key enablers that would support delivery. Statistics showing each Authority's performance are published by the DWP on a quarterly basis. • The average number of days to process a new Housing Benefit claim in Scotland has improved by 11 days from 54 days in 2002/03 to 43 days in 2004/05. This has reduced by a further 13 days to 30 days for the first half of 2005/06. • The number of LAs meeting the 36 day Performance Standard for processing new claims has improved from 12 in 2002/03 to 14 in 2004/05 and there were further improvements in the second quarter of 2005/06 when 21 LAs met the 36 days standard. • Performance by the local authorities which have undergone wholesale stock transfer (Glasgow, Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway) is within the average for the rest of Scotland. 	
<p>Action required & by whom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further monitoring required to ensure that local authorities are setting and meeting appropriate standards and targets. • Detailed report on local authority performance to be prepared for discussion by HMG. 	
<p>Key milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB/CTB Performance Standards published in April 2002 and revised in April 2005. 	

(17) The need for more pro-active benefits outreach and for clear service priorities for at risk / homeless groups should be addressed in the design of the new Jobcentre Plus service.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Jobcentre Plus
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobcentre Plus aims to provide work for those who can, and support for those who cannot, by helping disadvantaged people into work as a route out of poverty. Job entry targets reflect the emphasis on assisting priority customers. Changes within the organisation of Jobcentre Plus will help deliver more integrated services, focusing on priority customers while extending the range of partnership working so that customers receive help to find work. See also recommendation 50. • From April 2006 Jobcentre Plus will introduce a new Job Outcome measure to replace the existing Job Entry target (i.e. Jobcentre Plus staff targets will relate to longer term job outcomes, rather than focussing on job entry only). As a result of these changes even more emphasis will be placed on supporting disadvantaged customers including homeless people. • A new External Relations team has been set up within Jobcentre Plus, Office for Scotland, to identify and support closer partnership working to help those customers most disadvantaged in the labour market. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobcentre Plus to consider most effective ways of prioritising homeless customers, including evaluation and mainstreaming of existing projects and the development of a strategy for long-term engagement. • DWP/Jobcentre Plus to provide further information as to activity underway. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobcentre Plus will place a higher priority on homeless customers from April 2006. 	

(29) The Department for Work and Pensions should consider granting local authorities discretion to pay housing benefit to those expected to be in prison for more than 3 months.	
RAG status: Red	Delivery contact: Housing Benefit Strategy Division, DWP
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DWP advise there are no plans to change the current Regulations which limit the period for which benefit can be paid to 13 weeks when a person is in prison. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMG/Scottish Executive to continue to put the case to DWP. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice received from DWP March 2006. 	

PREVENTION: EVICTIONS (Recommendations 22-23)

(22) The Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland and Communities Scotland, in consultation with local authorities, should review the appropriateness of the “Current tenants’ arrears as a percentage of net rent due” Key Performance Indicator to determine whether an alternative approach could assist in reducing homelessness by reducing the number of households evicted for rent arrears.

RAG status: Green

Delivery contact: Communities Scotland, Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland

Progress to date:

- Audit Scotland and Communities Scotland, in consultation with local authorities, have reviewed the arrears indicator following publication of Communities Scotland’s thematic study on evictions. The Accounts Commission’s Direction for year 2006/07, published in November 2005, sets out the revised indicator (available online at: <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/publications/pdf/2005/2005PIDirection.pdf>).

Action required & by whom:

- HMG to review recommendation in light of Accounts Commission Direction in November 2005 – to monitor the impact of the revised indicator; and also in order to explore the necessity for further action in relation to management of rent arrears.

Key milestones:

- Communities Scotland Evictions in Practice study published March 2005.
- Publication of Accounts Commission Direction November 2005.

(23) The Scottish Executive should discuss the issue of illegal eviction and harassment with the police, the Crown Office and local authorities.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Private Sector Housing Team, Scottish Executive
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive has taken steps to focus on the standard of private landlords and the awareness of landlords and tenants. The registration of private landlords was enacted by the Anti-Social Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004. Registration requires the local authority to be satisfied that the landlord is fit and proper to be letting houses, and evidence that the landlord had been illegally evicting or harassing tenants would be significant. A landlord who lets while unregistered (and does not have an application in process) will be committing a criminal offence. The local authority will also be able to apply a cumulative financial penalty by serving a notice that rent liability is suspended, and it is expected that this will be a powerful incentive for landlords to comply with the law and good practice. • The Executive is running an awareness publicity campaign called Better Renting Scotland which is backed up by a website (www.betterrentingscotland.com). The site provides access to a full range of information about landlords' and tenants' rights and responsibilities, with a digest of the main points and links to other relevant sites. This will be a long term resource and is intended to complement local efforts by local authorities in connection with HMO licensing, registration and their increasing degree of engagement with private sector housing. • Shelter Scotland submitted examples of illegal eviction cases to Scottish Executive in June 2005. • Meeting with ACPOS, CoSLA, Crown Office and Shelter Scotland sought for April 2006. Proposing to explore options for handling of illegal eviction and harassment cases between the police and local authorities in light of the introduction of landlord registration. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Executive to take forward discussions as outlined above. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration of private landlords - April 2006. 	

PREVENTION: HIGH-RISK GROUPS (Recommendations 26-28 & 30-31)

(26) Those responsible for prisoners, looked after children, long stay hospital patients and the armed forces should develop high quality housing and homelessness advice services with support from Communities Scotland. Standards for these advice services should be set and monitored within the appropriate regulatory regime for each type of institution. Local authorities should ensure that appropriate linkages are being made between services in institutions and services in the community.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contact: Communities Scotland, SPS, SEED, MoD, SEHD

Progress to date:

- For details on the services being provided please see recommendations 27 (looked after children), 28 (prisons), 30 (armed forces) and 42 (hospital).
- HomePoint, part of Communities Scotland, provides support and information to advice provider agencies including prisons outreach projects and the armed forces. This support includes the development of a model framework for the provision of user centred advice. The model 'Scottish National Standards and Good Practice Guidance for Housing Information and Advice Services' defines organisational standards for the delivery of an advice service with performance indicators and good practice guidance on meeting them. The model also clearly defines core competence for advisors and the knowledge base they require to advise in the 19 areas of housing law defined by the advice sector.
- Communities Scotland Regeneration Division has been working to identify the best way it may support standards in this area. Contact with regulators of these services suggests that support to service providers in identifying their progress against standards will be the most appropriate way to take this forward. For example, contacts between Communities Scotland and the Care Commission as regulators in this area highlighted the Commission's interest in a care service where looked after children receive support and a duty to regulate offender accommodation services. The Care Commission uses National Care Standards for Housing Support Services to monitor the quality of housing support services as they describe what individuals can expect from the service provider.
- Communities Scotland has been involved in exploratory discussions with some local authorities about common assessment procedures on prison discharge and has become a proactive member of the Veterans Programme Scotland Steering Group as an agency housing support and information provider. Consideration is being given to ways of encouraging adoption of the "Scottish National Standards & Good Practice Guidance from Housing Information and Advice Services" by prison outreach projects, armed forces and other "institutional" organisations.
- Communities Scotland contributed to a seminar in November 2005 on housing advice services for prisoners. The audience of representatives of local authorities, Scottish Prison Service and voluntary sector agencies were encouraged to adopt a consistent approach to delivering effective and efficient advice services. The consensus was that the Scottish National Standards for Housing Information and Advice Services was the quality framework that should be adopted.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Executive commissioning research on effectiveness of prevention activity, including role of advice and information services.
Action required & by whom:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities Scotland to develop further contact with service providers in the relevant areas identified in the recommendation to ensure progress against National Standards. Communities Scotland and Scottish Executive to identify the appropriate role of the agency to further progress the recommendation in context of developments in each policy area (prisons, looked after children, etc). • Scottish Executive to commission research into prevention. • For specific actions relating to the different client groups see the recommendations referred to above.
Key milestones:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See milestones identified at recommendations 27, 28, 30 and 42.

(27) The statutory obligation to provide aftercare should extend to all children who have spent 6 months or more in the care of the local authority between their twelfth birthday and school leaving age. All looked after children should receive appropriate housing advice, including advice on what to do in a crisis, before leaving care. The Looked After Children assessment and action records should be revised to check that this advice has been given and understood, and that future housing intentions are sustainable. Regular checks should be made on the housing circumstances of those leaving care for a period of at least 2 years. Contingency arrangements should be in place for dealing with emergencies or near emergencies and the careleaver should be aware of them. There should be a standard national form for recording the initial and subsequent housing locations of care leavers for at least 2 years after leaving care. Local authorities' homelessness strategies should seek to identify measures which can be taken, in the light of our comments, to reduce the risk of homelessness among those with a care background.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contact: SEED: Looked After Children & Youthwork

Progress to date:

- Regulations and Guidance on Supporting Young People Ceasing to be Looked After came into force on 1 April 2004. Regulations state that the young people's assessments and plans must set out what kind of accommodation best meets the needs of the young person and how this is to be obtained.
- Assessment materials to enable authorities to undertake this were sent to all authorities in April 2004 and training has been provided by the Executive on the Regulations.
- Statistics are collected yearly on the destination and accommodation arrangements of those leaving care over school age, including number of moves and periods of homelessness. The 2005 Children Looked After Statistics show that the percentage of care leavers still in touch with Local Authorities who were known to have had an episode of homelessness since leaving care fell by 4 percentage points to 11 per cent in 2004/05. In addition the Audit Commission will have a statutory performance indicator which will require authorities to track and keep in touch with young people leaving care over school age up to the age of 19, and up to 21 for those for whom the authority continues to provide a service.
- The Executive's working group on throughcare and aftercare of looked after young people (TAWG, now disbanded) advised that the recommendation to provide aftercare to a much wider range of formerly looked after children would raise a number of practical and financial issues, and may not be feasible. The working group were of the opinion that the new Regulations would be challenging and would need time to bed in before thought could be given to widening the age range. A meeting of Lead Implementation Officers (LIOs) - officers from each local authority who are charged with implementing the Regulation - on 22 February 2005 confirmed this view; a further LIO seminar took place in November 2005 and their view remained the same.
- Strategies assessment process includes check as to whether vulnerable groups are adequately catered for.

<p>Action required & by whom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities to comply with statutory duties by completing assessment and ensuring access to appropriate housing. • Scottish Executive considering how best to monitor the implementation of the Regulations. • Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum run a website providing policy and practice information and support authorities and voluntary organisations working with looked after young people (training, conferences, regional groups).
<p>Key milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations came into force April 2004. • LIO seminars held on a regular basis.

(28) On completion of the forthcoming evaluation, housing advice services currently provided in prisons should be put on a permanent footing.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: SPS, Scottish Executive Homelessness Team, Communities Scotland
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research by Reid Howie published in September 2004. All prisons now have housing advice services in place, although not all prisoners have access to these services. Most of the services are delivered through prison 'Links Centres'. • Discussions are ongoing among Scottish Executive, SPS, local authorities and Communities Scotland about how these services can be put on a permanent footing. A symposium on the future of housing advice services in prisons was held in November 2005, attended by 50 delegates from a wide range of bodies with experience and interest in the topic. The report of the symposium was published in April 2006. The main recommendations from the symposium were the creation of a national model of service based on a national minimum service level, standard procedures and monitoring arrangements; a contract-based service, exploring a regional approach with services contracted by Community Justice Authorities; and services should conform to the Scottish National Standards and Good Practice for Housing Information and Advice Services. • See also recommendation 30. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations to be made to Ministers on proposals arising from the symposium. • Scottish Executive, CoSLA and SPS to explore option of services being contracted by Community Justice Authorities from 2007/08, taking account of wider policy context of management of offenders and identifying role of HMIP, SPS and Communities Scotland as regulators of advice services. • Scottish Executive and CoSLA to discuss future funding arrangements for services in context of planned amalgamation of homelessness funding streams scheduled for 2007/08. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symposium on housing advice for prisoners held November 2005; report published April 2006. 	

(30) In preparing their homelessness strategies, local authorities should take full account of the needs of those leaving the armed forces and their spouses or partners. Guidance for local authorities should stress that people due to leave the armed forces should be classified as threatened with homelessness where their licence to occupy service accommodation is due to expire and they have no other accommodation. Local authorities and other bodies which may come into contact with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should have procedures in place to identify ex-servicemen/women amongst this group and to signpost the assistance available to them. Following evaluation the Ministry of Defence should extend the SPACES project to parts of Scotland where there are significant numbers of accessible contact points providing resettlement advice and assistance to those who have left the services.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contact: MoD

Progress to date:

- Strategies assessment process includes check as to whether vulnerable groups are adequately catered for. The revised HL1 contains a question on whether members of households applying as homeless have a history of armed service which will provide a useful evidence base for strategy development.
- Revised Code of Guidance on Homelessness published May 2005 and meets the terms of the recommendation. Revised guidance “Housing for People Leaving the Armed Forces” issued July 2005.
- Feasibility study to develop methods for assessing the nature, costs and extent of rough sleeping and homelessness amongst ex-service personnel was completed in September 2004. The Advisory Board for the study, on which the Scottish Executive is represented, is now considering the best way to take forward further studies, which will focus on informing policy and improving service provision.
- MOD’s SPACES project staff are conversant with new Scottish legislation and policy and will tailor services accordingly for those resettling in Scotland. MoD has no plans to locate a SPACES project in Scotland, it will remain in Catterick as a focal point for all single Service leavers, wherever they wish to live in the UK. SPACES has also developed a satellite office within the Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC) in Colchester.
- ODPM are funding the building of a hostel in Aldershot for ex-service personnel – this will provide 25 self contained flats and training facilities focusing on life-skills for move-on.
- MOD has established supports at pre-discharge and point of discharge. These provide housing advice and accommodation placement for Service leavers and short-term supported accommodation for those identified at risk of homelessness immediately after leaving the Armed Forces. The Early Leavers Policy was introduced in April 2004, providing resettlement advice and sign-posting for Service leavers who are not entitled to the full Armed Forces resettlement package. As part of this new policy, MOD staff seek to identify those vulnerable to homelessness and refer them to specialised assistance. In April 2004, the Joint Service Housing Advice Office took on additional staff whose role is to educate Service personnel on the need to make civilian housing provision at an earlier stage in their career.
- A prison in-reach pilot in Scotland is ongoing – raising awareness amongst prison resettlement services of the additional assistance available

from veterans' organisations.

- An awareness raising symposium was held in April 2005 and led to the establishment of a Veterans Programme (Scotland) Steering Group – this includes representatives from MoD, Scottish Executive, Communities Scotland, Veterans Scotland, Veterans Agency and a large number of ex-service benevolent organisations and is considering a wide range of issues including homelessness and appropriate accommodation for ex-service people.

Action required & by whom:

- Veterans Programme Scotland Steering Group to continue to consider accommodation needs of ex-service people.
- Homelessness Monitoring to analyse data from HL1 question on history of armed service and consider further action required.

Key milestones:

- Successful awareness raising conference held in Edinburgh – April 2005.
- Revised guidance “Housing for People Leaving the Armed Forces” issued July 2005.
- Veterans Programme Scotland Steering Group established July 2005. Representatives on the group come from Scottish Executive, Ministry of Defence and Veterans Scotland.
- Next meeting of the Veterans Programme Scotland Steering Group scheduled for August 2006.

(31) Asylum seekers granted leave to remain in the UK should be offered alternative accommodation if they do not wish to stay in the accommodation funded under NASS arrangements.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: SE Homelessness Team
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 7 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 ensures that homelessness applicants will not be deemed to have formed a local connection with a local authority merely because they were housed in NASS accommodation there. This will allow these applicants to apply to another local authority for assistance under the homelessness legislation if they so wish. • Revised Code of Guidance published May 2005. • Communities Scotland are checking the quality of accommodation offered to, and secured for, all homeless people as part of the inspection process (see recommendation 11) 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued monitoring required. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 7 commenced January 2004 • Revised Code of Guidance published May 2005 	

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIES: PREVENTION (Recommendations 18-21)

(18) Local homelessness strategies should review and, as necessary, make proposals for improvements in (1) the arrangements for early identification of those getting into housing difficulties, (2) the advice and support available for those getting into difficulties, (3) the advice and support available for those known to be at particular risk of homelessness and (4) the provision of leaving home and housing education in schools and other youth services. Strategies should take account of the differing and specific needs of families and single people living in urban and rural areas. They should ensure that they take account of the needs of people of differing age, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and belief.	
(19) Homelessness strategies should review the availability, accessibility and quality of services such as relationship counselling/mediation, financial/debt advice, drug/alcohol counselling, advocacy and proactive action to manage neighbour disputes and tackle harassment. Local authorities should act proactively to ensure that those at greater risk of homelessness are made aware of the support available, and are helped to access this support.	
(20) Homelessness strategies should provide for specific, concentrated support programmes for those threatened with eviction. These programmes should include the provision of access to independent advice and representation.	
(21) Local authorities should review their policies for arrears management and anti-social behaviour to ensure that they do not lead to unnecessary or avoidable homelessness. Other social landlords should be asked to conduct similar reviews as part of their contribution to local homelessness strategies.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Scottish Executive (Homelessness Team) ,Communities Scotland
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to prepare homelessness strategies. The planning and delivery of homelessness strategies with partner agencies should respond to recommendations 18, 19, 20 and 21. Executive guidance to local authorities on the preparation of homelessness strategies was issued in March 2002. This highlighted all Task Force recommendations, but particularly those aimed at local authorities. • All local authorities have prepared homelessness strategies for their areas. These were submitted to the Scottish Executive in early 2003. The strategies have been assessed by a cross-sector Panel established by HMG, chaired by the Executive and with representatives from CoSLA, Communities Scotland, the voluntary sector and the health sector. The Panel worked to an assessment system agreed by HMG, based on a framework shared with all local authorities in 2002. Detailed written feedback from the Panel was provided to all authorities to help them evolve the most effective strategies possible for their area. • Communities Scotland is taking account of the content of strategies and the response of councils to the feedback when carrying out its inspection function. 	

- Communities Scotland has developed a website of all information about housing issues translated into a range of community languages for use by local authorities and others – <http://languages.homepoint.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/>
- Local authority progress reports on their strategies, submitted in April 2005, were used to inform the Ministerial Statement on Abolition of Priority Need, published in December 2005.
- Ministerial Statement set out Scottish Executive's intention to adjust monitoring and reporting arrangements on homelessness strategies and local outcome agreements. From 2006/07 local authorities will obtain approval for use of funding allocations against HMG's top level outcomes, including the outcome that "fewer people become homeless in the first place", and establish levels of progress which are being worked towards. At the end of the financial year a report of achievement and any local issues affecting progress will be provided to the Executive. Work is underway to develop a standard template for reporting progress.
- Local authorities asked to submit progress reports on 2005/06 to Scottish Executive by end April 2006.

Action required & by whom:

- 2012 planning subgroup/Scottish Executive/CoSLA to develop template and guidance on format of outcome agreements and progress reports, ensuring that prevention work is specifically reported against.
- Local authorities to continue to develop services as strategies implemented and reviewed.
- Scottish Executive/Communities Scotland to ensure robust monitoring systems in place.

Key milestones:

- Guidance on preparation of homelessness strategies issued by Executive March 2002.
- Strategies submitted to Executive Spring 2003.
- Feedback provided to authorities Winter 2003.
- Assessment of strategies completed Winter 2004-05.
- LAs reported progress against homelessness strategies Summer 2005.
- Communities Scotland themed report on findings on homelessness in Pathfinder inspections published June 2005.
- LAs advised of new arrangements for monitoring strategies and outcome agreements – March 2006.
- Guidance on standard format of outcome agreements and progress reports issued –Spring 2006.

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIES: EFFECTIVE RESPONSE (Recommendations 32, 34-41 & 57)

(32) Local authorities, through their homelessness strategies, should provide the direction and create the framework within which all agencies join up to bring together a range of accessible options that open up genuine opportunities for homeless people.
(34) Local authorities should establish crisis response systems which are flexible and provide individualised responses; ensure that all those without accommodation are able to access at least immediate emergency accommodation until appropriate assessment is carried out; are permanently available and accessible and perform a triage function; include joint protocols and procedures for needs assessment to ensure appropriate support for people with complex or multiple needs; have effective referral arrangements in place; ensure that explicit exit strategies are devised; and monitor and evaluate the outcomes of resettlement services and adjust and improve provision wherever appropriate. The effectiveness of these systems should be subject to inspection by Communities Scotland.
(36) Local authorities should give priority to ensuring the availability of independent and informed advocacy services within their area and ensure that these services are well published. Advice and information should be made available in forms which are accessible by people of all ethnic groups and of all abilities
(38) Homeless people should, wherever possible, be located in a community in which they feel comfortable and are likely to be fully integrated into community life. Wherever possible they should have the opportunity to live near friends and family and their workplace/school or higher/further education institution.
(39) Local authorities should ensure that appropriate support packages are available for homeless people during their resettlement.
(40) Local authorities should plan the provision of barrier-free housing for varying needs and respond quickly to requirements for adaptations to housing stock which will prevent the occupier from becoming homeless.
(41) Local authorities' homelessness strategies should be dovetailed with domestic abuse strategies. In drawing up their homelessness strategies, local authorities should review the information and advice available to those who are, or may become, homeless as a result of domestic abuse, the availability of safe emergency supported accommodation, the availability of suitable long-term accommodation and support packages, and the extent to which local arrangements recognise the needs of children. Homelessness strategies should address the needs of all those who are or may become homeless as a result of domestic abuse, including young people and older people.
(57) Local authorities, through their homelessness strategies, should develop practical means of enabling people affected by

homelessness to (re)-build social networks. This may involve the use of new independent services or a review, with Social Inclusion Partnerships, of current practice.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Homelessness Team, SE; Communities Scotland
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per recommendations 18-21 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per recommendations 18-21 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per recommendations 18-21 	

(37) Local authorities should plan the delivery of a sufficient supply, range and location of temporary and supported accommodation. Provision should be made for the (sometimes very different) needs families, young people and groups who currently find it difficult to access or sustain any form of accommodation. Large-scale hostels should be replaced by alternative provision. Homelessness strategies should include proposals to reduce the use of Bed & Breakfast to a minimum, and to eliminate its use for families.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contact: Homelessness Team, SE

Progress to date:

- Order on Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation came into force December 2004, sets standards which temporary accommodation for households with children and pregnant women must meet. Order accompanied by supporting guidance.
- Arrangements are in place to monitor implementation of the Order: HL2 snapshot data return has been revised to give information on the number of breaches of the Order. In addition a six month pilot study is underway to give information on the circumstances and reason behind breaches of the Order. The pilot study will also elicit information on how local authorities have changed their working practices to cope with the introduction of the Order and what they think were the main factors which helped or hindered the introduction of the Order in their area.
- 3 of the large scale hostels in Glasgow have now been closed.
- Communities Scotland has published inspections reports for eight local authorities. All were using a range of temporary accommodation types but most were not planning effectively to identify and address future needs. At the time of inspection four authorities did not have adequate supplies of temporary accommodation to meet need and had failed to discharge their duty to provide temporary accommodation to people who were roofless; in one council this was a major weakness.
- See also recommendations 18-21.

Action required & by whom:

- Scottish Executive to consider results of pilot study and publish a report summarising the situation in Spring 2006. This will also include information on changes in working practices and more general guidance on what local authorities can do to help minimise the use of B&B more generally.
- Scottish Executive to consider amending the Order to remove the exceptional circumstance (3(3)(c)) which allows for the use of unsuitable accommodation if it is owned by the local authority and provides services or if it a women's refuge. (This exceptional circumstance was originally intended at the time of introduction of the Order to be removed at a later date).
- More generally, HMG remain concerned at the continued use of B&Bs for all vulnerable homeless people and will consider

recommending extending the Order to cover this category. There has been concern raised by some local authorities that the Order should be amended to prevent the routine use of out-of-area placements for all vulnerable homeless people, not just households with children or pregnant women. Scottish Executive to consider amending the Order to prevent out-of-area placements for vulnerable homeless people. Before any such amendments are made there will be a full consultation.

- See also recommendations 18-21.

Key milestones:

- See also recommendations 18-21.
- Order on Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation came into force 6 December 2006.

(35) The Executive should provide advice on the development of crisis response services and a national database and web-site of homelessness services should be established.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Scottish Executive (Homelessness Team)
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive guidance issued in March 2002 on the preparation of homelessness strategies included coverage of crisis response services. Where it is considered such services need strengthened to meet the Task Force's concept, this has been highlighted to relevant Councils in strategies feedback. Future advice on such services will be derived from positive practice identified over time by Communities Scotland. 'House Key' website launched January 2006, a list of 7,000 housing support services which can help vulnerable people to live in their own homes. Website will be complemented by a helpline later in 2006. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive to map existing databases of homelessness services and consider models of websites, including 'House Key', 'Homeless Dublin' and local models Scottish Executive and Shelter to discuss latter's database system.. Local authorities to continue to develop crisis response systems as strategies are implemented and reviewed. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Executive guidance on crisis response systems issued March 2002. 'House Key' website launched January 2006. 	

EFFECTIVE RESPONSE: HEALTH (Recommendations 42-49)

(42) A high priority should be placed upon monitoring of quality and delivery of Health and Homelessness Action Plans. The Health Department's Primary Care Modernisation Group should set out how primary care needs of homeless people would best be met.	
(48) In the case of primary care services, specialist provision should be seen as transitional for all but a small number of homeless people. It should provide planned support over a reasonable period of time until individuals are re-housed and settled with access to their local GP practice and primary health care team. The general approach should be to support homeless people to maintain their current health networks or to establish new regular contact with mainstream health services.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Scottish Executive – Health Department
<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Homelessness Action Plans were developed in the period to March 2005 and all NHS Boards are now implementing them. The Health Department's Primary Care Modernisation Group was dissolved in 2002. NHS Boards have responsibility for ensuring that the primary care needs of homeless people are met and are in line with the <i>Health and Homelessness Standards</i>. In March 2005 the Scottish Executive published its <i>Health & Homelessness Standards</i> for NHS Boards. The standards are at the centre of the Scottish Executive's commitment to improve the health of homeless people. The <i>Health & Homelessness Standards</i> require NHS Boards to re-state and further refine their commitment to meeting the health needs of all homeless people. The standards are not clinical standards, but are strategic and aimed at the corporate level of NHS Boards in recognition of the critical importance of strong leadership in tackling health inequalities. NHS Boards are implementing the standards from April 2005 onwards and actions are being incorporated into the wider plans of the Board. Whilst NHS Boards hold the strategic responsibility for the standards, it is expected that delivery will in the main be through Community Health Partnerships (CHPs). CHPs need to consider and plan for the needs of homeless people and NHS Boards must ensure that there is appropriate accountability in place to ensure continuous improvement. The health improvement and health inequalities guidance for CHPs assists in meeting these requirements. At the time of their publication in 2005, meeting the <i>Health and Homelessness Standards</i> was expected to form part of the NHS Scotland Performance Assessment Framework (PAF). Ministers have now introduced new delivery and performance management arrangements for NHS Scotland: "<i>Ministers' Key Objectives, Targets and Performance Measures for the NHS and Local Delivery Plans: Guidance 2006/07</i>". These new arrangements replace the previous system of Local Health Plans and the PAF. The Local Delivery Plan approach introduces the first steps towards a greater alignment between financial and operational planning, focused on achieving the key targets which support the "core set" of Ministerial objectives (Health, Efficiency, Access and Treatment – or HEAT). 	

- Although monitoring the implementation of the *Health and Homelessness Standards* is not a component of the HEAT core objectives, performance targets or the supporting measures, Boards are expected to operate the Standards – as above. In the recent Ministerial Statement on Abolition of Priority Need a commitment was given to undertake a survey of NHS Boards by the end of March 2006 on progress against implementation of the standards ‘one year on’. The survey will help to (i) establish a baseline of information as to how well NHS Boards are responding to the implementation of the standards, and (ii) identify areas against the standards where Boards may need further assistance and support in implementation. We will review the results of the survey with key stakeholders.
- With regard to specialist services, the *Health and Homelessness Standards* recognise that these services may be appropriate for homeless people for a short period of time, but that the existence of such services should not mean that everyone who is homeless is automatically channelled through this route. The aim is to incorporate homeless people within mainstream services and ensure that these services are designed in ways that meet their needs (standards 5.3 and 5.4 refer).

Action required & by whom:

- Scottish Executive Health Department to undertake a survey of NHS Boards on progress against implementation of the *Health and Homelessness Standards* ‘one year on’ – March 2006
- Members of the Health and Homelessness Steering Group will be involved in reviewing the findings of the survey.
- The findings will also be reported to the Homelessness Monitoring Group to consider and, where appropriate agree, follow-up work with NHS Boards.
- The findings will also inform what further monitoring is required and the frequency of that monitoring by the Scottish Executive Health Department.

Key milestones:

- *Health and Homelessness Standards* published March 2005.
- Commence survey of NHS Boards’ implementation of *Health and Homelessness Standards* – March 2006
- Collate findings of survey by end of April 2006; produce summary of key findings by May 2006; produce report and follow-on actions by June 2006.

(43) All local authorities should record information about the GP registration of all those who register as homeless, and should offer information about local health services to homeless people rehoused outwith their existing GP area.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Scottish Executive, Communities Scotland
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement reached that reporting against recommendation to be reflected in annual progress reports. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See recommendations 18-21. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See recommendations 18-21. 	

<p>(44) NHS Boards should ensure their strategic planning embraces the current and future service needs of homeless people. Drug and Alcohol Teams should include, in their planning priorities, the service requirements of homeless people relating to substance misuse. Monitoring of the effectiveness of such processes should be undertaken through the Scottish Executive's assessment of Local Health Plans and Corporate Action Plans on Substance Misuse.</p>	
<p>(47) Actions within the national drugs and alcohol plans which will prevent addictions contributing to homelessness and which will tackle substance misuse amongst homeless people should be given high priority. The recommendations of the Glasgow Street Homelessness Team in relation to the development and provision of drug and alcohol services to hostel dwellers should be more widely applied. Local action to tackle substance misuse and homelessness in parallel should be developed through homelessness strategies and Drug and Alcohol Action Team plans. The results of Scottish Executive work on effective interventions in tackling substance misuse should be disseminated to support commissioners and purchasers of services and service providers in both homelessness and drugs and alcohol agencies.</p>	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Scottish Executive – Health Department
<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic links are developing well in most areas ensuring that the needs of homeless people are reflected in a wide range of appropriate strategies. Strategic links are seen as vitally important and where such links have been established there is evidence of the complex needs of homeless people being mainstreamed through the wider planning process. Standard 1 of the <i>Health and Homelessness Standards</i> reinforces the need for NHS Boards to incorporate the health needs of homeless people into the Board's Health Inequalities Strategy and all other relevant strategic planning frameworks. Resources will be subject to each Board's prioritisation processes. • Standard 4 of the <i>Health and Homelessness Standards</i> focuses on the important area of access to health services. Homeless people need to know how, where and when they can access health services. The Single Shared Assessment is highlighted as an appropriate way of working to deliver the complex needs of homeless people. • Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) are a mechanism to deliver and support change. <i>Delivering for Health</i> (published in October 2005) set out 9 key priorities for CHPs. These included providing 'anticipatory care' (with the intention that CHPs target resources at disadvantaged groups and deprived households with better access to and use of services) as well as improving health and tackling inequalities and specific health outcomes. • Homeless and Substance Misuse Advisory Group established in November 2005. The group are aiming to develop an integrated set of approaches for homeless substance misusers, and those at risk of homelessness, that creates joint-working and integrated services, and ensures that those services are working together locally to deliver appropriate accommodation and levels of support. The group will also consider, disseminate and encourage implementation of examples of best practice. 	

Action required & by whom:

- Scottish Executive Health Department to work with CHPs to incorporate substance misuse links in the implementation of the *Health and Homelessness Standards*.
- The survey of NHS Boards on implementation of the Health and Homelessness Standards ('One Year On') will help identify what progress is being made in these areas and identify what further work is required.
- Corporate Action Plans to be submitted by NHS Boards (10 April 2006) outlining what activities are to be taken at local level to address issues of homelessness and substance misuse.
- Homelessness and Substance Misuse Advisory Group undertaking a mapping exercise to identify gaps in service provision for substance misusers.

Key milestones:

- Health and Homelessness Standards published March 2005; implementation ongoing.
- Homelessness and Substance Misuse Advisory Group established October 2005.
- Commence survey of NHS Boards' implementation of Health and Homelessness Standards – March 2006
- Collate findings of survey by end of April 2006; produce summary of key findings by May 2006; produce report and follow-on actions by June 2006.
- Findings from Homelessness and Substance Misuse Advisory Group mapping exercise will be disseminated locally to assist with service provision. Mapping will commence in June 2006.

(45) NHS Boards should ensure that all children in homeless families are able to access the full range of universal health services for children; and the health and homelessness co-ordinator should monitor this action.	
(46) NHS Boards should assess the provision of mental health services to homeless people to minimise the barriers to access. Being free from substance-misuse should not be an automatic pre-condition for access to services.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Scottish Executive – Health Department
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Health and Homelessness Standards</i> published in March 2005 represent a major step forward towards the delivery of recommendations 45 and 46. The standards apply to all groups of homeless people. As well as addressing issues for single people, the standards highlight for NHS Boards the significant issues for children and families who are homeless, their vulnerability and specific health needs. NHS Boards in addressing the performance requirements will need to ensure such differing needs are taken into account. They will require excellent strategic linkages, for example including homeless issues in Children’s Services Plans, which in turn will ensure appropriate responses from maternity services, screening, surveillance and immunisation for homeless children. • The <i>Standards</i> also emphasise that NHS Boards ensure that being alcohol or drug free is not a pre-requisite for access to services. NHS Boards have a responsibility to take action to ensure homeless people have equitable access to the full range of health services (Standard 4.3 refers). 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey of NHS Boards on implementation of the <i>Health and Homelessness Standards</i> (‘One Year On’) will help identify what progress is being made in these areas and identify what further work is required. • The findings will also be reported to the Homelessness Monitoring Group to consider and where appropriate agree follow-up work with NHS Boards. • The findings will also inform what further monitoring is required and the frequency of that monitoring by the Scottish Executive Health Department. • Corporate Action Plans to be submitted by NHS Boards (10 April 2006) outlining the activities being taken at local level to address issues of homelessness, mental health and substance misuse. 	
Key milestones:	

- Publication of research carried out for HEBS on *Delivering Health Care to Homeless People* – 2004.
- *Health and Homelessness Standards* published March 2005; implementation ongoing
- Publication of research into support needs of homeless families – Spring 2006.
- Commence survey of NHS Boards' implementation of *Health and Homelessness Standards* – March 2006
- Collate findings of survey by end of April 2006; produce summary of key findings by May 2006; produce report and follow-on actions by June 2006.

(49) The Health and Homelessness Co-ordinator, whose remit includes setting standards for homelessness training programmes, should support training on homelessness for health professionals and ancillary staff.

RAG status: Green

Delivery contact: Scottish Executive – Health Department

Progress to date:

- The Health and Homelessness Coordinator post was established within SEHD to assist Boards in the development of Health and Homelessness Action Plans and to mainstream Health and Homelessness activity into the NHS. The publication of the *Health and Homelessness Standards* in March 2005 marked the end of that transition period of mainstreaming and integration within Board and CHP planning activities, at which point the Health and Homelessness Coordinator post was discontinued.
- A key component of Health and Homelessness Standard 5 is that NHS Boards need to demonstrate that all front line staff have the skills and knowledge to assist homeless people and are trained accordingly. The underpinning principle of this standard is that the Board's services respond positively to the health needs of homeless people.
- Staff training is critical to ensuring appropriate service responses, though the content and level of training and awareness raising should be determined by local circumstances. Such training should include all relevant staff, including reception and administrative personnel.

Action required & by whom:

- Delivery of the *Health and Homelessness Standards* to be monitored by the Scottish Executive Health Department and CHPs.

Key milestones:

- *Health and Homelessness Standards* published March 2005.
- Commence survey of NHS Boards' implementation of *Health and Homelessness Standards* – March 2006
- Collate findings of survey by end of April 2006; produce summary of key findings by May 2006; produce report and follow-on actions by June 2006.

EFFECTIVE RESPONSE: EMPLOYMENT (Recommendations 50-54)

(50) Jobcentre Plus should, as a key priority, improve gateways for homeless people to access mainstream employment services and programmes. This should include systematic skills auditing of homeless people, ensuring easy access to employment services for homeless people and linking relevant employment initiatives to establish coherent systems for individual progression.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Jobcentre Plus Scotland
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since April 2004, there has been a common list of circumstances which entitle volunteers to early access to New Deal services. Homeless people (including rough sleepers) can gain early access to New Deal regardless of age or length of unemployment. • Progress2Work LinkUp is now available in Glasgow District, as well as in the Tayside part of Jobcentre Plus Grampian and Tayside District and the Fife part of Forth Valley and Fife District. Progress2Work LinkUp extends the help available to recovering drug users to other disadvantaged groups – homeless people, ex-offenders and recovering alcoholics. • DWP published ‘Building on the New Deal’ (BoND) in May 2004 – this sets out the Government’s aim to ensure that barriers to work are tackled, particularly for those people who have not been given sufficient opportunities to access work-focussed support in the past. It also sets out the principle of greater empowerment and flexibility for local Jobcentre Plus staff, so that they can tailor provision to individual clients needs, within a clear framework of national standards. DWP Ministers are currently considering the shape of future provision for disadvantaged clients pending decisions on the future of BoND. • Approval has now been given for an extension to all Action Teams of at least 6 months from April 2006. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Executive/HMG to continue to monitor progress. • DWP/Jobcentre Plus to take forward approach to Building on the New Deal. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the New Deal published May 2004. 	

(51) Jobcentre Plus should work with the Scottish Executive and the Scottish New Deal Task Force to engage employers to develop employment initiatives targeted at vulnerable and homeless people. This should include wider employer participation in relevant transitional employment programmes for homeless people. Jobcentre Plus should examine ways of supporting employers who are willing to participate in initiatives to employ homeless people, particularly smaller employers who lack the resources of the large corporate organisations. Appropriate business networks should be enlisted to promote such initiatives.

RAG status: Amber

Delivery contact: Jobcentre Plus Scotland, SE:ETTLD/Transitions to Work, SE:DD Social Inclusion

Progress to date:

- Jobcentre Plus engages with both large and small employers so that job opportunities can be created for priority customers – mainly IB clients and lone parents but also those considered to be most disadvantaged. A Diversity Manager and SME Channel manager support employer activity and have an interest in promoting most disadvantaged customers, including homeless people, to employers of all types. The new Jobcentre Plus External Relations team will work closely with all key stakeholders to promote and support initiatives to help all disadvantaged customers into work.
- The Scottish Executive is developing an Employability Framework as an opportunity for Scottish Ministers to drive forward action on the devolved areas of employability in Scotland, and to have a closely informed influence on the direction of UK policies and programmes on benefits and Welfare to Work. Jobcentre Plus is working closely with the Scottish Executive in the development of the Employability Framework so that homeless and other disadvantaged customers access Jobcentre Plus services at the most appropriate time. The Framework will emphasise the importance of local partnerships working together to identify priorities and agree relevant support to meet the needs of all clients, in each area. Employer engagement is a key aspect of both local and national employability partnership working.
- Communities Scotland and NHS Scotland have agreed to join The Scottish Partnership Accord : Helping the Hardest to Reach into Work. Discussions will commence with Enterprise Networks in early 2006. The Accord highlights the importance of public sector as a potential employer, and Jobcentre Plus is already working with local authorities across Scotland to identify ways of making vacancies available to clients needing additional support.
- Scottish Homelessness and Employability Network established to bring together employers, voluntary sector agencies, local authorities and other statutory bodies.
- Following a successful pilot, Scottish Business in the Community's "Ready for Work" Programme has been operational for 18 months. The programme is an effective business model that creates training and recruitment opportunities for businesses in Scotland to include people who are currently excluded from the workplace. The programme has surpassed its targets, with 122 participants attending Ready to Go training, 88% of whom went on to begin their work placement. 90% successfully completed the placement, 72% of whom have entered full time employment. A Job Coaching programme and Employability and Workplace Health Leadership Group have recently

been added to the Ready for Work package. SBiC are currently investigating, with external partners, how to evaluate and benchmark the Ready for Work programme.
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Executive and partners to ensure that this recommendation is reflected in the development of the Employability Framework. • New Partnership Accord to be agreed between the key stakeholders – Scottish Executive, Job Centre Plus, CoSLA and Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Communities Scotland and NHS Scotland.
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability Framework to be published in 2006.

(52) Public sector employees should also examine ways of creating and expanding work opportunities for homeless people. New public sector initiatives should strive to employ homeless people in the provision of their services.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: SE-ETLLD Welfare to Work Team; SE-Health Department.
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing the Opportunity Gap target set as “Public sector and large employers to tackle aspects of in-work poverty by providing employees with the opportunity to develop skills and progress in their career. NHSScotland will set an example by providing 1000 job opportunities, with support for training and progression once in post, between 2004 and 2006 to people who are currently economically inactive or unemployed.” <i>[Results against the target should be available prior to publication]</i> • The Employability Framework also highlights the need to work with business and the public sector to build the role of employers in helping to reduce worklessness. • DWP/ Jobcentre Plus is in discussion with COSLA and the Local Authorities to agree a Partnership Accord. This will be the basis for improved collaborative working with the priority of “ helping the hardest to reach into work”. • “Ready for Work” programme available to public sector agencies; Aberdeen City Council set to take placements later this year. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEHD/SEDD to ensure that homeless people included in activity to meet target. • Identify activity being carried out by other public sector agencies. • Scottish Executive and partners to ensure that this recommendation reflected in the development of the Employability Framework. 	

Key milestones:

- Closing the Opportunity Gap target to be met by 2006.
- Employability Framework to be published later in 2006.

(53) Transitional employment programmes should be piloted in Scotland to test the creation of new incentives to work for homeless people. Such pilots should test how flexibility around housing benefit payments could overcome the poverty trap faced by homeless people when trying to access employment. The Department for Work and Pensions should aim to develop and test in 2002 a pilot scheme with The Big Issue in Scotland. If the Department for Work and Pensions is unable to overcome impediments in Social Security legislation which may prevent potentially effective schemes, UK Ministers should consider amending the relevant legislation to remove these hurdles.

RAG status: Amber**Delivery contact: DWP****Progress to date:**

- In April 2004, DWP introduced a number of measures to improve work incentives for HB recipients by:
 - treating the move into work as a change of circumstances for most recipients. This removed the need for these people to reclaim benefit when they take a job. In most cases this should ensure that benefit payments continue without a break where claimants are entitled to in-work support;
 - applying the 30-hour disregard in HB and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) to those working between 16 and 29 hours per week.
 - extending the HB run-on to people receiving Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance (previously went only to people in receipt of Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance). The run-on involves paying HB at the “out of work” rate for the first four weeks of employment.
- DWP also believe that the Local Housing Allowance will encourage work readiness as for the first time, tenants in the private rented sector will know in advance how much they will receive towards housing costs and this greater certainty will help people make the move from benefits into work and will make it easier for Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisers to calculate how much better off claimants will be in work. They also believe that payment to the tenant rather than to the landlord, and encouraging people to use direct debits for rent payments, will also prepare tenants for the world of work, where income comes from a variety of sources and people otherwise find themselves responsible for managing their finances to pay their rent for the first time when they move into work. DWP have introduced 9 Pathfinders of the flat rate

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) – they came on stream between November 2003 and February 2004 – to test out paying an amount to tenants that is based on household size and locations for those living in the private sector. A further 9 local authorities implemented the LHA in the period April to July 2005.

- DWP five year strategy reiterated commitment to improve the benefits system to provide the right incentives, for example reforming Housing Benefit to empower individuals, and improve work incentives.
- DWP are working with the Greater London Authority and ODPM to test out approaches to helping families in temporary accommodation get a job, including testing the effects of different rates of rent. The Working Futures pilot involves fixing rents at affordable levels and putting in place a block grant to meet costs over and above this in order to address poverty trap issues – the pilot also involves the provision of employability support.

Action required & by whom:

- Scottish Executive/HMG to continue to monitor progress.

Key milestones:

- DWP five year strategy published February 2005.
- Working Futures pilot in place August 2005.

(54) A clear action plan should be developed to use the results of the ongoing evaluation of New Future Fund services to transfer successful service elements onto a permanent footing over the next 3 years. If proved successful, the relevance of the Routeways initiative and other similar approaches should be considered for application in Scotland.

RAG status: Green

Delivery contact: Scottish Executive -ETLLD

Progress to date:

- Mainstreaming, within a NFF context, was defined with a range of relevant stakeholders as either buying in services, or adapting their current provision to meet the needs of the NFF type client group. A number of projects have secured “in principle” agreements that their activities are being mainstreamed beyond 2005 by, for example, local authorities and health trusts. Others have secured short term funding, of between one to three years that will ensure the service can be delivered beyond NFF funding. Within mainstream organisations, the application of lessons learnt has already begun, for example in Scottish Enterprise’s Get Ready for Work initiative for young people, which has incorporated lifeskills support as a direct result of NFF experience.
- NFF was due to complete in March 2005, pending the implementation of the Employability Framework. Ministers approved a further extension of funding for all projects for an additional 3 months. Subsequently 50 projects were funded to the end of March 2006 of which 12 were for homeless people.
- From April 2006, Community Planning Partnerships will take the lead in developing the local infrastructure of support services, building on the work of NFF projects and other support services in their areas. This is consistent with the Executive’s approach to getting people back into work and the related outcomes set out by CPPs within their Regeneration Outcomes Agreements.
- The Employability Framework will recommend how local services should work together to help those most disadvantaged in the labour market to access training, move into employment and to develop their skills once in work. These services will need to identify the barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups. The Executive will be encouraging partnerships to mainstream NFF-type approaches and by recommending collaborative working, to make best use of resources.

Action required & by whom:

- Scottish Executive – ETLLD to ensure development of the Employability Framework supports the delivery of a more comprehensive service provision for those furthest from the labour market, building on the lessons of the New Futures Fund.
- Clear strategic guidance to be produced for Housing/Homelessness officers, endorsing practice and the tools developed within NFF.

Key milestones:

- Employability Framework to be published later in 2006.

EFFECTIVE RESPONSE: SOCIAL NETWORKS (Recommendations 55 & 56)

(55) The strength of a homeless person's social networks should be an integral part of the assessment of their needs and of the support offered to them in temporary accommodation and during permanent resettlement. All projects serving homeless people should pursue strategies to promote and support opportunities for positive social interaction.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Homelessness Team, SE; Scottish Social Networks Co-ordinator
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive is aware of a number of projects building a social interaction approach into their work. • Series of seminars held in Summer 2005 by Scottish Social Networks Co-ordinator to raise awareness of importance of social networks and building social needs of homeless households into wider needs assessment. • Revised Code of Guidance on Homelessness published May 2005 includes material on importance of social networks. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Social Networks Co-ordinator to organise National Social Networks Conference - May 2006. • Scottish Social Networks Co-ordinator to produce guidance on successful approaches based on evaluation of existing practice. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Networks Co-ordinator appointed August 2004 • Revised Code of Guidance published May 2005. • 5 local seminars held to raise awareness of social networks – Summer 2005. • National Social Networks Conference – May 2006. 	

(56) A national co-ordination role should be created to build and co-ordinate local mediation, befriending and mentoring services for homeless people across Scotland. This role would also evaluate existing projects, disseminate good practice and facilitate information sharing.

RAG status: Green

Delivery contact: Scottish Social Networks Co-ordinator

Progress to date:

- Lesley Stenhouse appointed as Scottish Social Networks Co-ordinator in August 2004. Lesley has publicised her role through circulation of a factsheet, personal contact with a range of organisations and a series of regional seminars held in Summer 2005.
- Social Networks Reference Group (including representatives from the Scottish Executive, Communities Scotland, the Scottish Mediation Network, Befriending Network Scotland, Scottish Mentoring Network, Scottish Churches Housing Action, Scottish Council for Single Homeless, the Ark Trust and the Rock Trust) established November 2004. Workplan and communications strategy for Co-ordinator agreed. The Reference Group continue to advise and assist on the development of the work plan.
- Awareness raising of: the importance of Social Networks in combating homelessness; the role mentoring, befriending and mediation can play in developing Social Networks: and the forum to support the development of services has continued through presentations, articles and visits.
- Five very successful seminars were held in June 2005 – Inverness, Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Edinburgh and Dundee. 200 people were directly involved with interest expressed by many more. The purpose and theme of the seminars was to look at national issues and contribute to local solutions which will enable people affected by homelessness develop positive social networks. A report of the seminars is available from the Co-ordinator.
- Newsletter established and work commenced on Social Networks website.

Action required & by whom:

- Scottish Social Networks Co-ordinator to take forward work plan including: raising awareness of Scottish Social Networks Forum and of befriending, mediation and mentoring services; mapping provision of services and dissemination of good practice and case studies; and development of electronic communication system.
- Co-ordinator to arrange National Social Networks Conference by May 2006
- Reference Group to agree forward work plan for Co-ordinator for 2006/2007.

Key milestones:

- Appointment of Lesley Stenhouse –August 2004

- Establishment of Reference Group – November 2004
- Seminar/roadshows June 2005
- National conference May 2006

MONITORING GROUP (Recommendation 58)

(58) A monitoring group should be set up to take forward the action programme. The group should play particular (but not exclusive) attention to movement in the number of households applying under the homelessness legislation; the number of households assessed as homeless; the proportion of homeless households placed directly into permanent accommodation; the number of households experiencing repeat homelessness; the number of homeless households – particularly families with children – in Bed & Breakfast; time spent in Bed & Breakfast; time taken by local authority to deal with cases, and customer satisfaction indices.

RAG status: Green

Delivery contact: HMG and Scottish Executive.

Progress to date:

- Monitoring Group established in 2002.
- First annual report published in January 2004; second annual report published April 2005.
- Homelessness Monitoring Group subgroups on 2012 planning, awareness raising and good practice and intentionality established Spring 2005.

Action required & by whom:

- Monitoring Group and subgroup members to fulfil remits.
- Scottish Executive to provide secretariat support.

Key milestones:

- First annual report published January 2004.
- Second annual report published April 2005.

FURTHER ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH (Recommendations 2 & 59)

(2) Information on ethnic status of homeless people should be analysed to assess whether any additional actions, focusing specifically on people from black and minority ethnic communities, are required. This should be complemented by a more qualitative study of the experience of homelessness amongst Scotland's black and minority ethnic communities.	
RAG status: Amber	Delivery contact: Scottish Executive (Homelessness Team)
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An independent study commissioned by the Executive to examine the use and provision of homelessness services in Scotland by black and ethnic minority communities was published in July 2004. The study includes refugees and gypsy/travellers and is available at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/resfinds/drf184-00.asp. A study of minority ethnic homelessness in Glasgow was commissioned by Communities Scotland and published in July 2004. The study is available at http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_009022.pdf Revised Code of Guidance published in May 2005, updated to reflect outcomes of research projects. Scottish Executive contributing to Commission for Racial Equality's revised Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive to progress follow-up research and CRE code of practice to identify any additional work required and implications for best practice. Other organisations to consider implications of research findings. CRE to publish revised Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of <i>Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and Homelessness in Scotland</i> and <i>Minority Ethnic Homelessness in Glasgow</i> July 2004. Revised Code of Guidance published May 2005. CRE Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing – 2006. 	

(59) An expanded suite of questions relating to homelessness should be included in the Scottish Household Survey from 2003.	
RAG status: Green	Delivery contact: SHS Project Team, Scottish Executive
Progress to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An expanded suite of questions on homelessness was included in the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) Questionnaire 2003/04 and continued in the 2005/06 questionnaire. • The additional questions have helped address information gaps identified by the Task Force by providing a wider understanding of homelessness trends and hidden homelessness. The complete two year data (2003/04) from these questions was published in August 2005. The 2003/04 Annual Report is available from the SHS website (www.scotland.gov.uk/shs). • The questions are also in the SHS in 2005/06; their inclusion in questionnaires beyond this date will be assessed in mid 2006. • The outcome of the questionnaire consultation will be implemented from January 2007. 	
Action required & by whom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Executive Analytical Service and Homelessness Team to bring discussions on how SHS questions could usefully be analysed and reported to HMG. • Scottish Executive to make case for continued inclusion of homelessness questions, format of questions and usefulness of data analysis to date. 	
Key milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of first complete two year sweep of data from expanded suite of homelessness questions - August 2005 • SHS Questionnaire review mid 2006. • Publication of 2005/06 data – August 2007. 	



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

This document is also available on the Scottish Executive website
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