

# HOMELESSNESS REVIEW DOCUMENT 2003

## CONTENTS

<u>PART 1</u> – INTRODUCTION	PAGE NO
1.0 Introduction	4
1.1 Background to the Review and Strategy	4
1.2 The Legal Framework – Homelessness	4
1.2.1 How the Homeless Service is administered	4
2.0 County and District Profiles	4-5
 <u>PART II</u> - THE REVIEW	
1.0 How the Review process was carried out	6
1.1 Review Methodology	7
1.2 Malvern and Strategic links	7
1.3 Profile of homeless services	7
1.4 County Homelessness Strategy Group	7
1.5 User Consultation	7
1.6 Homeless Review Focus Group	7-8
 <u>PART III</u> - MAPPING THE NEEDS	
1. Profile of homelessness in Malvern	9
1.1 Evidence of homelessness applications	9
1.2 Homelessness by household priority group	9-10
1.3 Reasons for homelessness	10-12
a. 16/17 year olds/youth homelessness	12-14
b. <i>Rough Sleepers</i>	14
c. Single homelessness	14-15
d. Families	15
e. Other special needs groups:-	
- (i) Elderly/disabled	16
- (ii) Mental illness/handicap	16
- (iii) Drug/alcohol abuse	17
- (iv) Prison leavers	17-18
- (v) Young Offenders	17-18
- (vi) Forces leavers	18
- (vii) Travellers	18
- (viii) People leaving hospital	18-19
- (ix) Domestic violence	19

f. Teenage Pregnancies	19-20
g. Rural Homelessness	20
h. Asylum Seekers	20
i. Hidden Homelessness	20
- (i) The Housing register	21
- (ii) Repossession Action	21
- (iii) Non Priority Homeless and Intentionally homeless Cases	21-22
2.0 Housing Needs Assessment	22
2.1 The Housing Needs Survey 2002	22
2.2 The Housing Register	22

#### **PART IV - CURRENT SUPPLY/RESOURCES - AN ASSESSMENT**

<b>A. <u>Accommodation Provision</u></b>	
1.0 Temporary Accommodation	23
1.1 Bed and Breakfast accommodation	23-24
1.2 Hostel accommodation	24-25
2.0 Permanent Accommodation	26
2.1 Relets of existing social housing	26
(i) Rehousing Performance 2002/03	26
(ii) Analysis of types of accommodation allocated	26
2.2 User Consultation	27
(i) Housing Supply	27
(ii) RSL Stock Analysis	27-28
3.0 Other Permanent Housing options for homeless people	28
3.1 Do it yourself Shared Ownership:Homebuy, Mortgage Rescue	28
3.2 Private Sector Housing	28
3.2.1 Landlord Renovation Grants	28
4.0 Supported Housing	29
5.0 Emergency Planning	29
<b>B. <u>Financial Resources</u></b>	
1.0 Internal Financial Resources	29
2.0 External Funding	29
<b>C. LAND/BUILDING RESOURCES - CURRENT AND FUTURE AVAILABILITY</b>	<b>30-31</b>
1.1 Housing Needs Assessment	31
1.2 The Local Housing Market	31

- Property prices – Malvern Hills	31-32
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**PART V - PREDICTION OF FUTURE LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS AND SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION 2003-2008**

1.0 Assessment of future needs in Malvern Hills		33
1.1 Future homelessness in Malvern Hills	33-34	
1.2 The inadequacy of existing affordable housing supply	35	
- Average rent levels – private sector housing	35	
Summary	35	

**PART VI - PREVENTION/ADVICE SERVICES**

1.0 Advice and information Services	36
1.1 The Stayput and Housing Advice Service	36-37
1.2 Outlets for housing advice	37
1.3 Methods of delivery - housing advice in Malvern Hills	37
1.4 Raising awareness	37-38
1.5 Resettlement and Tenancy Support	39-40

**PART VII - IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS IN PROVISION - SUMMARY**

1.0 LOCAL REVIEW - summary of gaps in provision and points for further action	41-42
2.0 SUPPORTING PEOPLE SHADOW STRATEGY - Gaps in provision	
- Homeless People with support needs	
- Strategic Priorities for:-	
- single homeless people	42
- young people at risk/leaving care	42
- people with drug problems	43
- people with alcohol problems	43
- teenage pregnancies	43
- women at risk of domestic violence	43
- travellers	43

**PART VIII - ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY**

1.0 Trends and key issues	
1.1 Homeless trends	44
1.2 Information and Communication	44
1.3 Research and Data collection	44
<b><u>Conclusion</u></b>	45

**APPENDIX 1 – Profile of Homeless Presentations 2000/03**

# **HOMELESS REVIEW – MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT MAY 2003**

## **PART I – INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background to the Review and Strategy**

Over recent years the issue of homelessness has had an increased profile on the Government's agenda. The Homelessness Act 2002 was given Royal Assent in February 2002 and the main provisions of the Act came into force in July 2002.

The Homelessness Act 2002 brings about changes to the approach local authorities have towards homelessness with an emphasis on prevention and strategic thinking rather than a reactive approach

Thus a major requirement of the 2002 Act is that all local authorities now have a duty to carry out a homeless Review in their District and develop and publish a 5 year strategy based on that Review by July 31 2003.

#### **1.2 The Legal Framework - Homelessness**

At present the rights of homeless people are contained in the 1996 Housing Act and the 2002 Homelessness Act together with accompanying government guidance.

Under current rules, local authorities must consider whether a person is eligible for assistance, is legally homeless, in priority need, not intentionally homeless, and has a local connection with the District. The results of enquiries will determine what duties the Council owes, the maximum duty is to provide permanent accommodation (or enable a person to access permanent accommodation).

##### **1.2.1 How the Homeless Service is administered in Malvern**

In 1995, the Council transferred its stock to Elgar Housing Association (EHA) (now part of Festival Housing Group). EHA are contracted to carry out homeless functions including interviews on presentation and investigations into homelessness. EHA after completing full investigations, make a recommendation to the Council. The Council then makes the decision and notifies the applicant accordingly. EHA also place applicants in temporary accommodation pending enquiries and makes arrangements to permanently rehouse those applicants who have been accepted as homeless.

The Council processes Reviews on homeless decisions and monitors its Agents performance.

### **2.0 COUNTY AND DISTRICT PROFILES**

#### **2.1 County**

- ***Geographical***

Worcestershire is a rural County and covers the Districts of Worcester, Malvern, Bromsgrove, Redditch, Wychavon and Wyre Forest. The majority of the County's population lives in fairly significant urban and suburban settlements.

- ***Demographic Profile***

The 2001 Census shows that the County of Worcestershire has a total population of 542,107 compared to 510,109 in 1991 (6.3% increase from the 1991 Census).

The population of over 75 years old totals 42,282 which is a 6.75 increase on 1991 (33,944). Single people total 111,233, whilst single person households total 92,984 (a decrease on the 1991 Census of 24.3%).

Lone parent households with dependent children total 10,952 compared to 5,459 in 1991.

- **Transport links**

There are good road links throughout the County with a motorway network that includes the M5; M42; M50 and M40 giving access north and south and west. There are rail links to London, Cardiff, Manchester and Birmingham.

The majority of the population however requires a car to be independent and the 2001 Census shows that 190,221 travel to work by car compared to 13,570 who travel to work by public transport.

In rural areas, the disadvantages homeless people have in accessing good transport systems can exacerbate a homeless problem.

- **Housing**

The County has a higher percentage of detached housing, 31.3% compared to the UK in general, at 19.9%, reflecting the rural nature of the area. There is a lower percentage of terraced and purpose built flats than regional or national levels. Only 6.3% of the stock are rented privately compared with 8.5% nationally; 20.3% rented from Local Authorities/Registered Social Landlords compared to 24.8% nationally.

- **Employment**

In April 2003, across the county, the Districts with the highest and lowest unemployment rates were Redditch (2.7%) and Malvern (1.3%) respectively.

**(Source: County Economic Summary May 2003)**

## 2.2 Malvern Hills District

### **2.2.1 Geographical Profile**

Malvern Hills is a predominantly rural area. Main urban centres of both population and employment are the towns of Malvern, Tenbury Wells and Upton upon Severn.

The District has ready access to road and rail net works

### **2.2.2 Demographic Profile**

The District has a population of 72,172. 71.4% are aged 16 to 74, whilst 10.4% are aged 75 and over.

Ethnicity – 71,110 (98.6%) of the population is white. The largest minority ethnic group is Chinese with a population of 271 (0.4%).

Employment - 32,416 (62.9%) are employed whilst 1,011 (2%) are unemployed.

A high proportion of the population are retired 8,707 (16.9%), whilst 2,068 (4%) are permanently sick or disabled.

The number of households has increased from 28,871 in the 1991 Census to 30,069 under the 2001 Census. A significant change has been composition of households in Malvern since the 1991 Census. The number of married households has dropped by over 20% from 61% to 40%.

A high proportion of households, 22,706 (75.5%) are owner occupiers.

The 2001 Census also indicated that 988 (3.3%) of households are overcrowded. Lone parent households with dependent children totalled 1,247 (4.1%) compared to 598 (2.2%) recorded in the 1991 Census.

## **Part II – The Review**

### **1.0 How the Review process was carried out**

Our approach to the Homeless Review has been to investigate the causes and incidences of homelessness throughout the District over the past 2/3 years, together with an analysis of housing supply.

Research encompassed both voluntary and statutory organisations' aspects, experience and knowledge of homelessness in the District.

We have considered homelessness and how it has affected certain priority groups, these are:

- 16 / 17 year olds and youth homelessness generally including young people leaving care
- Families
- Single people
- Rough sleepers
- Elderly / disabled
- Drug / alcohol users/persons with mental health problems
- Forces leavers
- Prison leavers
- Travellers
- Persons fleeing domestic violence
- Hidden homelessness
- Rural homelessness
- Asylum Seekers

In carrying out this research, we identified gaps in service provision both in terms of prevention, advice and assistance, emerging needs and more importantly, availability of supported accommodation for some client groups. Throughout the Review, action points have been highlighted which form the basis of the Homelessness Strategy and the associated Action Plan.

Evident from the Review was the need for more regular research. This and issues arising from the Review itself will be incorporated into the Homeless Strategy and subsequent Reviews of the Strategy.

**ACTION POINT NO 1: PUT IN PLACE METHODS FOR MORE QUANTATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INTO HOMELESSNESS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT**

### **1.1 Review Methodology**

A methodology was developed to address the requirements of Review and associated guidance notes on the scope of a homeless Review. The Review methodology has included the following stages:

### **1.2 Malvern and Strategic Links**

Research has been carried out on the wider context that impacts on homelessness, for example housing, demographics, and employment. Relevant Strategies (outlined in main Homelessness Strategy document) and targets have also been identified where there are strategic links with the Homelessness Strategy.

### **1.3 Profile of Homeless Services**

Use has been made of data where available and through consultations with both voluntary and statutory bodies. A data questionnaire was designed to collect the information on activities and services (including preventative services) and resources available throughout the District for homeless persons.

A 'snap shot' survey questionnaire was also designed and sent to various agencies to establish where people actually go when faced with homelessness. The snap shot survey covered a one-month period from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2003 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003.

A questionnaire was also sent to Members of the Council to establish which Members were aware of homeless service provision in the Malvern Hills District.

### **1.4 County Homelessness Strategy Group**

A County Homelessness Strategy Working Group was formulated in partnership with other District Councils in the County. The purpose of the group was to adopt a co-ordinated approach to carrying out homelessness Reviews and subsequent development of homelessness Strategies.

It is proposed that the work of this group will continue over the next five years to co-ordinate the collation of homelessness data throughout the County. It is also anticipated that the Group will monitor and evaluate the implementation of homelessness Strategies throughout the County over the next five years.

### **1.5 User Consultation**

We have been consulting with users of the homeless services for the past 3 years. Because these questionnaires covered the majority of homeless services provided it was felt that the results of these user consultation surveys sufficed for Review purposes. The findings of the consultation and surveys have been incorporated into this report.

The Homelessness Strategy must be Reviewed annually as part of the requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002. Homeless people will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy over the next five years.

### **1.6 Homeless Review Focus Group**

The Homeless Review Focus Group first met in March 2003.

The objective of the first meeting was to explain the need for agency involvement and for agencies to identify priorities in scoping the Review.

The terms of reference for the focus group were as follows:

- To provide multi-agency working
- To ensure that the Review and Strategy meets the key objectives of the Act , i.e. prevention and support
- To consider the potential benefits for users, agencies and the Council
- To ensure that the Homelessness Strategy links with other strategies both at District and County level
- To ensure that there is a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities for implementing and monitoring the Strategy
- To ensure that sufficient consultation is taking place.

**Members of the Malvern Hills District Council Focus Group**

Terry Pickup	-	Malvern Citizens Advice Bureau
S Portman	-	Bromford Housing Group
Rebekah Roberts	-	St Pauls Hostel, Worcester
Kathleen Murphy	-	Connexions
Neville Sheldrick	-	Malvern Police
Robert Werner-de-Sondberg	-	Malvern Police
Cllr. Graham Myatt	-	Member Malvern Hills District Council
Mike Mcknight	-	Community Action Group
Sharon Wheeler	-	Shelter
Ms Ali	-	Worcestershire Substance Misuse Action Group
Catherine Cole	-	Worcestershire Housing Association
Ken Allcock	-	Mediation, South Worcestershire
John Lambeth	-	Elgar Housing Association
Jonathan Greenwood	-	MHHYAT, Foyer
Lyne Jackson	-	Stayput and Housing Advice Service – Festival Housing Group
Nick Taylor	-	Housing Services, Malvern Hills District Council
Lisa Wearing	-	Centrepont
Sue Humphries	-	Social Services, Mental Health Team, Malvern
Rose Newbury	-	Housing Services, Malvern Hills District Council
Jo Greenbank	-	PCA Management Consultants

At the first meeting of the Focus Group, the group identified young people as the main group of people who approach the homeless service in Malvern. Also one of the main issues/problems in the District is the provision of services to help those with mental health, drug and alcohol problems both when persons present with problems as homeless and when they have been housed and require on going support to sustain tenancies etc.

[Back to Contents](#)  
[On to Part III](#)

## PART III – MAPPING THE NEEDS

### **1. Profile of Homelessness in Malvern Hills**

Given the context of diminishing supply of affordable housing and increasing demand, the District is under constant pressure to respond to the needs of homeless households as well as accommodating the needs of its partner RSL's normal waiting and transfer lists.

As part of the Review, we have attempted to develop a comprehensive picture of homelessness in Malvern Hills as possible, making use of data from different sources. However, it is recognised this is not a full picture. We have also provided some information not available through normal data collection methods, for example, 'the hidden homeless'.

The process of carrying out a Review has identified the need to develop procedures / guidelines on homeless data collection in the District so that we can more accurately monitor levels of homelessness in the future. We see this as a 'Multi Agency' task and this objective and possible ways it can be met will be outlined in the Strategy.

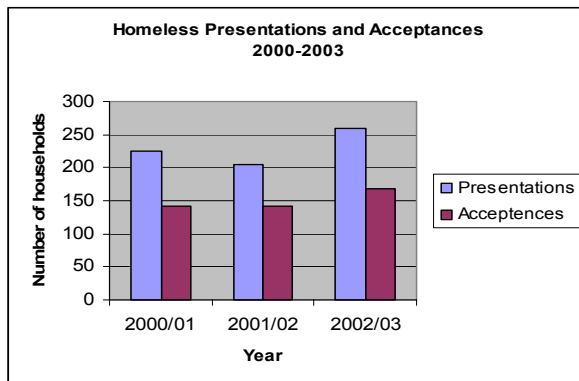
#### **1.1 Malvern Hills District Council - Evidence of homelessness applications**

A full profile of homeless presentations during 2000/03 is shown at Appendix I.

The table below shows that the number of presentations has increased over the last year and although the number reduced in 2001/02 the level in 2002/03 increased.

The number of presentations was around the same level between 2000/01 and 2001/02 but has increased slightly in 2002/03 in line with new eligible priority groupings identified in the Homelessness Act 2002.

#### **Homeless Presentations and acceptances 2000-2003**



#### **1.2 Homelessness by household priority group**

On considering the breakdown of priority households being accepted as homeless, the chart below shows that families remain the largest priority group who are accepted by the Council as homeless and despite an increase in cases between 2000/01 and 2001/02 this has reduced slightly in 2002/03.

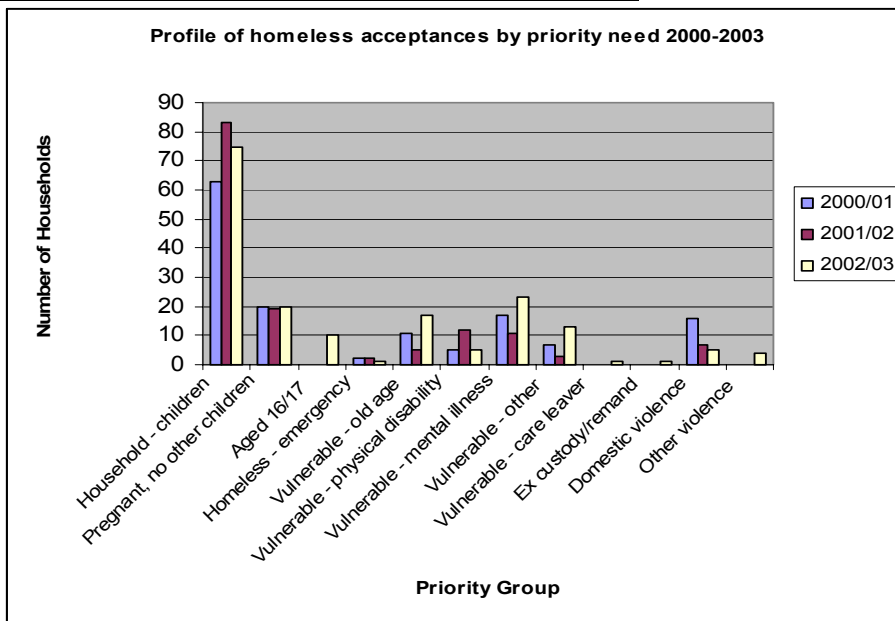
The number of households where a member is pregnant but has no other children has also remained at the same level over the past 3 years.

Households who are vulnerable due to old age, mental illness or other reasons are also showing an increase in cases, however this can also be attributed to the changes in legislation of accepting those who are vulnerable due to these problems.

Households who are aged 16/17 are showing on this table for the first time given the changes in priority needs order.

Cases of acceptances due to domestic violence have also reduced in 2002/03.

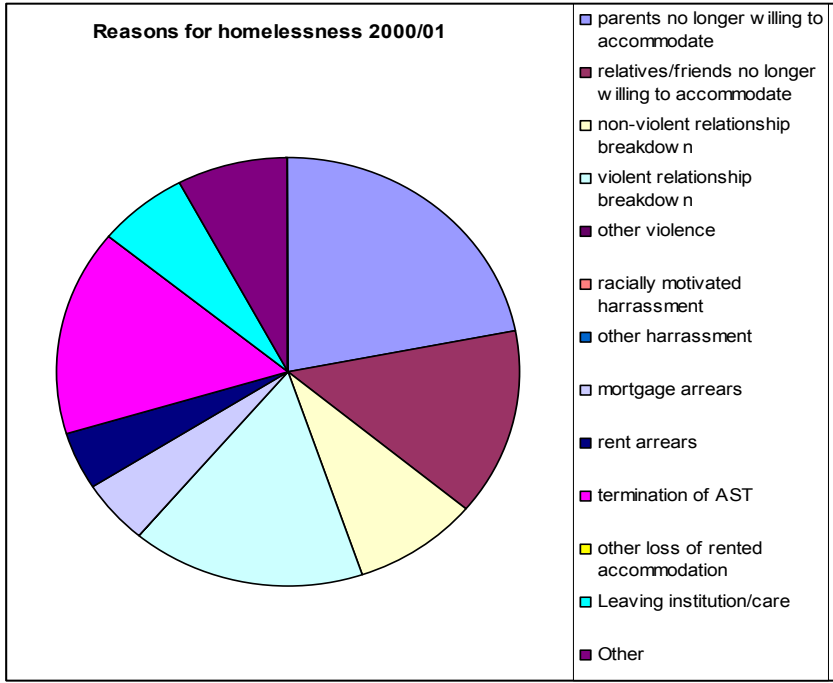
**Profile of homeless acceptances by priority need 2000-2003**



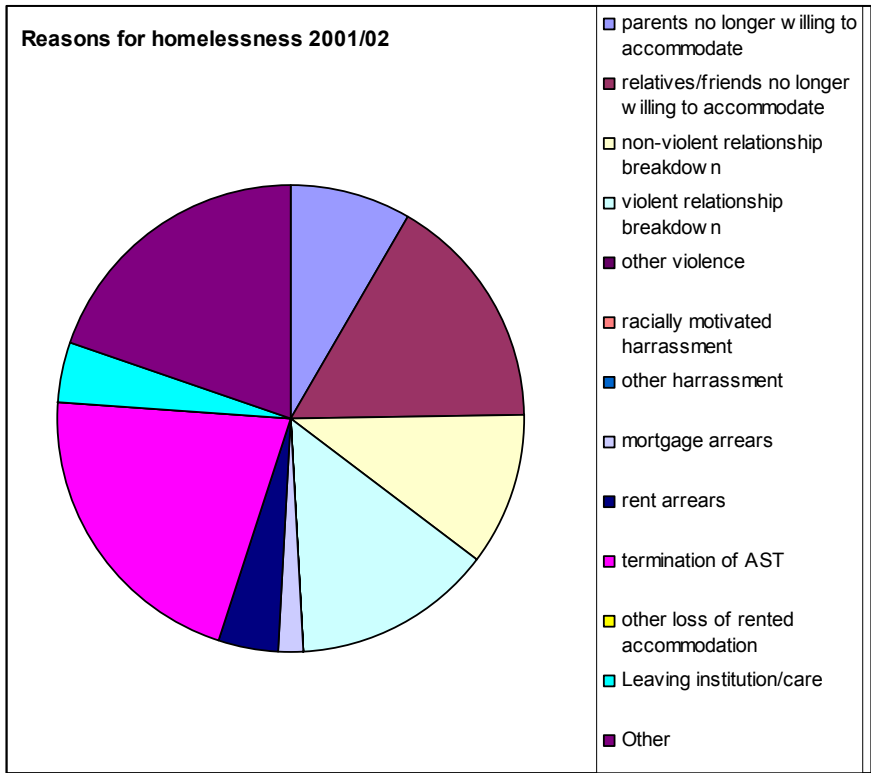
**1.2 Reasons for homelessness**

The following three charts show the reasons for homelessness against those accepted as homeless over the past three years.

In 2000/01 the most popular reasons for homelessness were parents were no longer willing to accommodate; friends and relatives no longer willing to accommodate, termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies and violent relationship breakdown.

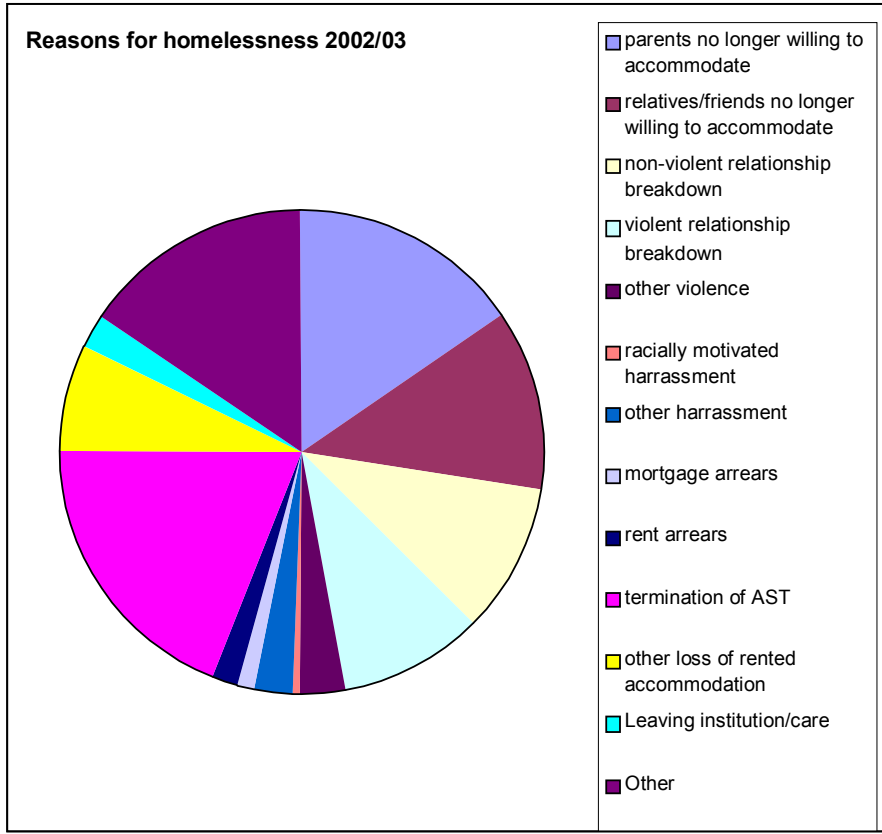


In 2001/02 the main reasons for homelessness of those households accepted as homeless were friends and relatives no longer able to accommodate, violent relationship breakdown, loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancies and other reasons which are not recorded separately. In 2001/02, there was a reduction in the number of cases where parents could no longer accommodate but an increase of cases resulting from rent arrears.



In 2002/03 the main reasons for homelessness for accepted households were parents no longer willing to accommodate, loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancies and other reasons which are not specified.

As well as the new priority groupings showing as reasons for 2002/03 there was a number of cases where there had been a loss of rented accommodation for problems other than an ending of the Assured Shorthold Tenancy.



An analysis will now be made of homeless presentations categorised by user group.

**a. 16/17 Year olds - Youth Homelessness**

The Homeless Act 2002 includes a new duty towards young people aged 16 and 17 years old as a priority need group.

During 2000/01 – a total of 5, 16 and 17 year olds were accepted as statutorily homeless and during 2001/02 a total of 4 young people were accepted as statutorily homeless.

Since the introduction of this new duty (July 2003), a total of 14 persons presented as homeless with 4 cases being accepted for permanent rehousing. These cases presented between the 1 August 2002 and 31 March 2003.

It does appear, therefore, that with the introduction of this new priority category, there has been a marked increase in the number of homeless presentations from this user group.

## **Causes of Homelessness 16/17 Year Olds – 1 August 2002 – 31 March 2003**

Of the 14 cases, 8 (57%) were asked to leave by family; 1 (7%) case was living in accommodation which was unreasonable to occupy; 1 case (7%) was due to relationship breakdown, and 4 cases (29%) were deemed not to be homeless.

Centrepoint, as part of the Worcestershire Youth Homeless Partnership carried out a snapshot survey of homeless young people between 16<sup>th</sup> September 2002 and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2002. The survey was part of an ongoing effort to monitor the numbers of young people that are becoming homeless in the County.

The total number of young people (16 to 25) who presented during this period was 79. The overwhelming reason for homelessness was due to being asked to leave family accommodation, 41 (52%). The highest number of referrals were from 17 year olds (16 cases).

The snap short survey carried out by the Council during the month of March 2003, revealed that 15 persons aged 16 – 25 requested assistance because they were homeless or threatened with homelessness. Of this total, 5 (33%) were aged 16 and 17 years. Where indicated on the survey forms returned, the main loss of accommodation was again due to having to leave the family home.

To measure the overall impact of the introduction of the new duty to 16/17 year olds, the numbers of this client group will need to be continually monitored.

**ACTION POINT NO 2: INTRODUCE A ROLLING MONITORING METHOD TO REVIEW THE NUMBERS OF HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS OF 16/17 YEAR OLDS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT**

### **(i) Research into Youth Homelessness – Worcestershire**

Centrepoint in 1999 carried out an audit of housing needs and problems for young people in Malvern (***Centrepoint : Housing and Support Services for Young People in Worcestershire – Autumn 1999***). Contained in that audit were the results of ***other studies*** and surveys together with the results of a mini audit of 16 and 17 homeless who contacted various local agencies for assistance. The following needs were identified.  
Summary of Research Findings

#### (a) Housing Needs Summary MHDC 1996

- 850 cases out of 1350 surveyed were single concealed households.
- 780 cases were under 25.

#### (b) Supported Housing Study 1998

The Supported Housing Needs Group carried out research that prioritised the following as:

- **HIGH** – supported move-on accommodation for young people

The general conclusions of the Centrepoint Research regarding gaps in provision included:-

- **Lack of emergency provision**
- **Little appropriate private sector accommodation**
- **Rural isolation in Parishes and small towns with young people finding it difficult to access services**
- **No provision for groups with special needs, eg young people with mental health/drug/ alcohol problems**
- **Little preventative work**
- **Exclusion of 16 and 17 year olds from services, in particular social housing**

### **(ii) MALVERN HILLS HOMELESS YOUNG ADULT TRUST (MHYAT) (FOYER)**

The aim of the Foyer is to provide accommodation with support and training/development. The Foyer provides a Lifeskills course that prepares residents in their transition to independent living. The Foyer provides a home,

support and training to young people between the ages of 16 and 25. Since its opening, the Project has continued to have high occupancy rates. Although the project has 12 residential places, there is always a waiting list of young people. Foyer has planning permission to build 4 additional rooms.

Young people moving into these units are provided with ongoing support from a Tenancy Support Worker employed by Elgar Housing Association and support is also available for former residents who frequently return to the Foyer for advice and assistance.

Since January 2001, a total of 92 young people have been referred to the project. Of these, 37 (40%) were aged 16/17. Referrals to the project are monitored by the Council on a monthly basis and will continue to be monitored as part of the overall objective of monitoring this client group.

There appears to be an acute shortage of affordable accommodation for this client group within the District, both in the private and social housing areas. This situation is likely to worsen with the implementation of the new priority status applied to 16/17 year olds.

### **ACTION POINT NO 3: WORK WITH OTHER RELEVANT BODIES TO DEVELOP APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION (WITH SUPPORT IF NEEDED) WITHIN THE DISTRICT**

#### **b. Rough Sleepers**

Malvern Hills District Council appears not to have a significant problem with rough sleepers.

Although an official head count has never been carried out, analysis of homeless presentations by rough sleepers is made by calculating those who have no fixed abode or who specifically state that they are sleeping rough. **However it must be recognised that there may be people sleeping rough in the District who have never made a homeless presentation.**

During year 2001/02 the number of persons presenting as homeless being classed as having no fixed abode was 1. For 2002/03, the figure was 2. (**Source: Housing Investment Programme – Annual Statistical Returns**). All these cases were accepted as statutorily homeless and were offered permanent accommodation. However, experience has shown that this client group often has associated problems such as drug/alcohol abuse and as such have difficulties maintaining tenancies. These clients, therefore often become homeless again and therefore require fairly intensive support from voluntary and statutory groups to ensure that tenancies are sustained and clients do not go through the 'homeless revolving door' process. The Supporting People Shadow Strategy indicates that throughout the County, there is no accommodation specifically designated for rough sleepers. Although there is some direct access accommodation (but not in the Malvern area).

### **ACTION POINT NO 4 DEVELOP LOCALLY BASED PROTOCOL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RELEVANT VOLUNTARY AND STATUTORY BODIES TO ENABLE ROUGH SLEEPERS TO SUSTAIN TENANCIES**

#### **c. Single Homelessness (Persons without dependants)**

Under current homelessness legislation there is no absolute right to housing and it is only those who are deemed to be vulnerable and thus is priority need that are entitled to any accommodation should they become homeless.

As such many single people are not entitled to accommodation from a local authority but will receive advice and assistance to help them find their own accommodation.

Whilst a local authority has the discretion to secure accommodation for those not in priority need, shortages of available accommodation often make this difficult, except in exceptional circumstances.

To clarify the term 'vulnerability,' the Government's publication Code of Guidance on Homelessness and Allocations has outlined a test of vulnerability as being " **whether an applicant is less able to fend for themselves when homeless or in finding and keeping accommodation, causing them to suffer injury or detriment than that experienced by a less vulnerable person**" (source: Code of Guidance Homelessness and Allocations)

Prior to the change in homeless legislation July 2002, the Council as a matter of best practice, deemed the majority of 16 / 17 year olds, care leavers and persons fleeing domestic violence and violence from outside the home as vulnerable and therefore, in priority need.

During 2000/01 a total of 41 single people were accepted as homeless and in priority need of which:-

5 (12%) were aged 16 / 17  
22 (54%) were aged 18 / 24  
6 (15%) were aged over 60

During 2001/02, again a total of 41 single people were accepted as homeless and in priority need. Of the 41 cases,

4 (10%) were aged 16/17  
13 (32%) were aged 18/24  
4 (10%) were aged over 60

During 2002/03, a total of 64 single people were accepted as homeless and in priority need. Of the 64 cases,

4 (6%) were aged 16/17  
16 (25%) were aged 18/24  
12 (19%) were over 60

However it should be noted that a large number of single homeless are deemed not to be in priority need and the issues surrounding this group (and other groups not in priority need or intentionally homeless) will be discussed separately in the Review document.

#### **d. Families**

Persons who are homeless with dependant children are the highest priority homeless group.

Families become homeless for a variety of reasons. In Malvern Hills, a common cause of homelessness is being asked to leave the home of another family member or loss of rented or owned accommodation.

During 2000 / 2001, 64 (45%) of homeless acceptances were households with dependant children; whilst during 2001/ 2002, 83 (58%) of cases had dependant children, and during 2002 / 2003, 75 (45%) of cases had dependent children.

Homeless families require support and assistance both during the period of homelessness and after they have obtained a permanent home. Many households are lone parent households who may require a higher level of assistance. The nature and level of assistance required will vary from family to family. This calls for a proactive, flexible service to be provided which is highly co-ordinated and which is tailored to the needs of individual families . At present, this co-ordinated approach/partnership working does not appear to be available in the District on any formal level except on an individual basis. Thus the provision of this service is an objective for the homeless service especially for those families with support needs. Currently Worcestershire has 75 units of accommodation for homeless families with support needs.

Pregnant households also make a high priority group with 20 (14%) being accepted during 2000 / 2001; 19 (13%) being accepted in 2001 / 2002 and 20 (12%) during 2002 / 2003.

**ACTION POINT NO 5: DEVELOP LOCALLY CO-ORDINATED SUPPORT MECHANISM TO MINIMISE THE HARDSHIP EXPERIENCED BY HOMELESS FAMILIES**

## **e. Other Special Need Groups**

### **(i) Elderly/disabled**

Demographic trends show that Britain has an ageing population. The 2001 Census shows that the Malvern Hills District has 7,485 (10.4%) people aged 75 and over. This is an increase of 1051 from the 1991 Census. The Census also shows that 2068 (4%) of the District's population are permanently sick or disabled.

Older people become homeless for a number of reasons including loss of tied accommodation, relationship breakdown, termination of tenancies, inability to afford existing accommodation or accommodation being in a poor state of repair. Generally fewer older people apply as homeless. During 2000/01, 11 persons were accepted as homeless and in 2001/02, 5 persons were accepted as homeless. During 2002/03, 17 persons were accepted.

Quite a high proportion of persons who apply as homeless are deemed to be in priority need due to physical disability. The term physical disability can also include persons who are suffering poor health and can be wide ranging as to include those suffering from Asthma to those having undergone a limb amputation.

Over the last three years 2000/03, a total of 22 persons have been accepted as homeless who have been suffering from a physical disability.

Generally, it is not known why so few older people or persons with a physical disability/illness request assistance and there is obvious concern that homelessness amongst these groups may be hidden, ie people choose to stay with families or remain in unsuitable accommodation. However, services within the District to enable these client groups to remain in their own homes are well used and these may well have an influential effect on levels of homelessness presentations. These will be discussed further in the Review document.

### **(ii) Mental Health Illness/learning disability**

Over the past 3 years a significant number of people have presented as homeless who have mental health problems.

The relationship between homelessness and mental health is complex. Often an individual's (or family's) homelessness is the cause of, or caused by mental health problems. Also mental health issues themselves are very complicated and wide-ranging and diverse, to someone being discharged from a mental health institution to someone suffering from depression and being treated by his/her GP (ie not being discharged from an institution). The effects of mental health problems is individual to each person and so whilst mental health problems may not cause homelessness in one person, the same mental health problem could cause a person to lose his/her home or prevent that person from finding a home.

During 2000/01 a total of 17 persons were accepted as homeless having mental health problems. Of this total 16 (94%) were single people. During 2001/02, 11 persons were accepted as homeless, of which 8(73%) were single persons.

During 2002/03, 23 persons were accepted as homeless having mental health problems, of which 19 were single persons.

As can be seen, a significantly high number of acceptances of persons with mental health problems are single people. Generally, these clients have no family support and are totally reliant on voluntary and statutory bodies for assistance. There are also many cases where a family member has mental health problems but these are not highlighted or counted in homelessness data as they are deemed to be priority need for other reasons, eg having dependent children, pregnant etc.

### **(iii) Drug/alcohol Abuse**

All people need a safe and secure environment in order to live happy and fulfilled lives. Having a stable home environment is essential to enable those who misuse drugs and alcohol to resolve other problems. It can be very difficult for persons who are involved in substance misuse to obtain accommodation, of either a temporary or permanent nature in Malvern Hills and often homelessness and drug/alcohol usage are intrinsically interlinked.

Even more difficult perhaps is the ability to sustain a tenancy.

Services tend to be reactionary (such as when a person is discharged from hospital) and thus a lot of time is spent on crisis management rather than forward planning.

Over the last 3 years, a total of 5 persons were accepted as homeless and permanently rehoused who had drug related problems.

Recent research took place in Worcestershire '**Accommodation Drugs', Research into drug and housing issues for young people in Worcestershire – 2002 – Centrepoint**. The research has highlighted the following issues:-

- **Drug use is a symptom of social exclusion**
- **There is a lack of appropriate accommodation for young people in Worcestershire who use or are recovering from use of drugs**
- **Drug treatment is not readily accessible to young people in the County**
- **There is a lack of awareness between housing providers, substance misuse services and health authorities about the availability of services**

### **Worcester Druglink**

Worcester Druglink confirmed that in April 2003, they had one client who was actually homeless, and 4 clients who were staying with friends on a short term basis or staying in hostels.

There are a high number of clients from the Malvern area who are considered to be very vulnerable, who reside with parents and their situation can change very quickly due to family pressures.

In Worcester Druglink's experience, is that there is inadequate short-term provision of accommodation for these clients at a local level. Therefore clients often try to find accommodation in Worcester or other areas.

**ACTION POINT NO: 6 AIM TO PROVIDE SHORT-TERM PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION, POSSIBLY WITH SUPPORT, WITHIN THE DISTRICT FOR PERSONS WITH BOTH DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROBLEMS**

### **(iv) Prison leavers**

The 2002 Homelessness Act has extended the priority groupings to include prison leavers that are expressly stated to be vulnerable and therefore in priority need for the purpose of homeless legislation.

The **Social Exclusion Unit's Report 'Reducing Reoffending by ex Prisoners' – July 2002**, identifies particular problems for prisoners that make them more vulnerable to homelessness, including loss of access to Housing Benefit after relatively short sentences. Housing advice may not always be provided prior to discharge, but could help reduce homelessness.

### **(vi) Young Offenders – Malvern Hills District**

During 2002/03, 2 young offenders aged 16 to 18 were recorded as being homeless or living in unsuitable accommodation.

It is not known at this stage what the impact of the 2002 Homelessness Act will be. However, it is apparent that at the moment a purely reactive service is currently being provided and that a more cohesive preventative service needs to be available which includes the probation and other voluntary and statutory bodies.

***(vii) Forces Leavers***

The new Homelessness Act also extends the priority grouping to those persons leaving Forces accommodation where persons are vulnerable as a result of leaving such accommodation. Again, housing advice may not always be provided prior discharge but if provided could prevent homelessness occurring at the very least and at most, ensure that an applicant is housed where he/she wants to live wherever it is reasonable to do so.

In respect of homeless presentations, forces applicants and prison leavers apply directly to Elgar Housing Association upon release or discharge. The numbers of persons presenting and being accepted as homeless over the last three years average between 0 – 5 cases per year.

**ACTION POINT NO 7: DEVELOP LOCAL MECHANISMS WITH RELEVANT BODIES TO IDENTIFY THE HOUSING AND SUPPORT NEEDS OF PRISONERS AND ARMED FORCES LEAVERS PRIOR TO DISCHARGE**

**(vii) Travellers**

Responsibility for the provision of suitable sites for travellers rests with the County Council. Malvern Hills has just one site containing just 5 units. There are currently 9 people on the waiting list for this site and the waiting period can take years, the turnover on most sites within the County being very low.

It is planned that an assessment of future Traveller needs will be carried out shortly of young people on site to calculate future demand but it is expected that demand will be high.

There are no current plans to develop further sites in the Malvern Hills District

Homelessness amongst travellers in Malvern Hills tends to be on a seasonal basis, ie families presenting themselves as homeless mainly during the winter months.

Whilst families if accepted as homeless are offered general needs accommodation, such accommodation may not be suitable/compatible to their life styles. Therefore it is important that further research is undertaken into the housing needs of travellers in order to ascertain the need for the development of further sites in the District, bearing in mind that there are no plans to develop any more sites.

**ACTION POINT NO: 8 CARRY OUT RESEARCH INTO THE HOUSING NEEDS OF TRAVELLERS TO ASCERTAIN THE NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FURTHER SITES IN THE DISTRICT**

**(viii) People Leaving Hospital**

A number of people apply as homeless on being discharged from hospital. Over the last 11 months, the South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust has identified 2 patients with no fixed abode who have presented as homeless. One client was from Tenbury Wells, the other was from Malvern.

The Trust does have a policy statement within the new discharge policy which includes homelessness as an “at risk” patient category. There is a joint protocol with Social Services for in-patients of no fixed abode. This involves the hospital work team visiting the patient with the subsequent referral to the appropriate Homelessness Officer and Benefits Agency. Other patients who may have accommodation problems are assisted to find appropriate alternative accommodation if possible.

The Trust highlights the following gaps in housing provision for such clients:-

- **Insufficient provision for affordable housing for patients at risk**
- **There is a need for further work to agree a protocol and pathway for patients who have multiple problems eg, alcohol or drug misuse, mental health problems and homelessness**

**ACTION POINTS NOS 9 AND 10 - WORK WITH APPROPRIATE BODIES TO IDENTIFY THE CURRENT AND FUTURE LEVELS OF NEED FOR AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION WITH SUPPORT, AND WORK WITH SUCH BODIES TO DEVELOP A SUITABLE PROTOCOL FOR THOSE PATIENTS WITH MULTIPLE PROBLEMS**

### **(ix) Domestic Violence**

Under the Housing Act 1996 (Part VII), a person is homeless if it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy accommodation even if they have the right to do so. The 2002 Homelessness Act further extended this provision by applying it to people who were suffering or at risk of suffering domestic violence outside the home. The term domestic violence is very broad and refers to any violence including physical, verbal, emotional or sexual abuse, actual or threatened from an associated person, eg partners, and also from other persons outside the home.

Women are the most common victims of domestic violence, although this Council has received and accepted males who have presented as homeless having suffered domestic violence.

Over the last three years, there has been a high number of persons applying as homeless due to violence. During 2000/01, 23 applicants were accepted as homeless. In 2001/02, 20 persons were accepted and during 2002/03, 16 persons were accepted as homeless due to violent relationship breakdown.

The snap shot survey carried in March 2003 showed that the Women's Project in Malvern took 5 referrals from women suffering domestic violence.

The Council has always adopted a very open and sensitive homeless service to women fleeing violence, with the majority being accepted for rehousing (whether or not that person had a local connection with the District), irrespective of where the violence was instigated (ie not necessarily domestic violence). Nearly all cases accepted as homeless are housed in Malvern in general needs accommodation. The Council and its agents also have good working relations with the Project which provides an Outreach worker who supports women once they have been rehoused.

However, more research is needed on domestic violence in rural areas and this is considered further in the Homeless Strategy document.

### **f. Teenage Pregnancies – UK Position**

Britain has the worst record of teenage pregnancies in Europe. Every year, 90,000 teenagers in England become pregnant. They include nearly 8,000 who are under 12, and 2,000 + who are aged 14 or under. **(Source: Tony Blair, Prime Minister: Teenage Pregnancy: Report by the Social Exclusion Unit – June 1999).**

### **Teenage Pregnancies and Homelessness in Malvern**

Over the last 2 years, teenage pregnancies and homelessness does not appear to have any significant numbers. During 2001/02 the number accepted as homeless was 9, and during 2002/03, 6 persons were accepted as homeless. For the age group 18/24, during 2000/01 a total of 3 cases were accepted as homeless and during 2001/02 acceptances rose to 8. During 2002/03 a total of 3 were accepted.

There is no specialist-supported accommodation available in Malvern. All accepted cases are rehoused in general needs accommodation. A Tenancy Support Worker is actively involved in supporting this client group in sustaining their tenancies provides floating support.

It will be essential to monitor the levels of teenage pregnancy throughout the District over the next 5 years to establish whether there will be a need for the development of supported housing for this client group. The monitoring to take account of the County document '**Tackling Teenage Pregnancy and Paternity in Worcestershire.**' This is a 10 year strategy, which identifies the current level of teenage pregnancies in the County, the availability of existing services and identifies gaps in provision.

**ACTION POINT NO 12: TO MONITOR CLOSELY THE LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS AMONGST PREGNANT TEENAGERS OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS WHO MAY NEED SUPPORTED HOUSING**

**(g) Rural Homelessness**

A Housing Needs Survey, carried out in 2001 (discussed more fully under Housing Needs Assessment), recognised that the greatest shortage of affordable housing supply in proportion to the numbers required, was in rural areas.

Malvern Hills is predominantly rural. During the period 2001 – 2003, 83 homeless presentations have been received from rural areas of the District. Although rural homelessness compared to main areas of homelessness in Malvern is relatively small, the issue is compounded by a lack of affordable housing for different client groups and the lack of or difficulty in accessing service provision generally.

Historically Malvern has never sought to quantify or highlight its rural homeless population and it is likely that the incidence of homelessness in rural locations remains largely hidden.

The Council's Rural Housing Policy contains a commitment to undertake a programme of surveys for rural parishes. The surveys can then be used to justify provision of homes on land outside, but adjoining, the settlement boundary which otherwise would not be available for development. To date, rural parish housing needs surveys have not highlighted any homeless issues.

However it is recognised that a greater understanding is needed of rural homelessness in Malvern which would assist with the development of Malvern's homeless strategy and ensure a closer match between the needs of homeless and roofless people and local service provision.

It is anticipated that the work of the South Worcestershire Rural Youth Work Team will play a key role to this to address the issues of inclusion in Rural communities.

**ACTION POINT NO:13- TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH INTO HOMELESSNESS AMONGST THE RURAL POPULATION AND ASSESS SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY**

**(h) Asylum Seekers**

There is currently no provision at the moment for asylum seekers within the County. If Central Government decides to develop a refugee centre within the District, then plans will need to be put in place, in liaison with other statutory bodies, to support the centre.

**(i) Hidden Homelessness**

For the most part, statistical information provides data on homeless levels within the District. However, there are many people within the District who, whilst not presenting themselves as homeless, nevertheless, do not have home and who wish to have settled permanent accommodation. These may range from people, living with friends and family who are on the waiting list for rehousing or they may be wanting a home of their own but do

not know how to access accommodation within the District. Some may be victims of domestic violence, not knowing about the various agencies available in the District to help them, including housing agencies.

### **(i) The Housing Register**

Analysis of the current housing register (the main register in the District being held and maintained by Elgar Housing Association) shows that out of 1263 (including transfer applicants) people registered on the waiting list, a total of 303 (24%) applicants were sharing facilities. Of this total, 102 (8%) applicants were sharing accommodation with someone who was not a family member. Thus there are a high percentage (32%), who were without a home of their own and therefore could be classed at 'hidden homeless'.

Also at this time, 37 applicants on the waiting list were under a Notice to Quit and were therefore living in insecure accommodation.

### **(ii) Repossession Action**

A detailed survey was carried out as part of the homeless Review of Registered Social Landlords regarding repossession action taken against tenants during 2001 – 2003.

During 2001/02 RSLs within the District obtained 17 repossessions; 786 Notices of Seeking Possession were issued, whilst in 2002/03, 7 repossessions took place and 654 Notices of Seeking Possession were issued. Rent arrears was the predominant reason for Notices being served and repossession action being taken. Approximately 3 actions for repossession were due to neighbour nuisance.

An area of possible future concern regarding repossessions is the government's plan to enable social housing providers to have wider powers to take action against anti-social tenants, including faster evictions. (**Home Office: Respect and Responsibility – Taking a Stand Against Anti- Social Behaviour 2003**). These new powers will result in the need for social landlords to work closely with the homeless service to develop early intervention services to prevent evictions and consequent homelessness.

**ACTION POINT NO 11: DEVELOP EARLY INTERVENTION AND OUTREACH SERVICES FOR THOSE AT RISK OF LOSING ACCOMMODATION DUE TO ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR/AND/ OR RENT ARREARS**

### **(iii) Non Priority Homeless and Intentionally Homeless Cases**

Where a person has been deemed to be homeless but not in priority need, there is no statutory duty to rehouse. Although the 2002 Homelessness Act does give local authorities the discretion to rehouse such clients. In Malvern Hills, non priority homeless applicants make up a high percentage of presentations. In 2000/01, 84 cases were deemed to be non priority, whilst in 2001/02, 63 cases were deemed as non priority. During 2002/03, 92 cases were decided as non priority. Additionally, 24 cases over the last three years, have been deemed to be homeless but intentionally so.

Under Homeless legislation, local authorities have a duty to provide non priority households with advice and assistance to enable them to secure alternative accommodation. Under the 2002 Homelessness Act, a housing needs assessment on each non priority applicant has to be undertaken to further enable the applicant to secure housing .

A number of presentations, whilst being homeless and in priority need, are deemed to be intentionally homeless. Where the households have dependent children, the Council provide temporary Bed and Breakfast accommodation for a period not exceeding 6 weeks. This is to allow sufficient time for the household to secure their own accommodation. However, in most cases, these applicants cannot secure permanent accommodation via RSL waiting lists because they may have been deferred from being rehoused for a specified period of time. Thus applicants must find accommodation in the private sector if at all possible or with friends and relatives. Where a household is intentionally homeless but does not have a priority need, temporary accommodation is not provided. Advice and assistance is given to applicants to assist them to secure alternative accommodation.

Thus, whilst over the last 3 years, **451** cases of homelessness have been accepted for permanent rehousing, a total of **263** cases, have been deemed to be homeless but without any statutory duty to rehouse.

## **2.0 Housing Needs Assessment – Malvern Hills**

### **2.1 The Housing Needs Survey 2002**

The Council's key responsibility as a strategic housing body is to consider the housing needs of everyone in its District. Government guidance published in 2002 advised local authorities to collect, analyse, and monitor data from a number of sources which can be updated regularly. In 2001, the Council commissioned a full housing needs survey. The assessment concluded there was an annual need for **161** additional affordable dwellings over the period 2002-2007 and for a total of **1,405**, or an average of **156** per annum over the 9 years 2002-11. Household surveys in both rural and urban areas revealed high numbers of households who need social rented and/or shared ownership housing but are not registered on the housing register. The survey also revealed that the number of households within the District requiring various forms of low cost home ownership far exceeded the diminishing supply.

### **2.2 The Housing Register**

The Housing Register presents the main indicator of housing need within the District. The main provider of social housing within the District is Elgar Housing Association and as such hold the main housing register of housing need.

As at 31 March 2003, there were **940** applicants on the waiting list (not including transfers but including homeless acceptances).

**Table 1: Housing Waiting List Analysis – Elgar Housing Association – 31 March 2003**

<b>Household type</b>	<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Homeless</b>	<b>Total</b>
Single Person	263	51	4	318
Single Person OAPs	115	43	1	159
Childless Couple	193	63	3	259
Couple OAPs	71	27	1	99
Pregnant	21	1	1	23
Household – 1 child	121	56	0	177
Household – 2 children	102	45	1	148
Household – 3 or more Children	37	37	6	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1263</b>

Whilst the Housing Waiting list is a good indicator of housing need within the District, and is Reviewed on an annual basis, there is also a probability that there may be those in housing need who do not know how to access the Waiting list. Also, the Waiting list is an 'open' list – ie open to anyone irrespective of where they live, and thus may not reflect a true picture of actual immediate local need. Therefore it is important to identify and encourage those in housing need to access and register on the Housing register.

**ACTION POINT NO: 14 ENABLE HOMELESS AND/OR POTENTIALLY HOMELESS PEOPLE TO ACCESS THE HOUSING REGISTER AND ACCESS HOUSING ADVICE SERVICES**

[Back to Contents](#)  
[On to Part IV](#)

## **PART IV - CURRENT SUPPLY/RESOURCES – AN ASSESSMENT**

### **A. Accommodation Provision**

#### **1.0 Temporary Accommodation**

The Council is under increasing pressure to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households. Temporary accommodation must be provided for applicants applying as homeless pending a decision on their homeless application, if they are in priority need.

Difficulty is experienced in finding suitable temporary accommodation for those applicants who have specialist needs such as drug/alcohol abuse. In some instances, applicants have to be placed outside of the District ie Worcester and Hereford.

#### **1.1 Bed and Breakfast Accommodation and user Consultation**

The Council aims to reduce time households spend in Bed and Breakfast. A target of 5 weeks maximum stay has been set for households with children and women who are pregnant. Working in partnership with a number of private landlords has resulted in the availability of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families.

**Table 2: Bed and Breakfast Accommodation Provision – Private Sector**

<b>Client Group</b>	<b>Max No. of Rooms Available</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Support</b>
1. All age groups Male and female	3 double rooms	Malvern	Nil
2. All age groups Male and female	11 rooms (single)	Worcester	Nil
3. All age groups Male and female	16 rooms 8 doubles – 8 singles	Hereford	Nil
4. All age groups Male and female	22 rooms - 1 family room 3 double – 18 single	Worcester	Nil
5. Single Males	4 single rooms	Worcester	Nil
6. All age groups Male and female	15 units – 13 single 2 double units	Malvern	Nil
7. All age groups Male and female	12 rooms – 5 single 7 doubles	Worcester	Nil
8. All age groups Male and female	27 rooms – 10 single - 10 double - 7 large double rooms	Worcester	Limited
9. Emergency only	3 rooms - 2 singles - 1 double	Worcester	Nil
10. Males over 25 only	12 single	Worcester	Nil

As can be seen, Bed and Breakfast provision appears fairly extensive. However, other local authorities within the County also make use of this accommodation. Landlords also do not keep accommodation exclusively for use by local authorities. They are businesses and thus take other paying clients. Bed and Breakfast accommodation can also be difficult to access, especially around certain annual public events, eg Malvern Three Counties Show and the Cheltenham Gold Cup Festival.

Also many landlords are unwilling to take under 25s or persons with special needs.

During 2002/03 the Council's met its own target of 5-week maximum in Bed and Breakfast. However, the Council also recognises the need to continually meet its own targets together with the Government's aim that there should be no families in Bed and Breakfast by 2004 except in emergencies.

The Council also recognises that Bed and Breakfast accommodation for all household types is not always suitable, especially if applicants are placed in accommodation outside of the District. Some future planning on allocations will need to be undertaken to try and shorten the time families spend in Bed and Breakfast. Short term solutions could include the offering of Assured Shorthold tenancies before offering more permanent accommodation. As indicated, the needs of single persons under 25 and persons with special needs/problems also need to be addressed and alternative emergency accommodation in Malvern should be provided wherever possible with some support. This will be an objective set out in the homeless strategy document.

#### User Consultation

As part of the Homelessness user consultation process, applicants who are placed in temporary accommodation are asked how they rated the standard of Bed and Breakfast provided. During 2002/03, 25% thought the standard to be good whilst 75% thought the standard to be fair.

#### **1.2 Hostel Accommodation**

As well as Bed and Breakfast accommodation, the Council and its Agents make extensive use of various hostel type accommodation, both within the District and throughout Worcestershire. The following outlines a brief description of hostel accommodation available to homeless persons within the District.

##### **a. Foyer (MALVERN): Malvern Hills Homeless Young Adults Trust. (MHYAT)**

The Foyer contains 12 furnished rooms including one which is adapted for disabled persons (if no disabled person is in occupation, then room used for non-disabled). Also available is a communal kitchen and lounge. A Project worker is available to all residents, there are also drop in facilities, Gateway course and training available. The age group covered is 16/25 years of age. The turnover for the period 2001-2002 was 11 persons.

##### **Move On Accommodation. – From the Foyer Project**

1 unit comprising of 3 self contained flats a communal kitchen and lounge. Age group 16/25 and will be in the main used for those leaving MHYAT. Support is through Elgar HA worker, which will involve a minimum weekly visit and help with benefit forms etc.

##### **b. Brookside Hostel**

This hostel is owned and managed by Elgar Housing Association. It contains 10 furnished units - 8 x 1 bed and 2 x 2 bed. There are also laundry facilities available.

The Hostel benefits from an off site support worker who will give advice and assistance in order to maintain a tenancy and assessment of any other support that might be required.

Clients: single person all age groups, single parents, couples and family (in 2 bed accommodation). Most will be pending homelessness enquiries.

### **c. Women's Project (The Plum Tree Project)**

The Project has 6 furnished bedrooms. Room 1 (2 Single beds), Room 2 (1 single bed), Room 3 (Woman + 2 children), Room 4 (Woman + 3 children), Room 5 (Woman + 2), Room 6 (Woman +1). Rooms may be changed depending on client circumstances. There are a maximum number 12 children allowed at any one time, with an age limit for boys being 14. The refuge covers all age groups for women. There is a communal lounge, kitchen, dining room and laundry. In addition there is also a young person's room for those up to age 8, and a further room for those who are older. Outside there is a garden, which it is hoped will see the addition of a children's play area in the near future. There are child care workers attached to the scheme.

Support in the refuge is described as "medium" and includes counselling, help with form completion and access to legal advice services. If re-housed in the Malvern area on going support is available through a drop in centre at the Langland's centre and assistance with furniture and re-settlement process is also available.

An estimated turnover given for the year 2001-2002 was 125 clients.

### **d. YMCA – Worcester.**

This hostel contains 50 rooms (all 1 Bed) and are part furnished. All ages are catered for men and women. Normally would be residents require 2 references, I/D, proof of income. Support is provided by way of assistance with completion of all kinds of documentation, and assistance with reading and learning difficulties. Also available is advice about alcohol and drugs. However the hostel will not accept heroin users. Applicants and referrals cannot be accepted on the same day. The estimated turnover is 3 persons per week.

### **e. YMCA- Foyer (attached to YMCA)**

The Foyer unit contains 21 furnished rooms (all 1 Bed). Bed and Breakfast and an evening meal is provided. The unit has a communal lounge and TV room, together with 2 kitchens. Age group 16-25 years. There is Zero tolerance on drugs. Support with all documentation is available and key workers are on site to give various support.

### **f. St Paul's Hostel.**

The Hostel caters for a maximum of 46 residents. The facilities include a quiet room, TV room, dining room and laundry room. The age group covers 17 – 60 years and some clients with mental health problems. Cases are referred by statutory and/or voluntary organisations or are self-referral. On site support is available to assist with completion of forms. Breakfast and evening meals available as are day time snacks.

### **g. RSL Stock**

#### **Elgar Housing Association**

In the event of an emergency over night accommodation may be available within various sheltered housing complexes.

Alexander Gardens: 1 Double room + shower.

Geraldine Court: 2 single beds + shower.

Storer Court: 1 Double room + shower.

Williams Court: Guestroom, 2 single beds.

Thomas Morris House: Guestroom, 2 single beds.

The Firs Kempsey: Guestroom + shower.

Parkheath: 1 single room + shower.

## **h. Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme**

The scheme, launched in 1997, was set up by the Council to assist people who have been accepted as homeless but not in priority need and on low incomes and/or in receipt of benefits, gain access to privately rented accommodation. Currently 7 landlords are registered onto the scheme, with a total of 21 units available. Since the scheme began, a total of **11** rent guarantees have been arranged.

## **2.0 Permanent Accommodation**

### **Homeless Rehousing Policy**

When a person has been accepted for rehousing, the Council arranges rehousing in permanent accommodation or within the private sector. Under the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Agreement, the Council's agents, Elgar Housing Association will find permanent accommodation for all homeless acceptances. Homeless applicants obtain the maximum number of registration points of 300. The target time for rehousing homeless people in any one year is set at 30 days maximum (Note: this target relates to homeless persons accepted in that particular year).

There is no short term solution to the shortage of supply of affordable housing in Malvern Hills in relation to special needs clients eg those with mental health problems, drug/alcohol abuse.

### **2.1 Relets of existing social housing**

Relets of existing social housing are an important source of supply. In 2000/01 a total of 372 lettings were made in the District (ie all RSL lettings). Of this total, 124 lettings were made to homeless people.

During 2001/02, 383 lettings were made, of which 112 were made to homeless people.

During 2002/03, 361 lettings in total were made, of which 115 were made to homeless people.

#### **(i) Rehousing Performance 2002/2003 (Time taken to rehouse homeless applicants)**

##### **Target time for rehousing: 30 days**

Actual 2001/02 = 32 days

Actual 2002/03 = 29 days

#### **(ii) Analysis of types of housing allocated to the homeless (ie those rehoused by Elgar Housing Association)**

##### **2001/02**

1 Bed flat = 19

2 Bed flat = 47

2 Bed house = 18

3 bed house = 33

4 bed house = 1

1 bed bungalow = 3

2 bed bungalow = 3

##### **2002/03**

1 bed properties = 35

2 bed properties = 51

3 bed properties = 21

4 bed properties = 1

## 2.2 User Consultation

Customer consultation during 2002/03 regarding satisfaction with permanent accommodation offered showed the following:-

- ***In terms of accommodation size:-***

- ❖ 11% thought size of accommodation was very good
- ❖ 56% thought size of accommodation was good
- ❖ 33% thought size of accommodation was fair

- ***In terms of location of accommodation:-***

- ❖ 11% thought location was very good
- ❖ 33% thought location was good
- ❖ 56% thought location was fair

### (iii) Housing Supply

At the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002, the stock position in Malvern was as follows:-

Registered Social Landlords =	4,338
Other private sector stock =	27,263 (of which 25,284 was owner occupied)
Other public sector stock =	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>31,606</u></b>

### (iv) RSL Stock Analysis – Excluding Shared Ownership or Homebuy Properties – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003

#### Bungalows

- 1 Bedroom = 460
- 2 Bedroom = 304
- 3 Bedroom = 46

Total = **810**

#### Flats

- Bedsits = 10
- 1 Bedroom = 883
- 2 Bedroom = 623
- 3 Bedroom = 2

Total = **1518**

#### Houses

- 1 Bedroom = 33
- 2 Bedroom = 569
- 3 Bedroom = 1322
- 4 Bedroom = 65
- 5 Bedroom = 3

Total = **1992**

### Rooms Only

1 Bedroom = 29

Total = 29

GRAND TOTAL = 4349

For many years, the Council has adopted a proactive housing enabling role in the delivery of affordable housing and this has been the priority in the Housing Strategy. This priority will continue because as well as housing the homeless in Malvern, there is a significant demand from households where financial and social circumstances preclude home ownership – this of course includes many homeless people.

### **3.0 Other Permanent Housing Options for homeless people**

#### **3.1 Do it Yourself Shared Ownership: Homebuy; and Shared Ownership Schemes, Mortgage Rescue**

The Housing Strategy 2002-2007, has set targets to provide 12 DIYSO/Homebuy homes per annum and the enabling of the provision of 12 new build shared ownership homes per annum.

Through these schemes, it has been possible to assist 6 potentially homeless, families to remain in their own homes when threatened with repossession action, (4 cases were assisted under the Mortgage Rescue Scheme and 2 cases were rehoused as homeless under the DIYSO Schemes) thus avoiding the provision of temporary accommodation and the disruption of education and other social networks.

#### **3.2 Private Sector Housing**

It has become very difficult to find suitable accommodation in the private sector for single people who are not in 'priority need'. Rent restrictions due to Housing Benefit rent levels do impact on a private landlord's willingness to rehouse single persons (especially under the age of 25) and so the Council have explored other methods of giving incentives to private landlords to provide accommodation. These include the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (previously discussed) and landlord renovation grants.

##### **3.2.1 Landlord Renovation Grants**

Over the past 2 years, the Council has awarded House Renovation Grants to landlords a condition of which is the exclusive nomination rights to renovated units for persons of the Housing Register. The 'nomination agreement' lasts 5 years from the date the renovation grant was committed. A total of 32 units have been made available via this process.

However, the scheme has experienced difficulties with nominations not being taken up. The main problem lies with the fact that landlords only offer Assured Shorthold Tenancies. Potential applicants from the waiting list (including homeless persons) would prefer to wait until more permanent settled accommodation is offered (ie via a RSL). As a result few private voids have been used under the scheme, ie a total of 2 successful nominations have been made during years 2001 - 2003. Methods to strengthen the nominations process needs to be considered to make full use of these private sector nomination rights.

**ACTION POINTS 15 and 16: - DEVISE METHODS OF STRENGTHENING NOMINATION RIGHTS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR  
EXPLORE MEASURES TO UTILISE OTHER PRIVATE STOCK IN THE DISTRICT TO HOUSE HOMELESS FAMILIES**

#### **4.0 Supported Housing**

Supported housing is an important part of homelessness prevention and the Supporting People Programme will have direct links with the Homelessness strategy at both strategic and service delivery level.

The role of Supported Housing should include:-

- Ensuring professional assessment and resettlement service for homeless people
- Ongoing role of tenancy and floating support in sustaining tenancies
- Working in partnership with other providers to ensure vulnerable people are appropriately housed with access to the support they need

Special needs social housing in Malvern is provided and managed by Registered Social Landlords. Accommodation is provided for different client groups including those with learning disabilities, persons with acquired brain injury and those with mental health problems. There is also a number of properties which have either been purpose built to suit the needs of physically disabled persons or have been adapted by Registered Social Landlords. The Council are also able to provide Disabled Facilities Grants to enable residents to remain in their own homes and over the last 3 years, a total of 153 such grants have been approved.

#### **5.0 EMERGENCY PLANNING – PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION**

In a major emergency, the Council will be required to support the Emergency Services and provide assistance to the victims of incidents, as well as maintaining normal public services in the community. The Council's initial responsibilities will include responding to requests for accommodation for the homeless both in the short and long term. The Council will be required to set up Emergency Rest Centres and as part of a County Emergency Plan have agreed a level of service for the setting up rest centres in Worcestershire. This includes:-

- Endeavour to provide temporary accommodation for up to 1,000 people within the County of Worcestershire
- Accept all available and suitable buildings for use as rest centres
- Accept that the Emergency Services will use any building as a reception centre
- Endeavour to set up the designated Rest Centre, ready to receive evacuees within 2 hours of being notified that is needed

The Council in response to the County Emergency Plan has carried out an audit on possible suitable sites for use as rest centres and a directory of suitable sites has been drawn up. The Council is confident therefore, that during or following an emergency that it will contribute effectively to a co-ordinated response.

#### **B. FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

##### **1.0 Internal Financial Resources for the Homeless Services**

The Council's homelessness service includes:\_

- Direct costs of staff and overheads
- Indirect support service costs
- Agency fees for EHA to undertake homelessness Agency work on behalf of the Council
- Net costs of bed and breakfast provision where expenditure cannot be recovered from the applicant or through housing benefits

During 2002/3, the Council's total expenditure on homelessness was £97,131. For 2003/04, The Council's budget for homelessness is £107,285.

## **2.0 External Funding**

To enable implementation/delivery of the new homelessness responsibilities under the Homelessness Act 2002, the Government awarded the Council a grant of £22,000 for year 2002/03.. A further grant of £22,000 has been made available for 2003/04.

The grant 2002/03 enabled:-

- A larger Good Start Package Reserve (scheme aimed at single homeless people under 25 to enable them to sustain new tenancies)
- Availability of an increased bond through the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme
- Provision of a grant to the development of the Countywide Youth Homeless Strategy
- Provision of funding to pump prime a Countywide Build and Train Scheme
- Provision of a grant to Worcestershire Mediation Services in order to set up mediation services for young people

The 2003/04 allocation will be distributed between:-

- Youth Homeless Strategy
- Worcester Mediation Services
- Community Action Furniture Project
- Financing of homeless initiatives outlined in the Homeless Strategy

### **2.1 Funding from Centre Point – Good Start Package**

The Council recently bid for and won funding of £5,500, which will enhance the current good start package to assist all vulnerable households, sustain a tenancy. Currently the scheme's client base is single persons under 25. The extra funding will assist any age group, with particular reference to those with special needs/problems eg mental health problems and pregnant teenagers.

## **C. LAND/BUILDING RESOURCES – CURRENT AND FUTURE AVAILABILITY**

1.0 The Worcestershire County Structure Plan requires that provision is made for the completion of 28,100 dwellings within the period 1996 to 2011. A development requirement of 3,900 dwellings for Malvern Hills District over the same period is also established by the County Structure Plan.

Between 1.4.1996 and 31.3.03, 1938 dwellings (net) had been completed with Malvern Hills District and a further 557 dwellings were either under construction or had planning permission, but were yet to be started, by 1.4.03. Of the remaining 1,413 dwellings to be found, 878 dwellings are predicted to be created through windfall developments (sites of less than 5 dwellings) throughout the District with a further 105 dwellings predicted to be provided in the form of replacement dwellings.

The above level of housing activity suggests that sites need to be found for a further 422 dwellings in order to comply with the County Structure Plan requirement. The strategy adopted by the Structure Plan envisages that the majority of these dwellings will be located within the District's main urban area (Malvern) and will be built on brown field sites (previously developed land).

Development requirements beyond 2011 will be considered in the light of updated Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands, but as yet the level of growth which may be directed to Worcestershire or indeed Malvern Hills District remains unclear. However, the emerging guidance proposes that in the event of Worcestershire

having to accommodate growth requirements, it is likely that Worcester City would act as a sub-regional focus for such growth. However, how this might be accommodated whilst the city is constrained by its administrative boundaries is yet to be considered and determined. Malvern Hills District would be likely to continue to focus upon housing to address local needs only.

The key characteristics of the current land supply and requirements are the significance of small sites (windfall sites) within the overall supply and the relatively modest requirement for additional land to be allocated in Malvern through the current local plan Review. At present it is not anticipated that in order to meet the strategic housing land requirement it will be necessary to release greenfield land / sites for development. The delivery vehicle for the allocation of housing land up to 2011 will be the Review of Local Plan coverage for Malvern Hills District, with a first deposit draft version of the local plan expected later in 2003.

Under the existing and emerging planning policy framework it is possible to release land outside existing settlement boundaries (in the open countryside) on an exceptional basis where there is clearly established local housing need and any housing provided is retained for affordable housing purposes in perpetuity

### **1.1 Housing Needs Assessment**

Malvern Hills District Council commissioned a Housing Needs Assessment in 2001. The assessment looked at the stock profile, the costs and the supply in each section of the housing market: full owner occupation, shared ownership, private rent and social rent. It Reviewed each element of housing need - registered and un-registered, backlog and emerging, urban and rural, general and special needs, so as to enable a detailed comparison to be made between need and supply which highlighted the nature and extent of the shortfalls. Finally, it considered ways in which planning policies could contribute to meeting those shortfalls, the effect of alternative thresholds and proportions of affordable housing within new developments and the way in which those policies could be implemented and kept up to date.

The District was divided into five sub-areas, within which it would be desirable to achieve some degree of match between need and supply. Each sub-area contains either one large settlement with a full range of facilities, or a number of larger villages which provide a range of alternative foci for meeting need from the rest of the area.

### **1.2 The Local Housing Market**

Areas such as Malvern Hills, with an attractive physical environment, good education and cultural facilities, and ease of access to the Motorway and Rail networks, create high levels of demand which have an impact on house prices. The average price of all dwellings sold in the District during 2001 was well above the regional average at £131,575, ranging from £120,859 in Malvern town to £164,770 in the South sub area based on Upton upon Severn, and representing an increase of around 40% over the previous 3 years. Dwellings in the lower price bands represented a much smaller proportion of the total in the rural parts of the District than in Malvern town and the larger villages on the Worcester fringe.

#### **Property Prices – Malvern Hills District**

House prices have risen continually across, not only the District, but the County as a whole since 1995, but particularly over the past few years.

**Table 3: Average prices in Malvern Hills for property types – July to September 2002**

Detached	£249,955
Semi-detached	£134,805
Terraced	£139,197
Flat or maisonette	£101,793

Trends in housing prices from 1995 – 2002 (average across all properties)

1995 - £88,177  
1996 - £84,575  
1997 - £97,727  
1998 - £105,020  
1999 - £104,581  
2000 - £127,827  
2001 - £148,250  
2002 - £190,070

Price changes across local authorities in Worcestershire from 2001-2002

Malvern Hills - 28.2%  
Worcester - 27.2%  
Redditch - 20.4%  
Bromsgrove - 17.2%  
Wychavon - 9.0%  
Wyre Forest - 6.6%

Average price of all properties in Worcestershire from July to September 2002

Malvern Hills - £190,070  
Bromsgrove - £169,383  
Wychavon - £158,016  
Worcester - £129,295  
Wyre Forest - £116,851  
Redditch - £114,326

25% of all households would not be able to purchase a property, even with assistance, but have incomes of between £16,250 and £17,250. This is above the level of almost all of those who are allocated social rented housing, but also inadequate to secure suitable sized property in the private rented sector where rents are approximately double the amount.

A further 40% of households would be able to purchase - either outright or on shared ownership - if the supply of properties at the lower end of the market was adequate.

[Back to Contents](#)

[On to Part V](#)

## **PART V – PREDICTION OF FUTURE LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS AND SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION 2003 – 2008**

### **1.0 Assessment of Future Needs**

Needs mapping is crucial to the success of a Homelessness Strategy. To be effective, needs mapping must be divided into met and unmet need, where met need focuses on services that are currently being provided and unmet needs reflects future demand for which services are not available either because of the strength of demand or because they are in a priority group for which there is currently no provision.

Demand estimates can also be underrepresented as where no service currently exists, it is only following development of a service that true demand becomes apparent, stimulated as people recognize the availability of a service to assist them. Additionally, although a good service results in greater demand, the service may be more efficient at dealing with clients and assessing applications, which can result in people in need being identified and assisted more quickly.

It is very difficult to assess levels of future need as few indicators are publicly available to inform this area of work. Trends in statistics can tell us which reasons and household groups are increasing and those which are decreasing, but based solely on current numbers, short-term trends may be misleading.

Important trends, however, are likely to be economical, on both a national and local level, although they should be treated with caution.

For example, a significant increase in interest rates would be expected to increase the number of mortgage repossessions that occur, however given that a number of people have fixed interest rates or other products, there could be a time gap between interest rate rises and mortgage repossession case increases.

Local economic changes, such as wage levels or unemployment would be significant, however, resulting in increased mortgage repossessions, increasing rent arrears cases and an increasing number of young people seeking accommodation. Positive changes, such as new work opportunities may also have an impact where people are unable to afford to live in the local area.

### **1.1 Future homelessness in Malvern**

As it moves towards a preventative approach rather than a reactive one, a successful strategy would expect to result in a reduction in the number of homeless applications. However looking at the levels of need evident from the previous three years of homeless applications in Malvern a number of trends are evident and can provide some indication of the likely future needs in the District.

It should be noted that, as part of the Strategy, these trends will need to be continually monitored and the predictions Reviewed on a regular basis in order to measure the actual situation against predictions.

The reasons for homelessness and the household groups that have been accepted over the last few years are diverse, yet there are some patterns in respect of the reasons for homelessness, with the following reasons being apparent as the main causes of homelessness that have remained at significant levels over the three years:

- family no longer willing to accommodate
- friends and other relatives no longer able to accommodate
- ending of Assured Shorthold Tenancies
- relationship Breakdown

In respect of such reasons as domestic violence, the number of cases had remained at a steady level however there appears to be adequate provision of support to deal with these cases. It is difficult to predict a specific increase in domestic violence cases, however with the change in legislation covering those at threat from

domestic or other violence the number of presentations would be likely to increase. Continuous promotion of accommodation and support provision should enable help to be provided at the crucial stage and reduce the potential for people to present themselves as homeless as a last resort.

The number of single people presenting as homeless is increasing and this is backed up by the results from the 2001 Census which shows a reduction in the number of married households in the District. Single households are the largest group on the Housing Register and there has been an increase in the number of presentations as homeless by single people under 25. Coupled with this is the evidence that the majority of cases of those with mental illness problems are also single.

Alongside this, there is evidence of a shortage of accommodation for single people, both in terms of supported or temporary accommodation for those with multiple problems, and there are also fewer units of permanent accommodation for those needing 1-bed flats or houses for single people. There is also an issue of affordability for single people of private rented accommodation or purchasing a property in the local area.

The issue in respect of supported accommodation for those with mental health, drug or alcohol problems is that without provision of such support, problems will not be overcome, which, in turn, could potentially lead to more homeless cases of those with multiple problems. Actions within the Strategy to work with appropriate organizations to develop accommodation for single people relevant to their needs will go some way to addressing this area of potential increase.

The census also showed a significant level of overcrowded households and that lone parent households have doubled.

As was expected as a result of the new priority needs order, there has been an increase in the number of 16/17 year olds presenting themselves as homeless, and given the new order, a number of cases have been accepted in 2002/03. The main reason for this group presenting themselves as homeless is due to parents asking them leave home. As has been evident over the last year, more younger people are approaching agencies as homeless and work will need to be done to address this issue in the short to medium term with close monitoring being undertaken of these cases. Work with schools and youth agencies and promotion of such schemes as Homeless at Home or mediation could help to prevent these cases.

A further issue for the Council is the number of those on the housing register who are sharing accommodation. Almost a quarter of all households on the housing register are sharing facilities and of that, just under half are sharing with people they do not know. This situation could result in an increase in homeless cases and a key issue for the Council will be to ensure that Elgar Housing Association, as part of the management of the register, review the list on a regular basis and, in particular, address the needs of this group of people to ensure that are supported to help them find alternative solutions to their problems before they are faced with applying as homeless. Some of the issues around 'hidden homelessness' can be addressed and monitored through proactive management of the housing register.

There has been an increase in the numbers of non-priority, intentional cases and this could be an indication of households who are applying as homeless in the first instance rather than as a last resort. With the implementation of the Strategy and a change in approach to a preventative, proactive role and a greater emphasis on raising awareness of prevention and housing advice it would be hoped that this will result in fewer people applying as homeless in the first instance.

A recent questionnaire found that only half of those questioned knew about available advice services. Without addressing this, the number of cases of people presenting to the Council without first approaching other generic and specialist advice agencies could be seen to rise, but, again, this Strategy aims to tackle this issue by ensuring that advice services are promoted.

## 1.2 The Inadequacy of Existing Affordable Housing Supply

A disproportionately lower rate of vacancies occurs in family houses than other property types - even more so in rural areas than in urban ones. With land prices generally above the level that can be afforded by housing associations, and with a very limited opportunities through planning agreements, new supply has averaged only 53 p.a. over the last five years, about equal to the level of Right to Buy sales.

Pressure for social rented family houses comes from large numbers of existing tenant households who have outgrown smaller properties, and also from homeless households, leaving very little scope for other applicants. While the greatest numbers in households in need are in Malvern town, the greatest shortages of affordable housing supply, in proportion to the numbers required, are in the rural areas.

Household surveys in both rural and urban areas have revealed high numbers of households who need social rented and/or shared ownership housing but are not registered on the Council's Waiting List.

The number of households within the District requiring various forms of low cost home ownership greatly exceeds the diminishing supply. They also have to compete for this with purchasers from outside the District.

There are 1011 (2.0%) unemployed people in Malvern (2001 Census), and across the Districts, Malvern has the lowest unemployment rate. However, whilst unemployment levels are comparably low, incomes, are below the regional average, with almost half of household incomes below £18,200, and for three quarters of households the maximum mortgage which would be available on a 3.5 plus 1 multiplier, would be £68,000.

If people are unable to purchase a property or rent from a Registered Social Landlord, the alternative would be to rent privately.

### **Table 4: Average Rent levels – Private sector – Malvern Hills**

One room accommodation – board and lodging - £57.11
One room accommodation – no board, shared facilities - £45.00
One room accommodation – self contained - £63.46
Two rooms - £78.12
Three rooms - £92.31
Four rooms - £102.12
Five rooms - £117.98

However there is also a shortage of affordable privately rented accommodation in the District and rent levels can preclude many people from having a tenancy. Even with the allocation of Housing Benefit, some persons, especially those single people under 25, find it difficult to obtain and sustain tenancies.

## Summary

As indicated above, it is important that the monitoring framework implemented by the Council as part of this Strategy adopts a method of picking up trends in the future, by continually monitoring available and relevant information as to the number of cases and the reasons for homelessness or threatened homelessness.

To some degree, the preventative work that is being put in place will go some way to dealing with issues at the root of the problem which will be likely to reduce future presentations, although this can only be measured by on-going monitoring. Preventative work will also need to monitor legislative changes, policy changes within existing social landlords and new support packages available under the Supporting People Regime.

A constant line of communication with various agencies will help to identify changes which may have an impact on increased cases of homelessness, such as the level of drug use in the area. Agencies, such as Probation and Social Services, could work with the Council to deal with cases where people are leaving institutions in order that their housing need can be assessed before there is a need to present as homeless.

[Back to Contents](#)  
[On to Part VI](#)

## **PART VI – PREVENTION/ADVICE SERVICES**

### **1.0 Advice and Information Services**

Housing advice can achieve many things, but none is more important than preventing homelessness. Early housing advice improves the quality of life for homeless people, and ensures that social housing together with support (if required), goes to those in greatest need. Adequate provision of housing advice can be a cost-effective solution to a human and financial problem.

The Council in conjunction with its Agents via the homeless and Stayput and Housing Advice services, provides housing advice and assistance. Advice and information services are also provided by many organisations throughout Malvern (and Worcestershire) including the Citizens Advice Bureau, Women's Plum Tree Project, Age Concern, and services targeting specific groups eg Connexions and the MHHYF Foyer (providing advice services for young people).

The snap shot survey carried out in March 2003, showed that during the survey period, CAB dealt with 8 homeless inquiries, the Malvern's Womens Project dealt with 5 homeless inquiries, whilst Elgar Housing Association took 37 homeless presentations.

Advice and information services include advice on tenant's rights, matrimonial law, rent deposit guarantee scheme, housing options, referrals to social services, mediation, benefits assistance, home repair grants (to enable persons remain in their own homes if the condition of the home is unsuitable), financial assistance and training.

The Council and its Agents have jointly produced a series of information leaflets for members of the public to advise on the homeless services and general housing advice.

The leaflets produced are as follows:-

- ◆ *A Guide for Young People leaving home*
- ◆ *Mortgage debt advice*
- ◆ *Relationship breakdown and the home*
- ◆ *Private tenancy advice*
- ◆ *Homeless advice and assistance*
- ◆ *Detailed booklet on the homeless service and the law*
- ◆ *Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme*
- ◆ *Good Start Package*
- ◆ *'Better Care Higher Standards' – service directory/charter for service users and their carers*

### **1.1 The Stayput and Housing Advice Service**

A Stayput and Housing Advice Service is also provided by the Council's Agents to enable the elderly, sick and/or disabled persons to remain in their own homes.

Advice is given on:-

- ◆ Community alarms
- ◆ Council and other state benefits
- ◆ Home repair grants
- ◆ Home security
- ◆ Home Energy Efficiency

Over 500 clients are assisted each year by this service and it is likely that this is one of the reasons why so few elderly people actually become homeless in the District.

### **1.2 Outlets for Housing Advice – Malvern Hills**

There are various outlets from which housing advice can be obtained – these include the following:-

- ❑ EHA offices in Malvern, Bromyard and Ledbury
- ❑ Council Offices in Malvern and Tenbury
- ❑ CAB offices in Malvern, Tenbury and Bromyard
- ❑ Connexions in Malvern
- ❑ Age Concern in Malvern
- ❑ Worcester Drug Link in Worcester
- ❑ Mediation Services in Worcester
- ❑ Social Services in Malvern
- ❑ Womens Plum Tree Project, Malvern
- ❑ Police in Malvern
- ❑ Probation Service in Worcester

### **1.3 Housing Advice Delivery – Malvern Hills**

There are a variety of ways in which advice is provided such as: \_

- ❑ Booklets and leaflets (noted above)
- ❑ Telephone
- ❑ Office based
- ❑ Council members

### **1.4 Raising Awareness**

Despite various housing advice outlets and modes of delivery, not all those who have housing problems know how to access help. Many people rely on friends or family telling them where to get help or are referred to appropriate services. Links between the Council and other providers are important to ensure that people can access the help they need. It is also important that the quality, range and accessibility to services are monitored. Formal monitoring systems are not currently in place although user surveys forms are sent to clients of the homelessness, Stayput and Housing Advice, Rent Deposit, Good start Package and Home Repair Grants.

Services that are highly visible and located in busy areas will attract more attention but may not cater for everyone.

It appears that whilst in some areas, it may seem obvious who the providers of housing advice are. There are certainly gaps in this knowledge. As part of the snap shot survey carried out during March 2003, various agencies were asked to comment on their knowledge of homeless services within the District, ie question “**Are you aware of which Agencies deal with Homelessness in the District?**” – **48%** of respondents answered NO, whilst **52%** answered YES. This analysis clearly identified a gap in the knowledge of homeless advice services at a local level.

A questionnaire was also sent to Members of the Council who were asked ‘**whether they felt they had sufficient information about what help and services were available in dealing with homeless cases**’. Of the responses received, 67% answered NO to this query, whilst 33% answered YES.

It seems evident that more promotional work is required to ensure all parts of the community are aware of homelessness and housing advice services.

**Table 5: Housing Advice/Information and Support Provision – Malvern**

<b>Client Group</b>	<b>Advice Services</b>
1. Young People 16-25	MHDC, EHA, Connexions, CAB, Education, Schools, Social Services, Youthline, Mediation Services, RSLs Youth Zone, Youth Offending Service (Worcester Team), Youth Scheme Outreach Workers
2. Young People leaving care	NCH aftercare project, Worcester
3. Young Parents	MHDC, EHA, Health Visitors, CAB, Social Services
4. Families	MHDC, EHA, Relate, Family Mediation, CAB, Social Services, Health Visitors, RSLs
5. Households in insecure Private Accommodation	MHDC, EHA, CAB,
6. Households with debt/rent arrears problems	EHA, CAB, National Debt Helpline, Welfare Rights Worcester, Social Services, RSLs
7. People with Drug problems	CAB, Worcestershire Substance Misuse Action Team, National Drugs Help line
8. People with alcohol problems	Worcester Drug Link, Community Drug Team, EHA CAB, Advisory Services on Alcohol, National Alcohol helpline, EHA
9. People with mental health problems	CAB, Social Services, MIND, EHA
10. Women suffering domestic violence	Womens Plum Tree Project, MHDC, EHA, RSLs, CAB, Social Services, National Helpline, Police – Domestic Violence Unit, Children’s Information Service
11. People with physical disabilities	MHDC, EHA, Social Services, RSLs, CAB
12. People leaving armed forces	MHDC, EHA, CAB, SSAFA
13. People leaving prison and YOI*	MHDC, EHA, CAB, Probation Service, Youth Offending Service, Connexions
14. People leaving hospital	MHDC, EHA, Health, Social Services, CAB
15 Older People	MHDC, EHA, Health, Social Services, CAB, Age Concern
16. People living in unfit accommodation	MHDC, EHA, CAB, Social Services, Health
17 Persons suffering harassment from private landlords	MHDC, EHA, CAB
<b>* YOUTH OFFENDER INSTITUTIONS</b>	

## **Resettlement and Tenancy Support**

Resettlement and tenancy support have broad objectives of homeless prevention and the promotion of social inclusion, through practical, financial support to meet individual needs. Tenancy support services are delivered across Malvern by different organisations, targeted at risk groups including persons suffering from domestic violence or mental health problems.

**Table 6: Summary of Tenancy Support Services in Malvern**

### **1. Support for RSL tenants**

#### **AGENCY**

#### **Elgar Housing Association:**

- Tenancy support worker

#### **SERVICE PROVIDED**

Support Services for vulnerable clients newly rehoused  
General advice

#### **Malvern Hills DC**

- Provision and administration of Good Start Package - single persons

Package includes money towards first utility bill, food voucher and utensils

### **2. Women Suffering Domestic Violence**

#### **Womens's Plum Tree Project**

Ongoing support for women who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence

#### **Hereford Women's Aid Floating Support**

Outreach Worker

### **3. Young People**

#### **MHHYAT FOYER (Malvern)**

Provision of training and development in careers and life skills, and tenancy sustainment

#### **CAB(Malvern, Tenbury**

Advise on benefits, debt, employment, discrimination, housing issues, family and relationships, immigration

#### **CONNEXIONS (Malvern, Hereford)**

Advisory service to young people, housing, Options, benefit advice  
opportunities for young people

### **4. People with Drug Problems**

#### **WORCESTER**

#### **SUBSTANCE MISUSE TEAM**

Support and advice for persons with drug dependency

### **5. People leaving prison and YOI\***

Youth Offending Service, Worcester

#### **PROBATION SERVICE**

Rehousing and support, employment, training

### **6. Stoneham Housing Association**

Floating support for all tenants

A Service Level Agreement exists between the Council and the Citizens Advice Bureau for the Provision of a free, confidential, independent and impartial information and advice service to all. Part of CAB's service is the prevention of homelessness. During 2002/03, CAB dealt with a total of 46 actual homelessness cases (including 12 cases from the Tenbury Wells area) and dealt with 263 cases which were threatened with homelessness (including 48 from the Tenbury Wells area). The majority of clients seeking advice from CAB did so because of rent arrears to a Registered Social Landlord.

Therefore, the Council, voluntary and other statutory bodies have a major part to play in preventing Homelessness in the District and such bodies should be encouraged to assist in this role.

**ACTION POINT NO: 17 RAISE AWARENESS OF HOMELESS SERVICE AND HOUSING ADVICE SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT AND PUT MONITORING SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO TEST THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADVICE SERVICES**

[Back to Contents](#)  
[On to Part VII](#)

## **PART VII**

### ***IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS IN HOMELESSNESS PROVISION - SUMMARY***

The Review of needs and audit of services carried out in the District has identified where needs are not being met. The following is a summary of gaps in provision identified and these will form the basis of the Homeless Strategy for the next five years.

#### **1. Local Review – Summary of Gaps in Provision and Points for Further Action**

**Homeless Research** - The need for more regular quantitative and qualitative research into homelessness throughout the District, across all client groups.

**Monitoring of homeless presentations 16/17 year olds** - The need to monitor the effect of the new 16/17 year old priority groupings on homelessness presentations

**Provision of supported accommodation for single young people** - The need to work with appropriate organisations to develop appropriate accommodation for single young people within the District (with support if needed) both within the private and social housing sectors

**Provision of Support Services for Rough sleepers** - The need to develop locally based protocol to enable rough sleepers to sustain tenancies

**Support for homeless families** - The need to develop locally co-ordinated support mechanisms to minimise hardships experienced by homeless families

**People with Drug/alcohol Problems** – The need to provide short-term/long term accommodation (possibly with support)

**Forces/prison leavers** - To need to develop local mechanisms to identify the housing and support needs of this client group

**Travellers** – To carry out research into the housing needs of travellers

**Hospital Discharge** – To work with appropriate bodies to identify the current/future need for affordable accommodation with support

- To work with appropriate bodies to develop a suitable rehousing protocol for those patients with multiple problems

**Mortgage/Rent Arrears/anti social behaviour – Repossession Action** – To develop an early intervention and outreach service to those at risk of losing accommodation due to rent/mortgage arrears and anti social behaviour

**Teenage Pregnancies** – Need to monitor the levels of homelessness amongst pregnant teenagers and to identify support needs

**Rural Homelessness** – To carry out research into homelessness in the rural population and assess service provision and accessibility

**Access to RSL Housing Registers** – To enable accessibility to the housing registers to prevent homelessness occurring and to provide a better indicator of need

**Private Sector Housing** – -To devise methods of ensuring take up of private sector lets where nomination rights have been secured

- To explore measures to utilise the private sector in the District to house homeless people

**Prevention and Housing Advice** – To raise awareness of homeless and housing advice services throughout the District and monitor the effectiveness of these services

## **2. Supporting People Shadow Strategy – Gaps in Provision**

Research on support services for certain client groups has been undertaken as part of the Shadow Strategy for Supporting People. The Research highlighted support availability for certain client groups together with gaps in provision throughout the County. A summary of the support needs identified for some vulnerable client groups (all having links with homelessness) and the Districts' homeless strategy must link into the findings of the Supporting People's Shadow Strategy. The findings/recommendations of the Supporting People's Shadow Strategy Team is outlined below:-

### ***Homeless People with Support Needs - General***

- ***Promotion of the development of Resettlement and Outreach services to appropriate supported accommodation to enable people to maintain accommodation***
- ***The development of floating support services to help maintain people accessing general needs housing***
- ***To work with homeless forums and other groups to integrate strategically planned support service developments***
- ***To support agencies and private developers of supported accommodation to plan appropriate accommodation provision***

### **Strategic Priorities for single homeless people**

The Supporting People's Strategic Priorities for single persons across the County include the following:-

- **Promotion of the urgent development of supported accommodation for single homeless in all Districts**
- **The development of Floating Support services for this group in each District with effective referral and joint monitoring processes**
- **To support the development of emergency 'direct access' accommodation for young vulnerable homeless people**
- **To investigate the need for a homeless support service/team with Housing, Health and Social Services representation**

### **Strategic Priorities for Young People at risk/leaving care**

- **Continuation of the development of Outreach and Floating Support services to enable young people to maintain tenancies and independent living**
- **To work with housing and agency partners to develop appropriate supported housing opportunities including supported lodgings**

#### Strategic Priorities for people with drug problems

- Promote development of early access supported accommodation aimed at increasing take-up and success of drugs rehabilitation programmes
- Develop floating support services in each District to enable people to gain accommodation and maintain independent living

#### Strategic Priorities for people with Alcohol Problems

- Support development of crisis accommodation in the South of the County
- Develop floating support services for this user group
- Develop an open access referral system to support services and implement a system of needs monitoring

#### Strategic Priorities for Teenage Pregnancy

- Develop specialist Floating Support services across the County to meet the particular needs of this group
- Develop, together with partners, an accessible referral system to ensure that targets are met

#### Strategic Priority for Women at risk of domestic violence

- Monitor development of support services and accommodation to ensure that needs are being met adequately and appropriately in each District

#### Strategic Priority for Travellers

- Encourage consultation with travellers about the support they would need to access housing

[Back to Contents](#)  
[On to Part VIII](#)

## **PART VIII – ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY**

### ***1.0 Trends and Key Issues***

#### **1.1 Homelessness Trends**

- Causes of homelessness throughout the last three years have been diverse. Therefore to tackle homelessness there needs to be a comprehensive range of approaches to meet the diverse client groups and the range of causes of homelessness.
- Early intervention and prevention work is essential in tackling homelessness and this will be the main theme dominating the homelessness strategy.
- There are large and increasing numbers of homeless families with children, together with high incidences of domestic violence and homelessness amongst those with mental illness or learning disability. The Review has also highlighted an increase in homelessness amongst 16 and 17 year olds.
- Evidence collected through the Review indicates that levels of homelessness over the last three years appear to be similar however the numbers of people accepted increased for year 2002/03.. Further research is needed to develop an approach to profiling the future trends of homelessness.
- The Review has found that there is a wide range of services and resources available in Malvern to assist in the prevention of homelessness and to respond to the needs of people who are currently homeless. However the provision and efficiency of services could be improved upon by adopting a more co-ordinated and strategic approach across the District. The Homeless Strategy will provide an opportunity to address this.

#### **1.2 Information and Communication**

The Review has highlighted areas where information and accessibility to homeless and housing advice provision is either limited or unknown. The lack of information, seriously limits people's access to services and the capability of professionals to make appropriate referrals. An information strategy needs to be considered as part of the Homeless Strategy.

#### **1.3 Research and Data Collection**

Undertaking a Review of homelessness in the District and developing a profile of homelessness, taking into account the large and varied sources of information has been hampered in some degree by the lack of compatible and accessible data. To effectively monitor homelessness, a common research/data collection method needs to be developed and agreed to by stakeholders.

Whilst the Review has involved collection of information from different sources, the scope of homelessness means that there are gaps in the information and that more detailed research is needed to respond to the needs of particular groups and establish future trends. However, given the information collated a wide range of action points were identified and these will form part of the Homeless Strategy.

[Back to Contents](#)  
[On to the Conclusion](#)

## **CONCLUSION**

The Homelessness Act 2002 outlines the key areas that the Homeless Strategy needs to address. These are:-

- The prevention of homelessness
- Securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for the people who are, or may become homeless
- Securing that there is satisfactory provision of support for people who are, who may become homeless, or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again

The development of the Homelessness Strategy was informed by the findings of the Homelessness Review, details of which are contained in this Review document.

Action points noted throughout the Review went on to become overall objectives with action points/tasks highlighted in respect of each objective. These are attached to the Housing Strategy document.

It is anticipated that the Homeless Review Focus Group will continue to meet and address the specific areas and issues of the Strategy to facilitate a multi-agency and co-ordinated approach.

Wide consultation on the draft Review/Strategy took place during mid May 2003 to end June 2003. It was agreed at Executive Committee on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2003, that delegated authority be given to the Member with Portfolio for Housing to agree the final version of the Strategy which was then submitted to Office of the Deputy Prime Minister at the end of July 2003.

[Back to Contents](#)  
[On to Appendix 1](#)

## HOMELESSNESS REVIEW 2003

### APPENDIX I

<b>Profile of Homelessness Presentations by Priority Need</b>			
<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>No of Cases</b>		
	<b>2000/01</b>	<b>2001/02</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
Household includes dependent children	63	83	75
Household member is pregnant and no other dependent children	20	19	20
Aged 16/17			4
Applicant formerly in "care" and aged 18 to 20 years old			
Homeless due to emergency	2	2	1
Old Age	11	5	17
Physical disability	5	12	5
Mental illness or Handicap	17	11	23
Other special reason	7	3	13
Having been in care			1
Having served in HM forces			
Having been in custody/on remand			1
Home because of violence or threat of violence, including domestic violence	16	7	9
<b>TOTAL CASES</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>168</b>

<b>Reasons for Homelessness</b>	<b>No of Cases</b>		
	<b>2000/01</b>	<b>2001/02</b>	<b>2002/03</b>
Parents no longer willing/able to accommodate	31	12	26
Relatives/friends no longer willing/able to accommodate	20	23	20
Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	12	15	17
<b>Violence</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
Violent breakdown of relationship with partner	23	20	16
<b>Harassment, threats or intimidation</b>			5
Racially motivated harassment			1
Other forms of harassment			4
Mortgage arrears	7	2	2
<b>Rent Arrears</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>
Local authority/other public sector dwellings			1
RSL's	1	3	1
Private sector dwellings	5	3	1
<b>Loss of rented/tied accommodation</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>44</b>
Termination of assured shorthold tenant		30	32
Other reasons			12
In institution/care	9	6	4
Other	11	28	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>168</b>

[Back to Contents](#)