



HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2015 - 2020

DRAFT

Homelessness Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. People become homeless for a variety of reasons. This strategy aims to improve the ability of people to keep their home or find another home if threatened with homelessness. The strategy has been developed with a range of partners. The Council will work with partners to implement the strategy so that wherever possible homelessness can be prevented and the availability of suitable settled homes is maximised to provide homes for homeless people. As such the homeless strategy forms an important part of the Council's overall housing strategy.
- 1.2. The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory obligation on all local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area, and based on the findings of this review, to develop a strategy to tackle homelessness.
- 1.3. The Council's Review included a review of homelessness demand, the services that are currently available to meet demand and consultation with partners and service users. The Review identified the following priorities for the Borough's Homelessness Strategy:
 - i. Good quality housing advice and accessible prevention services;
 - ii. Working in partnership to avoid duplication of services and ensure expertise is maximised;
 - iii. Meeting the need for emergency accommodation;
 - iv. Maximising access to housing.
- 1.3. This Homeless Strategy has been developed by the Council in partnership with voluntary organisations that provide services to homeless and potentially homeless people as well as registered providers of affordable housing.

2. Overview of Homelessness in Bracknell Forest

- 2.1. Bracknell Forest Council, as a local housing authority, works within a statutory framework that sets out its duties towards homeless individuals and families within the Borough. The primary legal instruments are the Housing Act 1996 (specifically Part VII, and to some extent Part VI) and the Homelessness Act 2002. The Government has published official guidance to help local authorities interpret the law and help them properly and fully comply with their duties.
- 2.2. A person is homeless if they have no accommodation, or have accommodation but they have no right to occupy it, or have accommodation but they cannot gain entry to it, or their accommodation is moveable and there is nowhere to place it, or have accommodation but it is not reasonable to occupy it.
- 2.3. A person is eligible to assistance if they have a right to live and work in the UK and are not subject to immigration control.
- 2.4. A person is considered as having a priority need if they are deemed as vulnerable within the terms of the legislation. This may include;

- Households with dependent children;
- Households that include a pregnant woman;
- Applicants or members of the household who are vulnerable or disabled as a result of old age;
- Applicants or members of the household who are vulnerable or;
- disabled as a result of a physical or mental illness or disability;
- Applicants or household experiencing homelessness as a result of an emergency such as floods, fires, storms or disasters;
- Applicants aged between 18 and 20 who have previously been looked after, accommodated or fostered;
- 16 and 17 year olds to whom social services do not have a duty within the Children's Act;
- Applicants who are vulnerable as a result of being in HM forces;
- Applicants who are vulnerable as a result of leaving prison or custody;
- Applicants fleeing their homes as a result of violence or threat of violence from others including domestic violence by a partner.

The issue of vulnerability is whether the homeless person is more vulnerable than an ordinary person if they were to be without a home. For an applicant becoming homeless from any of the above situations, an assessment would be made into any circumstances which would put the person more at risk of harm than an ordinary person without a home.

- 2.5 An applicant would be considered to be intentionally homeless if they knowingly did or did not doing anything that as a result led to them becoming homeless.

3. Homeless Demand

- 3.1 The following table summarises demand from homeless households over the last four years:

	Applications	Acceptances
2011/12	139	77
2012/13	124	67
2013/14	202	115
2014/15	226	110
2015/16 (Sept)	110	65

- 3.2 The number of households for whom the Council has accepted a duty to house increased by 68%, between 2012/13 and 2013/14. The level of homeless acceptances has remained at this level for the last two years.
- 3.3. The number of homeless households who were accepted as homeless and in priority need in Bracknell Forest in 2014/15 were 2.25 per 1,000 households. This was the second highest in Berkshire and above the national average of 1.91 per 1,000 households. Although homelessness is a consequence of the actions of the household it does raise questions about the disparity compared to other Berkshire Authorities that will be reviewed. Its should be recognised that homelessness can be caused by a multitude of factors both local and national policy.
- 3.4 The main reason for homeless households being in priority need is households with dependent children (71% of homeless acceptances). Households with mental health

problems account for 7% of homeless acceptances and households with physical disabilities account for 8% of acceptances.

4. Main causes of homelessness

4.1

	Family eviction	Violent relationship breakdown	Loss of private rented accommodation	Other
2011/12	17	5	40	
2012/13	23	5	25	11
2013/14	29	9	56	14
2014/15	29	13	56	10
2015/16 (Sept)	21	10	30	14

4.2 The main reason for homelessness is loss of private rented accommodation. Households may be served with notice if they lose their guarantor during the term of their tenancy, if they lose employment during their tenancy and their landlord isn't happy to continue letting to a household in receipt of housing benefit, or because the landlord wants to increase the rent. In 2014/15, loss of private rented accommodation accounted for 52% of homeless acceptances.

5. Future homelessness demand over the life of the strategy

5.1 There are a number of national policy changes which could impact on homeless demand over the next five years.

5.2 Reduction of the welfare benefit cap in 2017 to £ 20,000 for couples will impact on household's ability to meet rent liabilities. There are currently 32 households who are affected by the benefit cap of £ 26,000 a year, 10 who live in private rented accommodation, 19 who live in registered provider accommodation and 3 homeless households who live in the Council's temporary accommodation. Registered providers in Bracknell Forest estimate that the reduction in the benefit cap could lead to over 300 households being affected. There will be a need for proactive advice and budgeting support for those households if they are to avoid homelessness due to rent arrears as they are unable to manage the reduction in their income.

5.3 The 2015 budget indicated that from April 2017 tax relief on mortgage interest for buy to let property will be reduced from 45% to the standard 20%. If this generates additional costs for landlords there is a risk that the landlords will pass those costs on to tenants in the form of higher rents.

5.4 The following table sets out the average rent increases that have been experienced in Bracknell Forest over the last three years. The 2015 budget froze local housing allowance rates until 2020. Thus if the current trajectory continues the average rents will be 23% above Local housing allowances by 2020. The difference will be considerably higher for some property sizes such as two bedroom properties and could be around 50% higher by 2020.

Year	Room rent per month		One bed rent per month		Two bed rent per month		Three bed rent per month	
	LHA	MKT	LHA	MKT	LHA	MKT	LHA	MKT
2014/15	341	426	663	735	816	933	961	1143
2013/14	328	418	656	714	808	910	924	1178
2012/13	325	421	650	691	800	878	915	1069

5.6 As can be seen over the last three years private sector rents have increased on average by 6%. In comparison the Local Housing Allowance for housing benefit purposes increased by an average 3%.

5.7 The average costs to the Council of providing emergency housing are £250 per week. Non-self contained emergency housing should only be provided for six weeks before self contained temporary housing is provided for homeless households. Thus, every additional homeless household in emergency accommodation costs the Council at least £1,500 a year.

6. Temporary Accommodation

6.1 When a household presents as homeless, the Council must provide interim accommodation until it completes its enquires when there is a reason to believe the household may be eligible for assistance, homeless and does have a priority need. The following table sets out the overall temporary accommodation the Council has provided in the last five years.

	B&B	PSL	Council owned TA	Private rent as TA	Homeless at home	Other	Total
2011/12	16	8	16	7	8	1	56
2012/13	3	9	23	7	11	1	54
2013/14	16	8	28	4	12	3	71
2014/15	24	18	32	3	17	3	97
2015/16 (Sept)	31	19	34	7	18	8	117

6.2 The number of households in temporary accommodation has more than doubled during the period 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2015. The number of households in Bed and Breakfast has also increased during this period and reflects a similar level of increase as the rise in homelessness demand.

6.3 Unfortunately, there are very few bed and breakfast providers in Bracknell Forest who are willing to accept homeless households. This means that households are often placed into bed and breakfast outside the borough. This can make it difficult for households to retain contact with their support networks, schools and health services. During 2014/15, 46 children were placed in bed and breakfast outside the borough at some time during that year.

7. Homeless Prevention

7.1 The Council works proactively to prevent homelessness by intervening early, providing high quality housing advice and offering financial assistance to secure new homes or maintain existing accommodation.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 (Sept 2015)
Mediation/conciliation	19	6	4	5	0
Debt advice	1	1	0	4	2
Resolving housing benefit problems	8	5	9	15	11
Resolving rent/service charge arrears	3	3	3	3	0
Resolving rent/service charge arrears	1	2	7	9	4
Negotiate/advocate to remain in private rented property	12	18	9	7	10
Other assistance to remain in property*	0	0	1	3	0
Financial payments from Homeless prevention Fund	7	3	5	5	0
Mortgage arrears intervention/Mortgage Rescue	1	5	1	2	0
Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence	5	2	0	5	3
Other measures to assist household to remain in their home.					

* This additional assistance could be Discretionary Housing Payments.

- 7.2 The Council also provides financial assistance by way of rent deposit and rent in advance loans to help households secure accommodation in the private rented sector.

	No. Deposit/Rent in advance loans
2011/12	125
2012/13	93
2013/14	95
2014/15	58
2015/16 (Sept)	30

- 7.3 Unfortunately, the number of households that are assisted into the private rented sector has fallen over the last four years, mainly because of market rent levels which are significantly above the local housing allowance and make the private rented sector unaffordable for many households. Current market rents compared to Local housing allowances is shown below:

	Average Monthly Market Rents	Monthly Local Housing Allowance
1Bed	£ 922.00	£663.09

2 Bed	£1,230.00	£816.10
3 Bed	£1,420.00	£961.09

7.4 In situations where the rent for a property is above the Local Housing Allowance level, a household is only eligible for housing benefit up to Local Housing Allowance. This means that they would need to pay the difference between the two levels from their own resources and this would clearly be a challenge for people on low incomes. In the case of a two bedroom property, this could be up to £19.38 per week, or £66.00 per week for a three bedroom property. The Council steps in to meet the difference for homeless households if they want to take a private rented property as temporary accommodation. The Council has a discretionary housing payment policy to offer additional housing benefit payments for households who face financial hardship. The maximum discretionary housing payment that can be made is the maximum relevant local housing allowance.

8. Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

8.1 Local Authorities are required to monitor the number of people sleeping rough in the borough and report these numbers annually to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). During the last 3 years, the number of rough sleepers reported to the CLG has increased from 1 in 2013/14 to 4 in 2014/15. This complies with the DCLG definition of rough sleeping but it is difficult to obtain accurate numbers of those rough sleeping.

8.2 The definition of rough sleeping is:

“People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”).”

8.3 While the number of people meeting this definition is small, there is a much larger number of mainly single people who sofa surf, moving frequently between members of their family or friends, and may occasionally sleep rough or in their cars.

8.4 Substance mis-use increases the risk of homelessness. The Council and its partners work to help people avoid substance mis use. The Drug and Alcohol Team found that in 2013/14 of the total non-opiate users in treatment 62% had a housing / homelessness problem but this reduced to 59% when treatment was completed. In 2011/12 of those non-opiate users in treatment 72% presented with a housing problem and this reduced to 71% when treatment was completed.

9. Review of previous Homelessness strategy

9.1 The Council’s previous Homelessness strategy ran from 2003 to 2008. It contained four strategic objectives:-

Complying with new statutory requirements and meeting targets aimed to meet the new statutory requirements at that time and is not relevant to this strategy.

9.2 Preventing homelessness intended to decentralise the housing advice service and make it more accessible. In particular work was to take place with probation services to address the needs of vulnerable people leaving custody on a multi-agency basis. A

rent deposit scheme was established and this scheme has been developed since the strategy was included to also provide loans for deposits. The strategy promoted better liaison with housing benefit service. Since the strategy the welfare and housing service has been integrated to take this proposal one step further.

- 9.3 Securing sufficient accommodation. In particular this led to the development of specialist provision for homeless young people at rainforest walk and re-provision of the specialist scheme for young mothers and babies. It also promoted the establishment of a leasing scheme of private sector property to offer as temporary accommodation for homeless families. Since the strategy the Council's temporary to permanent scheme has led to the Council purchasing properties funded by the stock transfer receipt. The Council benefits from the income and equity growth of the temporary to permanent programme. Nevertheless, the leasing scheme has ben expanded.
- 9.4 Partnership working led to the procurement of specialist advice services such as support for single homeless people funded by the supporting people programme. Since the end of the strategy that service has ben integrated into the Council's welfare and housing service as that was more cost effective.

10. Good quality housing advice and prevention services

10.1 Where we are now

At present advice and support for homeless people is provided by a number of agencies in Bracknell Forest. The Council provides housing advice, housing options and homeless prevention services. This service is for customers of all ages, families and single people. The Council provides advice on maximising income and financial planning. The services range from advice to direct financial help in the form of loans for such things as rent in advance and deposit. In addition the Council provides grants from the social fund to address health and safety issues or to help set up home or help meet housing costs where there is financial hardship through the award of discretionary housing payments. In 2014 only 40% of the respondents to the Council resident satisfaction survey said they were satisfied with the quality of the housing advice provided by the Council.

- 10.2 The Council's family intervention team (FIT) works with the whole family or may be working with a number of individuals within a family. Fit provide financial planning, refer to CAP, negotiate repayment plans with LL, applications for DHP and make referrals to agencies for specialist advice.
- 10.3 The Council's Environmental Health Service provides advice to landlords on repair issues and licences housing in multiple occupation.
- 10.4 The Care Leavers Team in the Council's Children Young People and Learning Department provide support to care leavers to help them set up a home and keep the home they have.
- 10.5 LookAhead Housing Association is part funded by the Council to provide accommodation and support services for young homeless people and floating support to households who are potentially homeless. Lookahead provides a total of 55 supported housing homes for young single homeless people at Rainforest Walk and Holly House. The focus of work is to provide realistic information about housing options, helping customers to plan their future, encourage employment, and establish the skills for independent living.

- 10.6 Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) is part funded by the Council to provide refuge for women fleeing domestic violence as well as support services. BWA provides housing advice including helping people into private rented sector, financial planning , opening bank accounts, sanctuary schemes and provides 11 places in temporary accommodation in non self contained refuge.
- 10.7 There is a LIFE project that provides support for single mothers. This provides advice as part of the accommodation offer as well as through the provision of floating support.
- 10.8 The Citizens Advice Bureaux is part funded by the Council to provide advice to customers on housing issues. They provide specialist advice services on welfare benefits and landlord and tenant issues and debt management.
- 10.9 Shelter has an office in Slough and provides specialist housing and homelessness advice.
- 10.10 A number of registered providers operating in Bracknell Forest provide tenancy sustainment officers who work with customers who are under threat of eviction. BFH inform the Council where eviction is proposed to see if the Council can step in to help avoid homelessness.
- 10.11 The Kerith Centre and in particular Christians against Poverty provide advice, financial planning and the food bank and advice on debt management.
- 10.12 Pilgrim Hearts provide a drop in centre and an arts workshop. Their service is used by a number of the most disenfranchised (people with housing related debt, historical evictions for Anti-Social Behaviour, on-going alcohol and substance misuse issues).
- 10.13 There is limited measure of the quality of advice services provided by agencies.
- 10.14 Where we want to be

Advice provided by any agency in Bracknell Forest should aim to encourage and support independence. Advice services should create a customer contact sheet for customers to take away following face to face contact, summarising the advice and information that was given and action points that were agreed with the customer.

Regular customer satisfaction surveys should take place across agencies.

Advice services should be reviewed against the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Gold standard for homelessness services.

- 10.15 How we will know we have achieved our objectives
- All homeless and potentially homeless households will have a personal record of the advice they have received and actions they have been advised to take;
 - There will be an increase the customer satisfaction with advice they receive to help them avoid homelessness and in particular a 25% increase in the customer satisfaction in the Council's advice service;

- There will be action plan developing services against the DCLG gold standard.

11. Working in partnership to avoid duplication and maximise expertise

11.1 There are a range of services and agencies that are available in Bracknell Forest to help homeless and potentially homeless households. Obviously, it is everyone's interests to make sure those services and agencies complement each other and that homeless and potential homeless people are able to take advantage of the help that is on offer.

11.2 Where we want to be

A matrix for all agencies providing services to homeless or potentially homeless customers should be developed to say who does what and when. This should be held on a website, via posters in agency offices and regularly updated. To be included in the matrix an agency would have to agree to abide by basic rules such as always gaining consent of customer to act on their behalf, applying confidentiality, equal opportunities policy. This could lead to common forms of consent to be developed so that customers need only tell their story once. It was agreed that agencies should recognise who is best placed to provide services and avoid duplication so that resources can be best targeted and effectively used.

The matrix should be developed into a chart for customers so they are informed on where they should go to get advice and help. A common financial assessment model would be helpful for customers and agencies working with them.

Consistent advice should be provided by all agencies that are included in the matrix. This should include;

- Housing related debt can lead to you losing your home and stop you from getting another home unless you can show you are repaying your debt;
- Saving to help meet housing costs is essential and good financial management improves chances of avoiding homelessness;
- Customers must ask help for advice and help as soon as possible and agree to act upon advice – it is their responsibility to solve problems;
- Agencies should promote the use of credit Unions and where possible help customers with the set up costs for accounts as longer term it will save organisations and customers.

A signposting protocol should be developed which organisations should agree to operate. This will include guidance on making signposting effective and the necessity of casework to support customers.

There should be a mechanism for agencies to work together to meet the needs of the most challenging homeless customers in a coordinated conference approach.

11.3 How we will know we have achieved our objectives

- Agencies working in Bracknell Forest will have signed up to an agreed approach to working with homeless and potentially homeless customers;

- Agencies in Bracknell Forest will agree the consistent messages to be provided to homeless and potentially homeless households;
- Agencies will work from one common financial assessment for homeless or potentially homeless people;
- Agencies will operate an effective signposting service for homeless or potentially homeless people;
- There will be regular case conferences in place to help the most challenging homeless households.

12. **Meeting the need for emergency accommodation**

The Council has a duty to provide interim accommodation for households who present as homeless and the Council has reason to believe the household may be homeless, eligible for assistance and has a priority need. When homeless duty has been accepted, the household must be accommodated until permanent accommodation can be secured.

12.1 **Where we are now**

If a household presents as homeless on the day, or at short notice, the only resource that is immediately available is bed and breakfast accommodation. Households are often placed into bed and breakfast outside the borough because the supply in the borough is very limited.

For women fleeing domestic abuse, Berkshire Women's Aid provides emergency accommodation in Women's Refuges. Women are often accommodated in refuges outside the borough to ensure their safety.

Children Services have a duty to accommodate homeless 16 and 17 year olds, and un-accompanied minors.

The Council owns 6 units of shared accommodation in the borough and this is used as short stay accommodation in cases where the council has notice and can plan ahead to manage a vacancy in time for the household's homelessness.

There is no emergency accommodation in the borough for non priority single homeless people. The Council has a duty to provide accommodation during periods of particularly cold weather, Severe Weather Emergency Provision duties, and will make placements into bed and breakfast on these occasions until the weather improves.

12.2 **Where we want to be**

The need for emergency accommodation should have reduced due to increased homeless prevention activity.

Emergency accommodation should be provided in Bracknell Forest wherever possible so as to enable homeless households to benefit from maintaining family and friend networks and employment

The length of time homeless people spend in emergency accommodation should have reduced by the Council procuring more temporary accommodation or helping a household move into the private rented sector as a discharge of the Council's homeless duty.

Voluntary agencies with the support of the Council will have developed opportunities for meeting the gap in provision for single homeless non-priority people, particularly during the coldest winter months.

12.3 How we will know we have achieved our objectives

- Over 75% of all emergency accommodation provided for homeless households will be provided in Bracknell Forest;
- There will be a 50% increase in the amount of temporary accommodation available for homeless households;
- There will be a coordinated provision of emergency accommodation for single non-priority homeless people that operates during periods of severe weather.

13. Maximising access to housing

If households are to be able to avoid becoming homeless they must do all they can to improve their prospects of being successful in securing a home.

13.1 Where we are now

There are a range of services available to customers to improve their financial prospects to secure a home. United savings and loans credit union provide a range of financial products as does the Berkshire Credit Union. In Bracknell Forest the Citizens advice bureaux and the Christians Against Poverty (CAP) help customers with debt.

Regardless of whether a customer wants to rent a home or buy a home they need a deposit and for renting rent in advance. Landlords often require guarantors when letting their properties and usually this is a guarantor who can demonstrate that they are earning at least 30 x the monthly rent of the property.

The private rented sector property market operates effectively. However, there is evidence that landlords with a small number of properties that they manage themselves could benefit from help in advertising and sourcing tenants. Moreover, lodging and house sharing arrangements are not widely marketed.

Low cost home ownership is often cheaper for customers than private renting and incomes of £ 26,000 as year will be sufficient to allow a purchase as long as the customer has at least a 5% deposit of the purchase price.

Some potentially homeless households have additional needs that mean accessing housing is more difficult. In particular ex-offenders who have a history of substance mis-use often find it hard to secure a home without additional help and support.

The Council has set up an accreditation scheme for landlords but there is limited take up from landlords in the Borough.

13.2 Where we want to be

Customers housing options need to be explained to people as early as possible so that they have time to prepare themselves to be able to secure a home. This means explaining to young people in terms and media that they respond to the options available and what they will be required to do to take advantage of the options. This could include information provided in schools, youth services, via websites such as the Expressions website and also via video on YouTube. For customers who have experience of homelessness before securing a home extra support needs to be provided to the children of the families so that they understand and can take action to avoid the same path as their parents.

Customers need to maximise their financial capability and show a strong financial history to secure a home. Credit history is critical and customers should be encouraged by all agencies working with them to undertake a financial assessment and address any adverse credit issues or debts they have. The financial assessment should be transferrable between agencies and should not need to be done more than once. Customers need to be encouraged to set up savings accounts to cover the cost of rent in advance and deposit payments. The deposit for low cost home ownership is higher and if customers are aiming for that options they should be encouraged to save higher amounts. Customers should be advised of the need to secure a guarantor. The Council and its partners will investigate if there are ways in guarantees can be provided to enable customers to secure a home.

The Council will help customers apply for housing benefit to be paid to landlords direct where the safeguarding policy applies. The Council will support customers to make application for alternative payment arrangements if they are in receipt of Universal credit. The Council will promote the support it provides to landlords who are prepared to rent dwellings to people who are need the help of state benefits to pay their rent.

The Council will investigate with partner organisations ways in which private rented sector properties and room sharing and lodging opportunities can be advertised on line. This will give the opportunity to provide advice and information to customers in one place as well as including relevant information and advice to help customers. This will provide access to accommodation for homeless people that the Council does not owe a duty to provide housing.

The landlord accreditation scheme will be promoted and developed so that tenants who can demonstrate they meet agreed criteria could be accredited. Tenants who can demonstrate accreditation will improve their prospects for securing a home if they have to move.

13.3 How we will know we have achieved our objectives

- A coordinated package of information in a variety of media will be available for young people to advise them of housing options will be in place.
- There will be over 50% increase in the number of households who have set up a Homesaver Account with a Credit Union or can demonstrate savings to help them secure a home.

- There will be a website which coordinates private rented sector properties and room sharing opportunities with affordable housing opportunities also provides advice and information for homeless and potentially homeless households.
- A private lodging scheme will be promoted to facilitate housing options but also to address the issues of social isolation.
- Landlords and letting agents who let to people who need state benefits to help pay their housing costs will be promoted.
- There will be tenants who have received accreditation for the way in which they have maintained their tenancy.

14. Integrating the Homeless Strategy with the Housing Strategy

14.1 The Homeless Strategy will integrate with and inform the development of the Council's Housing Strategy. In particular the housing strategy should respond to the key issues of:

- Making best use of existing housing stock by encouraging use of under occupied housing;
- Maximizing affordable housing provision;
- Ensuring wherever possible new or redeveloped housing meets the housing needs of the community.

Homeless Strategy Action Plan

Priority	Objective	Actions	Target completion date	Lead organisation / person
	Assess homeless demand	Undertake annual Rough Sleepers estimate	Oct/Nov annually	BFC / Clare Dorning
	Establish homeless forum	To formally constitute Homeless Forum with agreed terms of reference	31/3/2016	BFC / Simon Hendeby
Good quality housing advice and prevention services	Homeless and potentially homeless households to have a personal record of advice and actions agreed	To agree minimum advice and actions recording across agencies for homeless and potentially homeless households	31/05/2016	
		To pilot advice and action recording and revise	30/06/2016	
	Improve customer satisfaction with quality of advice services	To agree Customer Satisfaction Survey	31/03/2016	
		To baseline Customer Satisfaction Survey	31/07/2016	
		To undertake annual Customer Satisfaction Survey	31/07/2017 31/07/2018 31/07/2019 31/07/2020	
		To develop annual Customer Satisfaction Survey Action Plan	30/09/2016 30/09/2017 30/09/2018 30/09/2019 30/09/2020	
	Review of services against DCLG Gold standard of homeless services	To complete a review of services for homeless and potentially homeless people against DCLG gold standard	30/11/2016	
		To agree action plan to achieve gold standard	31/01/2017	

Priority	Objective	Actions	Target completion date	Lead organisation / person
Working in partnership to avoid duplication and maximise expertise	An agreed approach to working with homeless and potentially homeless households will be established	Homeless Forum to agree minimum standards an agency should employ to be recommended to work with homeless or potentially homeless households	01/09/2016	
		A website for use by all agencies to say who does what and when to be established	01/01/2017	
		A website for homeless and potentially homeless customers to be established	01/03/2017	
	Consistent messages to be given to homeless and potentially homeless households	Homeless Forum to agree the consistent message that will be given to homeless and potentially homeless customers	31/03/2016	
		Promotion and publicity campaign to be developed to promote messages	01/09/2016	
	Common financial assessment to be used across agencies	A common financial assessment for customers to be developed and implemented	01/07/2017	
		All agencies to promote Home Saver accounts or equivalent and targets set for take up	01/09/2016	
		Agencies external to the Council to recommend social fund and homeless prevention funding	01/12/2016	
	Signposting protocol to be established	A casework protocol and recording system to be set up	01/09/2016	
		Signposting protocol to be piloted	01/10/2016	
		Go live of coordinated signposting between agencies	1/12/2016	

Priority	Objective	Actions	Target completion date	Lead organisation / person
	Case conference system for most challenging homeless households to be set up	Criteria for those households that can be referred for case conference to be agreed	31/03/2016	
		Case conference participants agreed for conferences for young people and other homeless or potentially homeless households and operation of conferences agreed	30/05/2016	
		Case conference s begin	01/07/2016	
Meeting the need for emergency accommodation	Over 75% of all emergency accommodation to be provided in the borough	Council to review business case for procuring emergency accommodation in the Borough and procure where viable	31/03/2020	
	Over 50% increase in the amount of temporary accommodation	Downshire Homes to procure temporary accommodation for homeless households	31/03/2017	
		Make a bid for Public Health England funding for accommodation for ex-offenders who misuse substances	04/12/2015	
	Provision of emergency accommodation in severe weather by voluntary organisations	Voluntary organisations to identify accommodation that can be used for emergency night shelter accommodation during severe weather	30/11/2015	
		Council to agree funding for emergency accommodation in severe weather	30/11/2015	
Maximising access to housing	Coordinated package of information in a variety of media for young people	Production of information on housing options information for young people to be made available to youth service and schools	30/11/2016	
		Production of YouTube videos to support information	01/01/2017	
	Increased take up of Home saver accounts	Stream lined process for setting up Home savers accounts set up with United Loans and Savings	01/01/2016	

Priority	Objective	Actions	Target completion date	Lead organisation / person
		Council to include setting up home saver or equivalent account as part of joining BFC MyChoice	31/03/2016	
		Council to include setting up home saver or equivalent account as part of registering for low cost home ownership	31/03/2016	
		Financial assessment should include encouragement of customers to set up home saver account	01/01/2016	
	Establish website to advertise private rented sector properties and provide information to homeless households	Bid for Berkshire Community Foundation funding to develop website for information on homelessness	30/11/2015	
		Set up website of coordinate with existing BFC MyChoice	31/03/2016	
		Agree if there is a to be charging structure for adverts	31/03/2016	
		Go live with website	01/05/2016	
	Tenants accreditation scheme	Re-launch the Landlord Accreditation Scheme	30/06/2016	
		Develop Tenant Accreditation Scheme	01/02/2017	
		Invite tenants to be accredited	01/03/2017	
		First tenants to be accredited	01/09/2017	