

East Sussex County Youth Homelessness Strategy 2009/10 – 2011/12

**East Sussex Children and Young People's
Trust**



East Sussex Youth Homelessness Strategy

The East Sussex Youth Homelessness Strategy has been developed during 2008/09.

The strategy has been developed by a steering group made up of representatives from the following organisations:

Eastbourne Borough Council
East Sussex Children's Services
East Sussex Supporting People
Hastings Borough Council
Rother District Council
Wealden District Council
CRI, East Sussex (voluntary sector representative)
Pulse (voluntary sector representative)

The strategy was written by Ian Copeman from the Housing & Support Partnership (www.housingandsupport.co.uk) an independent consultancy, with guidance from the steering group.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Vision and Objectives

This strategy is one of a number of strategies underpinning the East Sussex Children and Young People's Plan. It is designed to help achieve the vision for all young people set out in that Plan, and in particular to ensure that the well being and life chances of young people are not impaired through homelessness or the experience of insecure housing.

A key aim of this strategy is to ensure that there is a consistent approach across East Sussex to preventing and managing youth homelessness, and that approaches to managing housing requirements and homelessness are part of a holistic approach to supporting young people, avoiding any duplication of services and making best use of public expenditure in addressing youth homelessness. The strategy draws on current guidance from Government via Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and best practice from other local authorities. The strategy covers the period 2009/10 to 2011/12.

This strategy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To prevent youth homelessness wherever possible.
- To deliver homelessness prevention activities to support young people and their parents/carers, recognising that the most suitable place for young people aged 14-18 years is to live at home with their families (allowing for managing risks) unless there is a **planned** move to supported or independent living.
- To ensure sufficient suitable accommodation is available for young people who are, or may become homeless.
- To ensure the provision of appropriate support for homeless and insecurely housed young people.

The outcomes to be delivered by the strategy are summarised below:

- The use of bed and breakfast as temporary accommodation for young people will be eliminated by December 2009, excepting in extreme emergencies where homelessness occurs without notice or warning.
- 100% of young people who are able and safe to return to the family home will be enabled to do so through support and mediation, with support continuing after their return to build the capacity and sustainability of the family relationship.
- Homeless acceptances of 16-17 year olds and care leavers will comprise less than 5% of all acceptances across the county.
- Home visits will be made to the families of all young people presenting as homeless; in 75% of cases these will be made within 24 hours of the young person presenting as homeless.
- 'Generic' floating support commissioned through the Supporting People programme will be accessible to vulnerable young people.
- A range of supported lodgings will be developed across the county for young people who are unable to return to the family home or who need 'time out' accommodation before a family reconciliation can be achieved.
- All young people at risk of homelessness who are NEET will receive assertive support within 7 days of presentation to enable and motivate them to enter education, training or employment.

Consultation with all young people and their families who have accessed the new service by April 2010 will report that it was a positive experience which was delivered in a professional way and took account of their individual needs.

1.2. Strategy Content

This countywide youth homelessness strategy has been developed by Children's Services (CS), the five District and Borough Councils (DC/BCs) and the

Supporting People (SP) commissioners with involvement from a range of stakeholders including young people and voluntary sector organisations.

The strategy covers

- The current position in East Sussex in relation to:
 - The supply of services and resources for managing and preventing youth homelessness.
 - Anticipated future need in terms of youth homelessness.
 - Expenditure on services and resources.
 - Joint working arrangements particularly between Children's Services and the housing authorities.
 - Messages from stakeholders.
- Future strategic direction.
- A consistent approach to homelessness prevention
- Proposals for joint operational practice and working arrangements.
- A comprehensive approach to housing and support options for young people.
- Performance and outcomes.
- Delivery and implementation.

The definition of young people covered by this strategy includes:

- 16-17 year olds who are homeless/at risk of homelessness.
- Care leavers aged 18-21.
- Youth offenders aged 16 – 21.
- Young people aged 14-15 years identified as at risk of homelessness.

The strategy recognises the housing and homelessness issues faced by young people aged 18-25 years and the actions set out in the strategy are intended to apply to this group; however the primary focus of the strategy is the groups of young people defined above.

1.3. Equalities

1.3.1. Recognising Equality and Diversity

The local authorities in East Sussex all have equal opportunities policies which contain the following key commitments. The local authorities:

- Actively seek to reflect the diversity of people in East Sussex and intend that service provision policy reflects the needs and priorities of an increasingly diverse population.
- Actively seek solutions that advance the capacity and resources of people discriminated against in society. No service user will be discriminated against, directly or indirectly, harassed or receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital status, family commitments, sexual orientation, age, HIV status, religious or political beliefs, social class, or irrelevant spent conviction.
- Are committed to the fostering of good community relations and will work through their own services and the partnerships they are involved in to promote equality of opportunity to all.
- Aim to ensure that services are available and accessible to all.
- Will work to ensure that no group is disadvantaged in terms of access to services we are able to offer.

This Strategy and its associated implementation plan have been devised within the framework of the Equalities Statement.

1.3.2. Equalities Impact Assessment

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Equality Standard places a general duty on all public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote

equal opportunities and promote good relations between people from different ethnic groups.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out on the Youth Homelessness Strategy to ensure it meets the needs of diverse people in the community. The EIA includes sections explaining how different kinds of equalities issues affecting young people are being taken into account. These include:

- Young people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- Young people who are transgendered or transsexual.
- Young people from BME cultures including gypsies and travellers.
- Young people with disabilities and impairments, including mental health, learning/ behavioural/impairment, mobility, audio/ visual and limiting long term illnesses.
- Young people of different religions.
- Young people of different genders.
- Young people who are economically disadvantaged.

2. Background

2.1. National Context

There have been significant policy developments across the UK in the last decade to address youth homelessness. The introduction of homelessness strategies has placed a new emphasis on prevention, paying explicit attention to young people. Statutory protection has also been strengthened with the extension of priority need categories (particularly 16 and 17 year olds and care leavers aged 18–20) under the homelessness legislation in England, Wales and Scotland.

Existing data on youth homelessness has significant limitations; in particular it is only possible to count young people who are in contact with services. On this

basis, it can be estimated that at least 75,000 young people experienced homelessness in the UK in 2006–07. This included 43,075 young people (aged 16–24) who were accepted as statutorily homeless in the UK and at least 31,000 non-statutorily homeless young people using Supporting People services during 2006–07. The number of young homeless people sleeping rough in the UK on any given night is low. However, qualitative evidence indicates that some young homeless people may experience short periods of rough sleeping before securing temporary accommodation. Limited data also suggests that considerably more young people may experience rough sleeping over the course of a year than on any given night. The overall numbers of young people accepted as homeless across the UK increased following the extension of priority need groups in the early 2000s. However, levels have fallen in the last few years. At a country level, numbers have reduced in England and Wales but have remained similar in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The annual rate of young people aged 16–24 accepted as homeless is highest in Scotland (15.1 young people per 1,000 young people in population), followed by Wales (8.2), England (4.9) and Northern Ireland (4.8). Young women are more likely to be statutorily homeless than young men, whilst young men (aged 18 or over) are more likely to be non-statutorily homeless. Statutorily homeless young people are very unlikely to have an ethnic minority background in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland but are significantly over-represented in England, most particularly London.

2.2. East Sussex Context

Within the county of East Sussex the County Council has responsibility for Children's Services with five district/borough councils being the housing authorities. Two of these authorities are stock owning, Lewes DC and Wealden DC, two have transferred their stock to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Hastings BC and Rother DC, and Eastbourne BC's housing stock is managed by an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO).

Children's Services and the District and Borough councils have identified preventing and managing youth homelessness as a key priority. Presentations and acceptances by housing authorities of young homeless people have been increasing in East Sussex, particularly in Hastings and Rother. There is recognition amongst the organisations that commissioned and developed this strategy that a range of issues required a more strategic and consistent approach. These issues include:

- Current operational practice in relation to joint assessment for homeless young people have not been operating effectively in some areas.
- There has been a lack of a consistent and coordinated approach to preventing and managing youth homelessness across East Sussex.
- The availability of resources in terms of advice, mediation, housing options and support services vary across the county and are not necessarily based on evidence of need.
- It is not clear how much public funding is being committed to preventing and managing youth homelessness across the statutory agencies and what outcomes are being achieved for this investment
- The commissioning of housing and support services aimed at young people is not coordinated effectively between the statutory agencies.

2.3. Definition of Responsibilities

An issue that can arise in the management of youth homelessness is the 'status' of a young person of the way they are specifically defined and affected by legislation governing homelessness and Children's Services. These are summarised in the table below:

Status of Young person	Statutory obligations: Children's Services	Statutory obligations : Housing Authorities
Homeless 16 and 17 year olds	Duty on children's services authorities to provide accommodation for a child in need aged 16 or over whose welfare is likely to be seriously prejudiced if they do not provide accommodation;	Under the homelessness legislation (Housing Act 1996), all 16 and 17 year olds have a priority need for accommodation
Relevant children Children aged 16 and 17	To provide accommodation for a care leaver aged 16-17 years (known as a "relevant child") unless they are satisfied that his welfare does not require it.	No duty to secure accommodation
Former relevant children Young people aged 18-21 who have left care	Duty to provide assistance, including assistance with accommodation, to the extent that his welfare requires it.	Duty to secure accommodation if they become homeless through no fault of their own.
Young people over the age of 21 who have left care	Duty to provide continuing assistance if the person remains in education or training.	Duty to secure accommodation if they become homeless through no fault of their own and they are vulnerable as a result of having been in care.

This strategy aims to avoid a situation where the status of a young person and the way that they are defined within the two legislative frameworks is used as a barrier to effective joint working.

3. Policy Context

3.1. National Policy

This strategy is influenced by the relevant national and local policy context. The national and regional context includes CLG current homelessness policy and guidance, including Code of Guidance 2006, covering:

- The requirement to end the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for homeless 16/17 year olds other than in an emergency by 2010.
- Establishing a network of supported lodgings.
- Ensuring access to mediation services.
- Promoting the role and work of the regional centres of excellence.

Recent guidance has been jointly prepared by Communities and Local Government and the Department of Children, Schools and Families “Joint Working between Housing and Children’s Services”¹. Its purpose is to help the strategic managers of Children’s Services and Housing Services, in both unitary and two-tier authorities, to plan and deliver change to achieve three things for young people and children living with their families:

- Prevent homelessness.
- Minimise the negative impact of homelessness on their lives and life chances.
- Make sure they receive the co-ordinated services and support they need to recover from the impact of homelessness and get their lives back on track, including maintaining or returning to their journey through learning or work.

The challenge for Children’s Services and Housing Services is to ensure that there are no gaps between services, and that young people and children living in

¹ Joint working between Housing & Children’s Services – Preventing homelessness and tackling its effects on children and young people (CLG and DCSF, May 2008)

families get quick access to the services they need regardless of which service they approach for help first. This is consistent with the Government's Every Child Matters programme for better integrated services to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. The Children Act (2004) (section 10) sets out a statutory requirement for local authorities and their 'relevant' partners to cooperate to improve children's well-being

3.2. Local Policy and Strategies

The local context includes:

- District/Borough Councils updated their homelessness strategies by July 2008. All identify reducing youth homelessness as a priority and point to the necessity of doing this in partnership with a wide range of other organisations.
- The strategy has been developed along Enhanced Housing Approach principles. It is intended to learn from the trailblazer hosted by Eastbourne Borough Council and kickstart projects to build on existing partnerships and further develop a holistic approach to promoting the wellbeing of local young people.
- The locally defined requirements to have effective working arrangements and protocols between local housing authorities and Children's Services and other relevant agencies
- The recent updating of the Supporting People strategy in East Sussex. This has identified addressing youth homelessness as a priority including the development of a countywide strategy.
- East Sussex Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011 – An aim is to have fewer young people becoming homeless, or depending on temporary "sofa surfing" housing solutions.
- Youth Offending Team (YOT). The YOT is required to have a named accommodation officer, and all young people subject to community

interventions or on release from the secure estate have suitable accommodation to go to (which is a national target).

- In addition there are a number of other local strategies that are directly relevant to managing youth homelessness. These are shown below. The detail of these strategies is not replicated here; rather it is intended to demonstrate that this strategy is part of a wider set of policies and strategies that aim to address a range of issues in a comprehensive way in relation to young people.
 - Youth crime strategy.
 - Worklessness and young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) strategies.
 - Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) strategies.
 - Multi-Agency Transition strategy.

4. Current Position in East Sussex

This section sets out the position in East Sussex in relation to:

- The current position in relation to the young people aged 16-24 years in connection with the housing authorities, Children's Services and Supporting People.
- The anticipated demand for services and resources to prevent and manage youth homelessness.
- The current level and range of funding arrangements that pay for services and resources.
- The current joint working and assessment arrangements, in particular between Children's Services and the housing authorities.

4.1. Current Position

To provide a comprehensive baseline, set out below is a range of data that identifies the current position for the housing authorities, Children's Services and Supporting People in terms of both connection with young people who are at risk

of homelessness and current services and resources that are available across East Sussex to prevent and manage youth homelessness.

4.1.1. Housing Authority Position

The tables below summarise the position in 2008/09, where known, in relation to:

- Prevention of homelessness
- Homelessness decisions
- Use of temporary accommodation

Key points are:

- Data collected in relation to all three indicators provides only a partial complete picture, particularly in relation to homelessness prevention for 16/17 year olds and 18-24 year olds.
- In Hastings 41% of homelessness applications were from 16-21 year olds.
- In Hastings 28% of acceptances were for 16-21 year olds.
- In Rother 45% of acceptances were for 16 – 21 year olds.
- In Rother 78% of the people in temporary accommodation (TA) were 16-24 year olds in bed and breakfast.
- In the four districts the percentage of the people in TA who were 16-24 year olds in bed and breakfast varied between 0% and 2%.

Prevention of homelessness

	Eastbourne	Hastings	Lewes	Rother	Wealden
Total BVPI 213 homelessness preventions	513	202	108 *not yet audited	147	110
Total no. of preventions 16-17 year olds	N/A	44	N/A	N/A	1
Total no. of preventions 18-24 year olds	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	24

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(N/A – data not available or not able to be disaggregated. Part of implementation of this strategy involves ensuring that data is available in a consistent format)

Homelessness Decisions

	Eastbourne	Hastings	Lewes	Rother	Wealden
Total number of homeless applications	340	196	121	112	240
Number of applications from 16-17 year olds	40*	45	3	29	9
Number of applications from 18-24 year olds	70*	46	18	9	60
Total number of acceptances (all ages)	125	68	57	45	180
Total number of 16-17 year old acceptances	7	11	3	9	8
Total number acceptances 18-21 year old care leavers	1	5	1	1	1
Number of intentionally homeless decision made	47	21	8	15	16
Of those how many were 16-17	6	7	0	7	1

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Of those how many were under 25	20 (plus the 6 16/17 year olds)	4 (plus the 7 16-17 yr olds)	0	0	3
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* From a list of 276 (not 340)

Use of temporary accommodation as of 31/03/09

	Eastbourne	Hastings	Lewes	Rother	Wealden
How many people were in temporary accommodation	130	80	(all types of TA) 192	11	65
How many in B&B were 16/17 and 18-24	1 (16/17 yrs) 7 (18-24 yrs)	3 (16/17 yrs) 2 (18-24 yrs)	0	6	2 (16/17 yrs) 0 (18-24 yrs)
How many in supported/hostel were 16/17 and 18-24	6 (16/17 yrs) N/A (18-24 yrs)	6 (16/17 yrs) 8 (18-24 yrs)	0	16	1 (16/17 yrs) 4 (18-24 yrs)
How many in PSL were 16/17 and 18-24	0 (16/17 yrs) N/A (18-24 yrs)	0 (16/17 yrs) 11 (18-24 yrs)	4	0	0
How many in PRS were 16/17 and 18-24	0 (16/17 yrs) N/A (18-24 yrs)	0 (16/17 yrs) 0 (18-24 yrs)	0	15	0
How many in other TA were 16/17 and 18-24	0 (16/17 yrs) N/A (18-24 yrs)	0 (16/17 yrs) 4 (18-24 yrs)	2	0	0

(PSL – private sector leased accommodation).

4.1.2. Children's Services Position

Children's Services Integrated Youth Support provides a range of services to prevent and manage youth homelessness. These are summarised below.

Type of Service	Availability (2007/08)
Supported lodgings	29 units (31/03/08)
PASS service	218 people assisted
Support in schools	The integrated area service has a SW attached to each secondary school and a Connexions IPA provision based on a formula that reflects the schools needs.
Mediation services	The equivalent of two full time posts East and West.
Youth Offending Team	Remand placements spot purchased

4.1.3. Supporting People Position

The Supporting People programme commission's accommodation based supported housing and floating support services for young people. These services are summarised below where the 'primary client group' for these services is young people at risk. There are other housing support services that are for other 'primary client groups' but may also house and support young people at risk.

	Accommodation based services	No of units (total per district)	Floating support services	No of units (total per district)
Eastbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YMCA Residential Centre ▪ Eastbourne Foyer & Hyland House ▪ Vicarage Road (teenage parents) 	62	n/a	0
Hastings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brittany Road ▪ Milward Road ▪ Southwater Road ▪ Turner House (teenage parents) 	29	CRI floating support.	33
Lewes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Newhaven foyer ▪ Newhaven teenage parents 	41	n/a	0
Rother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 181a London Road, Bexhill ▪ 181b London Road, Bexhill ▪ Stepping Stones (Rye) 	19	n/a	0
Wealden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hailsham foyer 	7	n/a	0
East Sussex Total		158		33

4.1. 4. Voluntary Sector services and Resources

Voluntary and charitable sector organisations provide a range of services covering:

- Mediation services.

- Advice and information services.
- Support directly to young people.

However, an issue in developing this strategy has been the lack of a comprehensive 'map' of all the services provided by voluntary and community organisations for young people who may be at risk of homelessness. The development of such a 'map' and a consistent approach to involving voluntary sector organisations will need to part of the implementation of this strategy.

4.1.5. Summary

Data regarding the supply of services and resources is not currently sufficiently comprehensive for detailed analysis but possible emerging issues appear to be:

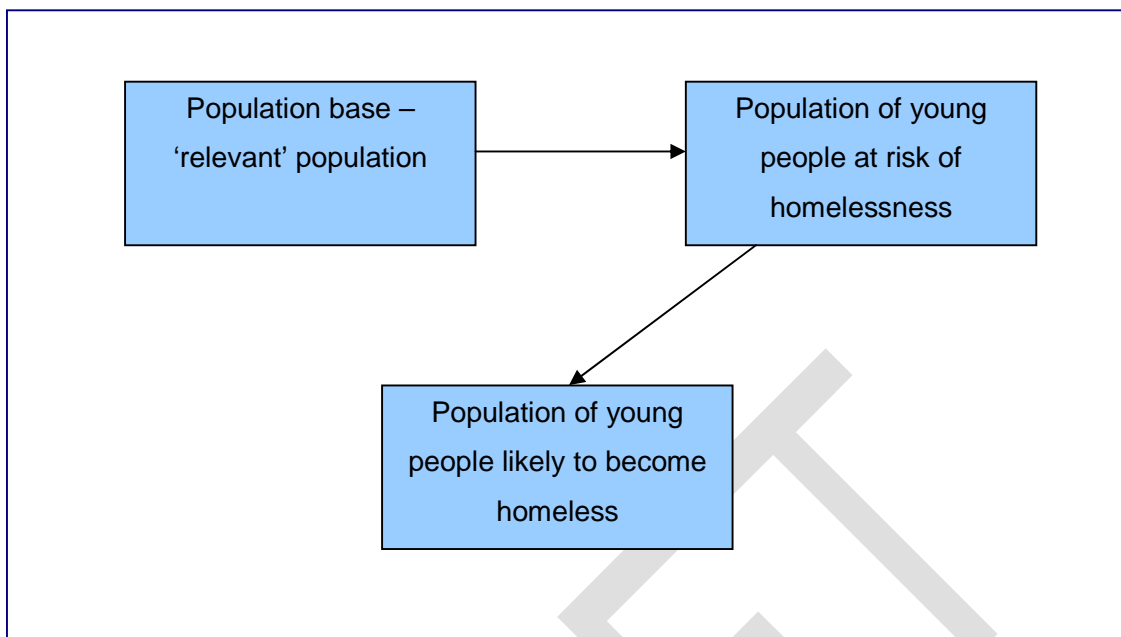
- Commissioning of services has not tended to be joint or coordinated between the housing authorities, Children's Services or the SP commissioners.
- Coverage of services commissioned and provided by both the statutory and voluntary sector is not comprehensive or consistent.
- Use of bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation varies between local authorities - reasons driving these variations are not necessarily apparent.
- Availability and access to rent deposit and bond schemes varies between authorities.
- Provision of information and advice regarding 'homelessness' in schools and colleges appears to be variable.
- Availability of accommodation based supported housing is based on the 'inherited' legacy of Supporting People funding.
- Availability of floating support services available to young people is limited to Hastings, but this is not meeting local demand.

4.2. Estimating Future Levels of Youth Homelessness

To make informed commissioning decisions it is helpful to estimate future projections of youth homelessness. The approach taken has been to

- Identify data that provides a demographic context for demand for housing support services, i.e. East Sussex population profile for 15-24 year olds.
- Use a range of sources of data that will help to estimate potential levels of youth homelessness. These sources of data include:
 - Local authority data including statistical returns, for example Housing Authority P1E data on homelessness acceptances for 16 – 21 year olds.
 - Data on client profile and needs held by agencies that work with young people, for example data on care leavers and the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training.

The approach to estimating the level of potential youth homelessness from young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness has been adapted from a model used for identifying the need for supported housing in London (London Housing Federation/Housing Corporation, *Building for All*, May 2007). The application of this approach to youth homelessness in East Sussex is illustrated in the diagram below.



The approach and data that has been used to estimate potential demand for youth homelessness services is set out below

4.2.1. The Demographic Context for Demand - Population

The estimate uses 15 – 24 years as the 'relevant' base population. The suggested 'relevant' population is based on age profile of service users of youth homelessness services and the potential demand amongst the 12-16 years age cohort of the population. The table below shows the relevant population in 2008 and the projected relevant population in 2028.

East Sussex Population		2008	2018	2028
Total Pop	15-24 years	56,500	54,300	54,700

Source: East Sussex in Figures (ESCC)

4.2.2. Population at Risk of Youth Homelessness

The population at risk is a subset of the relevant population base that may become homeless during a particular year. The population at risk of becoming homeless is based on a range of locally available data in relation to the different 'client needs' group that make up the youth homelessness 'sector'. This data is used to construct an estimate of the potential level of youth homelessness across these different 'client needs'. The data sources used are summarised in the table below.

Client Needs	Data Source	Population at risk of youth homelessness (per annum)
Homeless young people (16/17 years)	Annual homelessness acceptances for 16-21 year olds by housing authorities (2007/08)	84
Drug and alcohol	This is based on evidence collected by East Sussex DAAT regarding young people using drug treatment services who have a housing need (Jan – Oct 2008)	21
Offenders	This is based on data from East Sussex YOT on actual young offenders being managed in the community (2007/08)	579
Young people at risk	This is based on data from East Sussex CS regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Care leavers in a 12 month period ▪ Young people who are NEET in a 12 month period (16-18 years, 2006) 	38 1,170
Teenage Parents	This is based on number of conceptions amongst 15-17 year olds (2005, East Sussex in Figures)	358
Total		2,250

This indicates that the estimated population of young people at risk of becoming homeless services is 2,250 for 2009/10.

4.2.3. Population Likely to Become Homeless

The estimate of the population of young people who are likely to become homeless is based on adjusting downwards the estimated demand from the population at risk. The need to adjust the estimated demand from the population at risk of homelessness services is because of a number of factors including:

- The data used within the estimated population at risk was collected for a wider range of purposes than estimating youth homelessness.
- Not all individuals within the estimated population at risk will actually become homeless. Their needs will be for a far wider range of support, for example support with substance misuse or avoiding re-offending.
- There is the potential for some 'double counting' between the different needs groups.

To account for these factors in order to produce a realistic estimate of the population of young people likely to become homeless, it is assumed that up to 10% of the estimated population at risk is likely to become homeless in a particular year. *(The exception to this is the numbers of young people accepted by the local housing authorities as homeless and the number of care leavers, which have not been adjusted).* This is shown in the table below.

East Sussex Youth Homelessness	Projected Level of Youth Homelessness (per annum)
Estimated population at risk of youth homelessness services	2,250
Estimated population of young people likely to become homeless	335

This is intended to give an estimate only of the potential level of youth homelessness.

4.3. Current Funding Position

In relation to the identified current supply of services and resources, the investment in managing and preventing youth homelessness services by Children's Services, District/Borough councils and through the Supporting People programme is summarised in the table below. This indicates that:

- A relatively low proportion of the Prevention Grant funding received by the district/borough housing authorities from CLG is *directly* allocated to managing youth homelessness. However, the use of this funding is focused on preventing and managing homelessness which will cover young people.
- Funding from Children's Services and Supporting People is committed to existing contracts for services. Any refocusing of this existing expenditure requires reviewing and changing current contracts.

Investment in managing and preventing homelessness (anticipated spend 2008/09)

Type of expenditure	Eastbourne	Hastings	Lewes	Rother	Wealden	Total
Housing Authority spend on youth homelessness (from prevention grant)	£35,000 (Grant £130,000 pa)	Not calculated (Grant £125,000 pa)	Not calculated (Grant £60,000 pa)	£3,500 (Grant £45,000 pa)	Not calculated (Grant £55,000 pa)	
CS spend – (countywide)	YOT placements- £11,000 PASS scheme - £115,153 Supported lodgings scheme management - £115,153 Mediation service - £45,000 (approx)					£286,306
SP spend Accommodation based services Floating support	£418,137.88	£297,311.14 £93,662	£352,603.48	£197,629.32	£56,617.16	£1,322,297
Other	£36,000 (jointly with Wealden) – grant for education in schools				£36,000 (jointly with Eastbourne)	£36,000

4.4. Involvement of Stakeholders

A wide range of stakeholders were involved in the process of developing this strategy. This has included:

- Young people with experience of being homeless or in insecure accommodation.
- YOT
- DAAT
- Connexions
- Service providers of supported housing
- Voluntary organisations that provide mediation and advice services
- Representatives from colleges/schools.

Meetings were in the form of focus groups which covered a range of issues including:

- Identifying and discussing gaps between current supply of services and the current service usage and future anticipated demand.
- Considering the current performance and effectiveness of youth homelessness services and resources.
- Identifying the processes and systems that need to be used locally to deliver effective joint working arrangements, particularly between district/borough councils and Children's Services.
- Identifying the priorities that will need to be delivered through the youth homelessness strategy.

The key messages from stakeholders through this process have been:

4.4.1. Young People

- Reasons for homelessness often complex and with many causes.

- For many young people the route into homelessness starts prior to 16th Birthday. Some young people are in effect homeless prior to 16 years including rough sleeping.
- Those who have been through the joint housing assessment do not always understand what is actually happening and what they can expect.
- Many young people have 'complex needs' which may include substance misuse, offending, 'challenging' behaviours, experience of abuse as well as or as part of their experience of homelessness.
- Experience of private sector housing is generally that it is of poor quality
- Some young people do not understand how the local authority CBL scheme operates and how to make use of it
- Good awareness of local voluntary advice and information services (in Hastings) that can offer young people independent advice.
- Emphasis on getting information into schools from 12/13 years about the reality of homelessness and where to get help and advice from.
- Needs to be more information made available to parents to make sure they understand the consequences and reality of homelessness for young people
- CS and housing authorities need to get better at supporting individual young people jointly and explaining why a young person is being referred or signposted to another organisation/agency.
- Needs to be better and clearer information available to young people that explains the 'homelessness' system and what they can expect from different organisations. Organisations need to communicate with young people through mobile phone/text technology and 'social' websites.

4.4.2. Wider Stakeholders

- Young people are not being identified early enough – when they are referred they are already homeless.
- Housing – not 'young person' friendly. They have different agendas to other agencies.

- The process is clear but young people have different needs – housing see it purely from their perspective.
- Housing benefit levels for under 25s are a barrier to private rented accommodation
- Joint homelessness assessments – there isn't enough time spent doing assessments. It is hard to get the youth support team to assess needs unless the young person is a care leaver.
- Joint working protocol – agencies are aware of the protocol but there are inconsistencies between different districts and boroughs.
- Landlords – it is helpful to offer support to landlords such as bond schemes, mediation and training.
- Supported housing – there is a need for immediate access hostel accommodation to avoid street homelessness and Bed & Breakfast accommodation (such as the services available in Surrey and Crawley).
- Non-SP support services –
 - Adhoc. There is no strategic overview.
 - They are not evenly distributed across the county. The coastal strip is well served but not rural areas.
 - There are too many services doing similar things which causes overlapping/cross over and waste of funding.
 - Organisations need to work together better.
 - Need drop-in centres to have the same title and to offer the same service across the whole county. Need consistency.
- Assessment processes also overlap so young person has to keep doing through the same information with different agencies. Each agency has their own assessment process.
- Information sharing is getting better. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) should improve this further. If everyone used the CAF

for the core questions and basic information it would help to ensure consistency of background information and reduce the need for the young person to keep giving the same information.

4.5. Current Joint Working arrangements

Joint working arrangements, in particular between Children's Services and the five local housing authorities, but also with service provider and voluntary organisations, need to be effective and consistently applied. In order to understand at a local and countywide level the operation of joint working arrangements, including joint housing assessment, five workshops were held for staff from Children's; Services and the five local housing authorities who work directly with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The workshops included discussion of:

- What does current practice look like?
- Key local issues
- What do we need to change?
- Implementing changes to improve current practice

Summary of key issues and opportunities. Key messages include:

- Joint Homelessness Assessment (JHA) process is not currently fully understood by all staff
- JHA process is not applied consistently (or at all in some areas)
- Joint working in more general terms (as well as through the JHA) is mixed.
- Information sharing about young people is mixed between agencies
- There is a perception that is fairly widespread that CS and housing authorities manage their duties solely within the limits of their statutory responsibilities rather than as part of a wider partnership to assist young people at risk of homelessness.
- In all areas there is severe pressure on housing options for young people
- In rural areas there is little support available

- In urban areas there is more support available but this sometimes seems to lead to duplication/overlapping of services and a lack of coordination
- The availability of information and advice for young people particularly from voluntary sector organisations is mixed; good in some areas and absent from other areas

5. Good Practice and Case Studies

This strategy has drawn on current good practice guidance in relation to joint working between Housing and Children's Services, specifically the guidance issued by CLG and DCSF in May 2008.

We have specifically drawn on identified good practice in managing youth homelessness from Oxfordshire County Council and its partners, and Brighton & Hove City Council and its partners.

By contrast we have looked at 'case studies' that illustrate some of the issues that have affected the experience of young people at risk of homelessness. An example is set out below.

- C had been in voluntary care for approx 1 year, organised through the local authority. However the placement broke down just over a month before her 16th birthday and as a result she moved back home with her mother, which, considering their volatile relationship, was a highly unsuitable arrangement for them both.
- Housing would not take responsibility for C as she was still on the 'system' as being under local authority care. She was asked to return later that day so that it could be resolved.
- On return, the situation was still unresolved and as housing could not speak to anyone at Children's services, they decided that C was still 'in care'.
- The key worker then took C to Children's Services to resolve this through the duty team, who after some discussion issued a letter confirming that they did not have a duty of care for her.
- On return with this letter to housing, C was placed in a B&B, but they made it clear that they still felt that they should not have responsibility. Housing asked for further information about our work and Children's Services involvement, so that they could hold a further meeting to resolve this.
- C was asked to return the next morning to fill in forms as it was so late in the day.
- C was present at all of these meetings where people discussed their responsibility, or lack of it in this situation. This was very distressing for her, reinforcing her history of rejection.
- The next day she returned to housing to fill in forms and then had to go through another meeting with the officer assessing her housing needs.
- 5 days later C attended a Joint Homelessness Assessment meeting where she was asked to repeat her case history and experiences again. At the end of this meeting housing remained firm that they would only have a temporary responsibility until a joint meeting could be held between Children's Services and Housing Managers.
- 2 days later notification was received from Housing Services that Children's Services had taken responsibility for C and that in the short term this would not change the housing arrangements for her.

Procedures for making decisions of 'housing responsibility' between Housing Services and Children's Services need to be reviewed to limit the need for assessment, repetition and distress that this can cause to a vulnerable young person caught within the system.

6. Way Forward

6.1. Strategic Direction

The proposed vision is set out in section 1 of the strategy. The objectives for managing youth homelessness across East Sussex based on the key messages from stakeholders and current best practice are set out below.

Homelessness prevention is defined as activities that enable a young person to remain in their current home, where appropriate, or that provide options to enable a planned and timely move and help sustain independent living. The Youth Homelessness Strategy aims to deliver joint working between all key partners and to have a comprehensive and consistent approach towards preventing youth homelessness for young people aged 14 to 25 years resident in East Sussex.

6.2. Key Objectives:

- Intervention to prevent homelessness.
- Seamless and consistent joint working arrangements between organisations supporting young people at risk of homelessness.
- Providing a wider range of housing and accommodation options for young people.
- Providing comprehensive support to vulnerable young people.

6.3. The Objectives in Practice

Set out below under each of the four key objectives is what we intend to in practice to achieve these objectives. It is intended that these objectives are implemented in a consistent way across all five district/borough housing authority areas in East Sussex.

6.3.1. Preventing Homelessness

It is proposed to undertake the following prevention activities:

- Develop a single 'point of access' in each district/borough area to deliver housing advice and homelessness service to young people.
- Nominate and develop young person and family specialists within each local housing authority's Housing Options Team.
- Provide a single telephone number for information and advice about youth homelessness support and services.
- Children's Services to identify families where there is a risk of family breakdown including specifically identifying young people aged 14-15 years who are at risk of homelessness (through Common Assessment Framework).
- Develop a consistent programme of support, information and advice to parents in relation to leaving home/homelessness.
- 75% of home visits to families of young people at risk of homelessness will take place within 24 hours of presentation.
- Monitor and report on the levels and causes of repeat homelessness amongst 16 and 17 year olds.
- Develop a consistent approach to the commissioning and use of mediation services in response to youth housing issues.
- Include information on leaving home as part of the student support package delivered to year 10 & 11 in schools.
- Develop information and advice sessions in schools on leaving home.
- Develop and deliver training on preventing youth homelessness to Educational Welfare Officers and Teachers.
- Ensure inclusion of the Housing Options advice services for young people are included in on-line directories/information resources provided by Children's Services, District/Borough council and other relevant websites.

- Improve information on preventing youth homelessness available on East Sussex local authorities & Sussex Connexions websites.
- Make use of the resources and skills of voluntary sector organisations to support homelessness prevention work, e.g. recently commissioned theatre based work that addresses youth homelessness issues.

6.3.2. Future Joint Working Arrangements

Rationale

A key reason for developing this strategy was to improve joint working arrangements specifically between the district/borough housing authorities and Children's Services. It is also intended to improve working arrangements with voluntary organisations in order that all organisations working with vulnerable young people are working in a consistent way to prevent youth homelessness.

It is proposed to develop and implement a consistent joint working approach between the five district/borough housing authorities and Children's Services based on the following principles of shared responsibility:

- Focusing on managing and preventing youth homelessness.
- Undertaking joint assessments of young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness where this is necessary.
- Developing and contributing to a proposed joint 'youth housing team'.
- Improving outcomes for vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness.

In the past joint working has tended to focus primarily on a single point in a young person's experience of becoming homeless, typically through the 'joint homelessness assessment'. Through this strategy it is intended that joint working will operate at all the potential stages of a young person's experience of becoming at risk of homelessness. 'Joint working' should be viewed as a spectrum of homelessness prevention activities that will be undertaken jointly by

Children's Services and the housing authorities, along with their other partners, with young people at risk of homelessness.

The Approach

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has been developed for professionals in all agencies to communicate and work more effectively together, standardising the approach to the assessment of the needs of children and young people. As part of a wider programme to deliver more integrated services the Common Assessment Framework aims to support earlier intervention, improve multi-agency working and reduce bureaucracy for families.

It is proposed to use CAF as the 'tool' for identifying and raising the risk of a young person becoming homeless. This may require development of a referral protocol within CAF for young people who require housing advice. A separate tool, or 'addendum' to CAF will be developed for use as a joint assessment 'tool' to be used by Children's Services and the five housing authorities where a joint youth housing assessment is required. This would replace the current "Joint Homelessness Assessment" tool. The joint assessment should be seen as part of a spectrum of 'prevention' activity rather than the only response to a young person at significant risk of homelessness.

The joint approach to homelessness prevention will seek to minimise, and ideally eliminate, the number of young people who are ultimately 'accepted' as homeless by housing authorities and the number who are found to be 'intentionally' homeless.

The proposed operational joint working arrangements are summarised below.

Age/status of young people	Joint working Arrangements	Intended Outcomes
14/15 years old	CS quarterly reporting to district/borough councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individuals identified as being at risk of homelessness ▪ Current housing situation ▪ Current school status ▪ Severity of risk of homelessness ▪ Reporting in advance of 16th birthday. ▪ Identify input/involvement from CS with those Individuals identified as being at risk of homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preventing homelessness ▪ Identifying those young people who are most at risk of homelessness. ▪ Managing a smooth transition from 16 years effectively, particularly for those young people identified as most at risk of homelessness.
16/17 years old	Proposed joint Youth Housing Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lead on homeless prevention and CAF process (including any joint assessments required) ▪ Coordinating support required from CS and other agencies ▪ Coordinating housing options required via <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supported lodgings and/or accommodation/housing ○ Independent housing options with support (if appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prevention of 'intentionality' decisions ▪ Reduction in overall homelessness 'decisions' ▪ Jointly assessing young people and identifying suitable accommodation/housing ▪ Achieving a consistent approach to meeting young people's housing and support needs.
Care leavers post 17.5 years	CS reporting to district/borough councils 6 months before 18 th birthday:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prevention of 'intentionality' decisions

Age/status of young people	Joint working Arrangements	Intended Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Numbers in transition at 18years ▪ Locations ▪ Expected housing needs/requirements <p>Proposed joint Youth Housing Team to plan post 18 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support requirements and how these will be met with CS ▪ Coordination of housing options required via <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supported lodgings and/or accommodation/housing ○ Independent housing option with support (if appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in overall homelessness 'decisions' ▪ Jointly assessing young people and identifying suitable accommodation/housing ▪ Achieving a consistent approach to meeting young people's housing and support needs.
18-24 years old	<p>Proposed joint Youth Housing Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide advice and support to prevent homelessness ▪ Coordinate access to suitable support services ▪ Coordinate access to suitable accommodation and housing options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction in overall homelessness 'decisions' ▪ Reduction in young people 18-24 years becoming homeless

Joint Working in Practice

To ensure that joint working is a reality rather than an aspiration, it is proposed to develop a joint 'Youth Housing Team'. Based on good practice elsewhere (particularly in two-tier local authorities, e.g. Oxfordshire) and an understanding that youth homelessness cannot be tackled effectively by one organisation alone, this team will be made up of a mix of jointly appointed posts and other existing posts from within the five housing authorities and Children's Services.

It is proposed that the joint Youth Housing Team will be made up of the following posts.

- A Youth Housing Coordinator role. This will be a countywide position with responsibility for delivery of the youth homelessness strategy, managing the operational joint working arrangements and ensuring that there is a consistent approach followed by all five housing authorities and Children's Services. This is a new post and will require funding from Children's Services and the five housing authorities and/or resources from CLG as part of their national approach to managing youth homelessness. Estimated cost is approx £40-50k pa including on-costs. To be employed by CS but with specialist support/supervision from one of the housing authorities (e.g. Hastings BC).
- A nominated young person specialist within each of the five District/Borough council's Housing Options Teams.
- Youth Offending Team accommodation officers.
- Children's Services roles from Targetted Youth Support services, as required, e.g. Connexions personal advisors, drug misuse workers.
- A nominated person from the Supporting People team as required.

The requirement for any additional joint posts to implement the strategy operationally will be determined through a joint working workshop to be held by

Children's Services, the District/Borough Councils and Supporting People commissioners with other stakeholders as part of the implementation process.

The role of the proposed joint Youth Housing Team and the Youth Housing Coordinator in particular will include:

- Having the coordinating role for managing operationally the delivery of this strategy with Children's Services and all five district/borough councils and other relevant agencies and organisations.
- Ensuring that the proposed process of joint working is effective and consistently applied across all areas of East Sussex.
- Being the 'lead professional' for CAF purposes where this is appropriate.
- Ensuring that youth homelessness prevention activities are coordinated and consistent across all areas of East Sussex.
- Managing and assisting the resolution of any disputes that arise between the housing authorities and Children's Services in relation to joint working responsibilities
- Providing support directly and accessing other types of support that are available to young people to prevent and manage homelessness, which will include different types of support such as support via Children's Services and housing support services funded by Supporting People.
- Facilitating access to the range of housing and accommodation options proposed in the strategy including an expansion of supported lodgings.
- Supporting, and directing where necessary, housing and accommodation providers to provide the most effective services for young people at risk of homelessness.
- Monitoring the outcomes and performance that are delivered through the strategy.
- Develop a consistent approach to working with the voluntary and community organisations that support young people at risk of homelessness.

- Developing and refining a method for projecting future levels of potential youth homelessness.

From the work undertaken to develop this strategy it has been clear that we are not always making the best use of the range of support services that are available to vulnerable young people, particularly 16-17 year olds. There are a range of benefits that will come from the proposed approach to joint working.

- A key reason for basing the proposed joint post with Children's Services is because of the way that Children's Services is now structured, in relation to Targetted Youth Support, and in particular the wide range of services that can be drawn on to support young people who may be at risk of homelessness. Children's Services approach to Targetted Youth Support can draw on the following support services where necessary:
 - Under 19 years team
 - Youth Support Team (YST)
 - Youth Development Service (YDS)
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS)
 - Mediation services
 - Re-integration service (for children excluded from education)
 - Youth Offending Team (YOT)
 - Education Welfare Officers (EWOs)
- This approach also has the benefit of avoiding any duplication of support services that may be currently provided or purchased separately through district/borough councils, for example making use of mediation services provided through Children's Services.
- Basing the proposed joint post with Children's Services, but with the post co-located within the district/borough housing authorities, will provide a comprehensive approach to interventions to prevent homelessness, access to the widest range of support services and access to a range of accommodation and housing options where appropriate.

- It is intended to avoid any 'bouncing' of a young person between agencies and ensure that the young people with the most challenging and complex needs are supported effectively.

Summary

To implement a joint working approach to managing youth homelessness, including developing a joint Youth Housing Team, will require agreement from all five district/borough councils and Children's Services to:

- Agree to work in line with the principles and actions set out in the strategy.
- Make these principles work in practice by working in line with joint working operational approach.
- Contribute to the proposed joint youth housing team, either in terms of funding and/or nominated posts that will be part of the team.
- Agree on the use of CAF for identifying youth housing/homelessness issues and risks and an additional joint assessment 'tool' to be used where a joint youth housing assessment is required.
- Develop and deliver joint training programmes for professionals within District/Borough Housing Options Teams and Children Services teams, and staff from other organisations that work with vulnerable young people, including voluntary sector agencies and housing and support providers.

6.3.3. Providing a Wider Range of Housing Options

The availability of a range of housing options suitable to the needs of young people is an essential part of tackling youth homelessness and assisting young people to achieve independent living in a settled environment. It is intended to have a 'menu' based approach to housing options where there are a range of options available to meet varying housing needs. This is intended to provide a 'continuum' of housing and accommodation options that a vulnerable young person may use with the objective of accessing independent housing when this appropriate to their needs. This range of options is set out below.

Housing Type	Role
Emergency accommodation	To provide very short term accommodation in an emergency situation. As an alternative to use of bed and breakfast accommodation.
Supported lodgings	To provide short to medium term (up to 2 years) accommodation with individuals in the community providing a room within their home.
Supported housing	To provide short to medium terms (up to 2 years) accommodation within a supported, structured and staffed environment.
Independent housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private sector renting ▪ Private sector leasing schemes ▪ Social sector renting 	To provide longer term settled accommodation, with or without support available.

This approach requires the partners to:

- Develop an agreed countywide model of emergency accommodation as a replacement for use of bed and breakfast and other unsuitable temporary accommodation. The potential models include:
 - Emergency supported lodgings where the room is available on an as-and-when needed basis
 - ‘Crash pads’ which is similar to the supported lodgings model but is typically a room with an individual/family in the community that is available for one night.
 - Emergency ‘bedspaces’ within supported housing schemes. This is where bed spaces are specifically designated for emergency use only.
- Only use bed & breakfast accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds as a last resort and for the shortest time possible (maximum 6 weeks).

- Expand and develop the current supported lodgings scheme from 30 to 60 units across East Sussex and to be available to young people with a spectrum of needs. The development of the scheme will consider having different 'tiers' of support available so that young people with more complex needs can be accommodated within this model. The expansion of supported lodgings will allow both Children's Services and District/Borough Councils to have access to supported lodgings places for both care leavers and homeless 16/17 year olds.
- Develop small scale 'intensive support' supported housing for young people, including 16/17 year olds and young offenders, with very challenging needs. This is anticipated to require intensive staffing with 24 hour cover in order to provide a housing option for those young people who are not able to access other forms of supported accommodation due to their high support needs. An initial tentative estimate of the need for this type of intensive service is based on an assumption that up to 5% of the projected level of youth homelessness per annum of 335 young people, would require capacity of 16-17 places. Given that use of this type of service will be short term, the required capacity could be 10-12 places. Through the consultation about and implementation of the strategy it will be necessary to identify the specific demand/need more accurately, service models and potential locations for this type of service.
- Review the use and role of all supported housing for young people currently commissioned and funded through the SP programme as part of 'phase 3' of the recommissioning of SP services in 2009/10. Review the use and role of other supported housing funded by Children's Services at the same time, for example the shared supported housing in the Lewes district. This will allow for recommissioning and remodelling of supported housing services to fit with the objectives of the youth homelessness strategy and ensure that scarce supported housing services are available to those vulnerable young people whose needs are greatest.

- Each district and borough council to identify routes into and numbers of lettings that can be made available on an annual basis to enable vulnerable young people to access independent housing, predominantly in the private rented sector but also in the social rented sector.
- Each district and borough council to identify the potential for private sector leasing with RSLs or charitable housing organisations specifically for young people as an option for managing the impact of the Local Housing Allowance restriction for under 25s upon restricting access to the private rented sector
- Develop common practice in the provision of rent deposit and 'bond' schemes for young people.

6.3.4. Providing Comprehensive Support

A key priority of the updated Supporting People (SP) 5 year strategy is to establish a model of support where there is clear and managed 'pathway' for vulnerable people through a range of housing and support options. The aim of an integrated support pathway for homeless young people, young offenders and care leavers is to enable people to move through services in a structured way, with moving on to independent housing a key part of support planning. Better co-ordination of services will enable service users to move through to different stages of independence. The support pathway for managing youth homelessness is summarised below.

Circumstances of young person	Element of Support 'Pathway'	Source of support
Risk of homelessness	Support available to prevent homelessness from occurring	Recommissioning of PASS contract
Homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness	Support variable as part of a revised joint housing assessment process with the aim of managing immediate risks	Recommissioning of PASS contract
Moving into supported accommodation/housing	Support available to assist a young person to make the move into supported accommodation/housing	Recommissioning of PASS contract/SP funded floating support
Moving on from supported accommodation/housing	Support available to assist a young person to move-on successfully.	SP funded floating support
Living in independent housing	Support available to maintain independence.	SP funded floating support

Currently these forms of support are either available from different agencies/organisations or not at all, depending on location.

It is proposed to:

- Develop a comprehensive youth housing support service that can assist young people at all stages of the support pathway. This would be part of or coordinated by the proposed joint Youth Housing Team. The benefits of this will be to provide comprehensive and coherent support during their individual pathway away from homelessness or being at risk of homelessness.
- Ensure that 'generic' floating support commissioned through the Supporting People programme is accessible to young people particularly at the point of moving on from supported housing/accommodation and when living in independent housing.
- Produce information about moving on from supported housing/accommodation tailored for young people.

- Prevent unplanned moves from young persons supported accommodation/housing by agreeing a protocol between all providers of supported accommodation/housing and the local authorities so that any unplanned moves can be managed to avoid repeat homelessness from occurring.
- Ensure that all young people who move-on into independent housing have a 're-engagement plan' so that they have a clear route back to a support service if they become at risk of homelessness in the future.

7. Commissioning and Organisational Requirements

The commissioning implications of delivering the proposed actions are summarised below.

7.1. District/Borough Councils Housing Teams

The delivery of this strategy will require that all five district/borough councils work in a consistent way in relation to preventing and managing youth homelessness, whilst allowing for local variations in need and the number of young people at risk of homelessness.

In practice it will require that all housing authorities:

- Develop consistent information materials in relation to youth homelessness jointly with Children's Services
- Nominate a lead officer within the housing options team for youth housing. This person would be the local authority's nominated officer in the proposed joint youth housing team
- Develop, where necessary, the range of prevention approaches set out in the strategy for managing youth homelessness.
- Work consistently with each other and Children's Services to work with schools in relation to youth housing issues.

- Agree a single point of access for each district/borough where young people and others will go for advice, information and practical help.
- Identify and develop where necessary a range of independent housing options in the private and social rented sector that can be accessed by young people.

7.2. Children's Services

The delivery of this strategy will require that Children's Services, including the YOT, work in a consistent way in relation to preventing and managing youth homelessness, particularly in relation to working with the district/borough councils.

In practice it will require that Children's Services:

- Develop consistent information materials in relation to youth homelessness jointly with the district/borough councils.
- Nominate appropriate staff from both East and West operational areas to have the lead for youth housing and be the contact point in each district/borough area. These staff would be Children's Services nominated workers in a potential joint youth housing team.
- Ensure that there is a designated accommodation officer within the YOT who will be part of the 'virtual' joint Youth Housing Team.
- Recommission current contract for youth support, PASS and the supported lodgings scheme, to increase the scale of the supported lodgings scheme and to commission comprehensive support for vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness jointly with partners.
- Develop and agree with all district/borough councils the use of CAF for identifying youth housing/homelessness issues and developing with the district/borough councils an 'addendum' to CAF for use as a joint assessment 'tool' to be used where a joint youth housing assessment is required

- Work consistently with all district/borough council and Connexions to work with schools in relation to youth housing issues.
- Develop a system for identifying 14 and 15 year olds who are at potential risk of homelessness for notification to the district/borough councils.
- Provide information to district/borough councils in relation to care leavers in advance of their 18th birthday to identify those likely to be in housing need and/or risk of homelessness.

7.3. Supporting People

- Use 'phase 3' of the SP commissioning project to review the purpose and role of every current supported accommodation service for young people and to identify possible service model options and locations for developing small scale 'high support' supported housing services for young people with the most complex/challenging needs.
- Use 'phase 1' of the SP commissioning project to ensure that sufficient floating support services are available to vulnerable young people across every district/borough council areas.
- Ensure that all future contracts for supported housing for young people require service providers to operate consistently with the aims and objectives of the youth homelessness strategy and use the Outcomes Framework to assess the effectiveness these services in delivering positive outcomes young people.
- Develop a move on agreement/protocol between all supported housing/accommodation providers and the five district/borough councils.

7.4. Voluntary Sector Organisations

Voluntary and independent sector organisations play an important role in providing advice, information and assistance to vulnerable young people. All voluntary organisations that provide any services to vulnerable young people should receive information and training about the approach to youth homelessness being adopted through this strategy. A prevention model of

working will be less effective if any non statutory agencies are directing young people towards the 'statutory' homelessness route rather than working with the statutory agencies to support prevention activities that seek to direct young people away from the making homelessness applications.

All voluntary and independent sector organisations that have contracts with any of the district/borough councils, Children's Services and Supporting People in relation to services for young people will be required as part of the contract to adhere to the aims and joint working arrangements set out in this strategy.

8. Funding and Resources

This strategy is based on making best use of the existing funding that is spent by the district/borough councils, Children's Services and Supporting People on services for young people at risk of homelessness. This means that these partners will be delivering the strategy by 'realigning' existing resources and funding. The funding implications of the strategy are summarised below. Where the precise level of funding required or to be 'allocated' for specific issues is yet to be determined, this is shown.

Funding/Resource Issue	Funding Source	Funding
Recruit joint Youth Housing Coordinator position. Funding to be sought from CLG. Potential for funding contributions from CS and District/Boroughs.	CLG/CS/ District/Borough councils	Estimated cost is approx £40- 50k pa including on- costs
Identify options for pooling a proportion of current Homelessness Prevention Grant funding to jointly pay for prevention activities that are common for all authorities. e.g. work in schools.	District/Borough councils	To be determined through implementation phase
Funding that is available for Joint Youth Housing Team post/s Decommission current PASS service and invest in more comprehensive support services as part of the planned joint working arrangements between CS and the Districts/Boroughs.	CS	£115,000
Reorganise and recommission the current supported lodgings service to fund expansion of scheme*	CS	£115,000
Identify whether any savings can be delivered from the SP 'phase 3' review of current supported housing services in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small scale high intensity supported housing services ▪ Emergency bed space provision. 	SP, CS and YOT	To be identified through SP Commissioning Project 'phase 3'
Funding for floating support services that are available to young people. SP	SP	From within agreed budget for 'phase 1'

*Agree weekly fee to be paid by district/borough councils to place young people in supported lodgings as alternative to B & B and other unsuitable TA.

9. Performance Measures and Targets

The range of performance targets that will be used to specifically assess the performance of the strategy are set out below. Performance baselines will be agreed as part of the implementation process.

- Reduce levels of homelessness amongst 16 & 17 year olds to below national levels (less than 8 % of total homeless acceptances) by April 2011.
- Reduce repeat homelessness amongst 16 and 17 year olds to below 5% by April 2011.
- Eliminate use of bed and breakfast for homeless 16 & 17 year olds by April 2010.
- Homelessness preventions:
 - Preventions 16-17 year olds as percentage of homelessness applications 95% by April 2012
 - Preventions 18-24 year olds as percentage of homelessness applications 80% by April 2012.
- 100% of young people who are able and safe to return to the family home will be enabled to do so through support and mediation, with support continuing after their return to build the capacity and sustainability of the family relationship.
- Increase the percentage of care leavers at age 19 living in suitable accommodation to 95% by April 2011.
- Ensure that all young people subject to community interventions or on release from the secure estate have suitable accommodation to go to by April 2011.
- All young people at risk of homelessness who are NEET will receive assertive support within 7 days of presentation to enable and motivate them to enter education, training or employment.

- Unplanned move-on from supported housing to be less than 25% by April 2011.
- At least 75% of young people to successfully move on from supported accommodation and housing in a planned way by April 2011.

In addition to these performance targets the delivery of the strategy will be managed through the proposed governance arrangements. This will involve:

- Ensuring joint working arrangements are effective and consistent.
- Through other forms of performance monitoring, for example Supporting People led contract and service reviews including the use of the SP Outcomes Framework (using ECM domains) for all supported accommodation/housing services.
- Monitoring the experience of young people being supported through 'exit' interviews, periodic focus groups and other types of engagement with young people.
- Work commissioned or undertaken by voluntary organisations is consistent with the aims and actions set out in the strategy.

The collection and analysis of all performance information will be undertaken by the proposed Joint Youth Housing team.

10. Implementation and Delivery

10.1 Governance Arrangements

The following governance arrangements are proposed for the management and delivery of the strategy.

- The proposed Youth Housing Coordinator role to be based in Children's Services but jointly managed by an appropriate CS manager and an appropriate manager from one of the housing authorities.

East Sussex Youth Homelessness Strategy

- Quarterly reporting on progress and performance during 2009/10 to East Sussex Chief Housing Officer Group (ESCHOG), Children's and Young People's Trust Executive Group (CYPTEG) and the Strategic Forum (SF).
- 6 monthly reporting from 2010/11 to ESCHOG, CYPTEG and SF.

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10.2. Implementation Plan.

Set out below is the implementation plan for the strategy (key to responsibility 'acronyms' at foot of table).

Key Objectives	Activity	Timescale	Responsibility
Joint working arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reach agreement with each District/Borough council and CS East & West areas on joint working arrangements (through an implementation workshop). 	September 2009	DC/BCs & CS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each District/Borough council to nominate a lead officer within the housing options team for youth housing. 	October 2009	DC/BCs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit Youth Housing Coordinator role. 	October 2009	SG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop Joint Youth Housing team including actual and 'virtual' posts. 	October 2009	DC/BCs & CS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and agree joint working processes including joint youth housing assessment process. 	March 2010	DC/BCs, CS & YHT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree on the use of CAF for identifying youth housing/homelessness issues and risks and an additional joint assessment 'tool' to be used where a joint youth housing assessment is required. 	March 2010	DC/BCs, CS & YHT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and deliver joint training programmes for professionals within District/Borough Housing Options Teams and Children Services teams, and staff from other organisations that work with vulnerable young people, including voluntary sector agencies and housing and support providers. 	March 2010	YHT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a consistent approach to working with the 		

Key Objectives	Activity	Timescale	Responsibility
	voluntary and community organisations that support young people at risk of homelessness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing and refining a method for projecting future levels of potential youth homelessness. 	March 2010 September 2010	YHT YHT, DC/BCs & CS
Prevention Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a single 'point of access' in each district/borough area to deliver housing advice and homelessness service to young people. ▪ Provide a single telephone number for information and advice about youth homelessness support and services. ▪ Children's Services to identify families where there is a risk of family breakdown including specifically identifying young people aged 14-15 years who are at risk of homelessness (through Common Assessment Framework). ▪ Develop a consistent programme of support, information and advice to parents in relation to leaving home/homelessness. ▪ Put in place arrangements so that home visits can take place within 5 days for all young people who are threatened with eviction from the family home. 	March 2010 May 2010 October 2009 September 2010 March 2010	DC/BCs DC/BCs & CS CS & YHT YHT

Key Objectives	Activity	Timescale	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a consistent approach to the commissioning and use of mediation services in response to youth housing issues. ▪ Develop and introduce a consistent approach to providing information, advice and training for staff in schools/colleges in relation to housing and homelessness. ▪ Develop consistent approach to providing information particularly web based information about young people and housing/homelessness 	<p>September 2010</p> <p>September 2010</p> <p>September 2010</p>	<p>DC/BCs & YHT</p> <p>YHT</p> <p>YHT</p> <p>YHT</p>
<p>Developing housing and accommodation options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an agreed countywide model of emergency accommodation as a replacement for use of bed and breakfast and other unsuitable temporary accommodation. ▪ Expand and develop the current supported lodgings scheme from 30 to 60 units across East Sussex and to be available to young people with a spectrum of needs. ▪ Consider developing small scale 'high support' supported housing for young people, including 16/17 year olds, with very challenging needs. Identify specific demand/need, service models and locations ▪ Review the use and role of all supported housing for young people currently commissioned and funded 	<p>March 2010</p> <p>September 2010</p> <p>March 2012</p>	<p>YHT</p> <p>CS & YHT</p> <p>SP & YHT</p>

Key Objectives	Activity	Timescale	Responsibility
	<p>through the SP programme as part of 'phase 3' of the recommissioning of SP services in 2009/10. Review the use and role of other supported housing funded by Children's Services at the same time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each district and borough council to identify routes into and numbers of lettings that can be made available on an annual basis to enable vulnerable young people to access independent housing ▪ Each district and borough council to identify the potential for private sector leasing with RSLs or charitable housing organisations specifically for young people. ▪ Develop common practice in the provision of rent deposit and 'bond' schemes for young people. 	<p>September 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>September 2010</p> <p>September 2010</p>	<p>SP & YHT</p> <p>DC/BCs & YHT</p> <p>DC/BCs & YHT</p> <p>DC/BCs & YHT</p>
<p>Developing comprehensive support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a comprehensive youth housing support service that can assist young people at all stages of the support pathway. This would part of or coordinated by the proposed joint Youth Housing Team. ▪ Ensure that 'generic' floating support commissioned through the Supporting People programme is 	<p>March 2010</p> <p>October 2009</p>	<p>CS & YHT</p> <p>SP</p>

Key Objectives	Activity	Timescale	Responsibility
	accessible to young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prevent unplanned moves from young persons supported accommodation/housing by agreeing a protocol between all providers of supported accommodation/housing and the local authorities ▪ Ensure that all young people who move-on into independent housing have a 're-engagement plan' ▪ Produce information about moving-on from supported housing/accommodation tailored for young people. 	September 2010 September 2010 September 2010	SP & YHT SP & YHT YHT
Performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and agree a set of youth housing and homelessness performance indicators with baselines. ▪ Ensure performance data is collected and reported at agreed frequencies. 	September 2009 On-going	SG YHT

DC/BCs – District/Borough Councils

CS – Children's Services

SP – Supporting People

SG – Youth Homelessness Steering Group

YHT – Proposed Youth Housing Team (Lead by Youth Housing Coordinator)

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