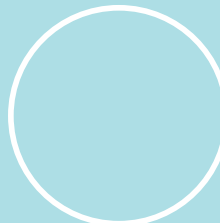
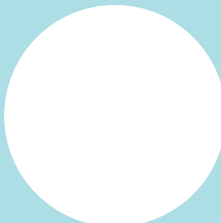
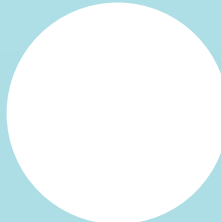


Homelessness Strategy
2008-2013
Executive Summary





INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is a national housing priority. The Scottish Government have agreed five national homelessness outcomes:

- ◆ *No one need sleep rough,*
- ◆ *Existing homelessness becomes more visible,*
- ◆ *Sustainable resettlement is secured for people who become homeless,*
- ◆ *Fewer people become homeless in the first place,*
- ◆ *The duration of homelessness is reduced.*

The Government has also set a national target that, by 2012, anyone in Scotland who is not intentionally homeless will have a right to permanent accommodation and an interim target that, by 2009, local authorities will reduce the

percentage of homeless applicants assessed as "non priority" by 50%.

These targets are challenging and underpin the actions set out in this Strategy.

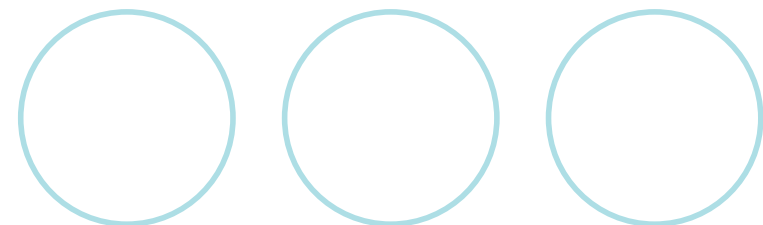
LOCAL CONTEXT

This Homelessness Strategy has been prepared in the context of other key local plans and strategies: Strategic Community Plan, 2005-2010, Corporate Plan 2008-2011 and Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009.

In terms of the Strategic Community Plan, homelessness is addressed under the themes of Regenerating our Communities and Improving Health and Wellbeing.

The Corporate Plan goals of:

- ◆ *increasing our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination*



- ◆ *Continuing to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our citizens and communities,*
- ◆ *Further developing a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy*

Are testament to the fact that we recognise that homelessness is not simply a housing issue.

Finally, in terms of the Local Housing Strategy, two key priorities are providing local people with a range of affordable housing options, including those who have specific housing needs and preventing and alleviating homelessness.

Work has begun on the development of the next Local Housing Strategy and this Homelessness Strategy will be a fundamental building block of this.

Following consultation with stakeholders, Falkirk Council has approved this new Homelessness Strategy covering the five years from 2008 to 2013. This Strategy will be our "road map" for meeting the 2009 and 2012 targets.

PARTNERSHIP

The causes and effects of homelessness are complex and it is vital that the Council continues to work in partnership with other agencies in both the statutory and voluntary sectors if homelessness in the area is to be tackled. The commitment of partners to the development of this Strategy is appreciated.

VISION

Our Vision for this Strategy is:

By 2012, no one need be homeless in the Falkirk Council area.

How will we achieve this?

We will focus on our three Key Aims:

- ◆ *Prevention: we will prevent homelessness by raising awareness of the help that is available in the area and by developing new services to meet local needs,*
- ◆ *Accommodation: we will make best use of the available accommodation by assisting people to explore the full range of housing options available in the area,*
- ◆ *Support: we will help vulnerable people to access the support they need so that they do not become homeless again.*



HOMELESSNESS IN FALKIRK (2007-08)

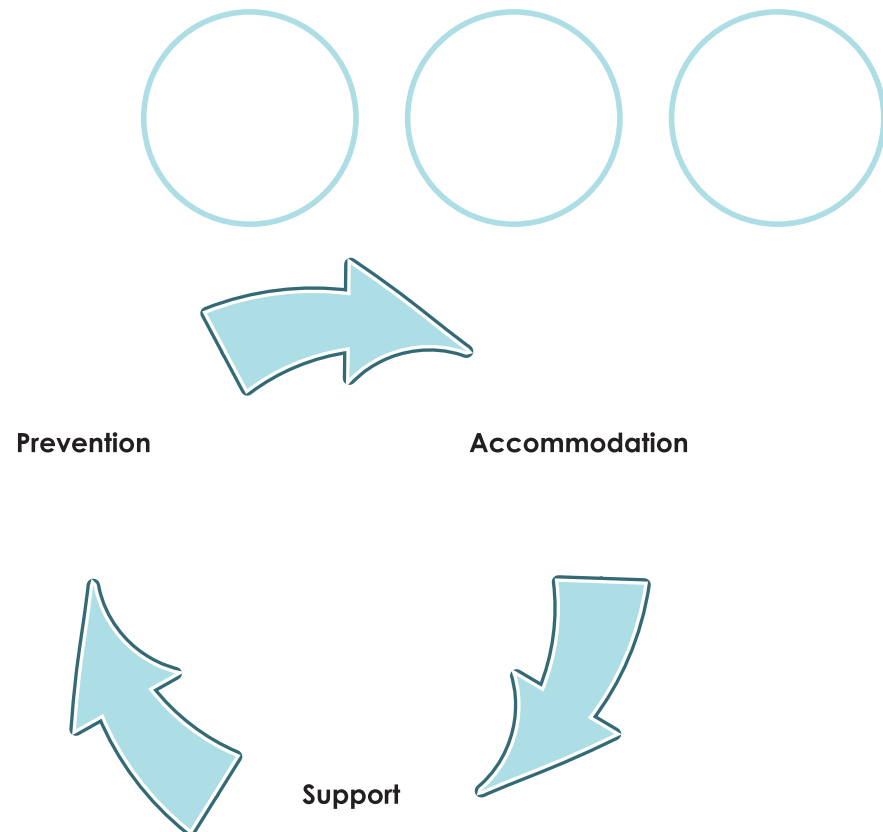
- ◆ Homeless presentations have increased by 66% since 2004,
- ◆ Relationship breakdown is the greatest cause of homelessness: nearly a quarter of people become homeless because they have been asked to leave their existing accommodation; 38% of applicants become homeless because of a dispute with a partner/spouse,
- ◆ Violence/abuse is involved in around 60% of disputes between partners/spouses,
- ◆ The majority of people becoming homeless are either single or single parents,
- ◆ The majority of homeless applicants are aged 26-59 years (56%) or 18-25 years (33%),
- ◆ The percentage of people over 60 years who become homeless is small

(4%) and the number of young people aged 17 or under is relatively small (8%) compared to the general population in those age groups. However, people in these age groups who become homeless are particularly vulnerable and may require specialist support,

- ◆ 33% of homeless households in 2007/08 had children and the effect that homelessness can have on children is recognised,

Current Services for Homeless People in the Falkirk Council Area

The hub of the services provided for homeless people in the Falkirk Council area is the Accommodation Resource Centre (ARC) based in Falkirk High Street. The ARC is the main point of contact for homeless people who are referred on to other services to meet their needs after a full assessment of their accommodation and support needs is completed.



2012 – THE WAY FORWARD

This Homelessness Strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will work together to meet the national 2012 target. This work will be monitored and evaluated by the Housing and Social Care Committee and the multi-agency Falkirk Homelessness Forum. The Strategy has been prepared as an integral part of the Council's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) which is currently being developed. This means that homelessness and solutions to it will be addressed alongside wider issues about housing need, supply and demand and the quality of the housing available in the local area.

Key areas for action over the next five years are noted below:

PREVENTION

- ◆ Improving local access to homelessness services through the provision of high quality housing advice and information in our local offices,
- ◆ Increasing awareness of the services available to prevent homelessness and help those looking for a home,
- ◆ Further developing our assessment processes to better identify any individual's requirements for both accommodation and support,

- ◆ Improving and developing the range of services available to help prevent homelessness e.g. debt and welfare benefits advice, family mediation, befriending, furniture provision, employment/training initiatives,
- ◆ Developing a focussed response to the housing needs of young people,



ACCOMMODATION

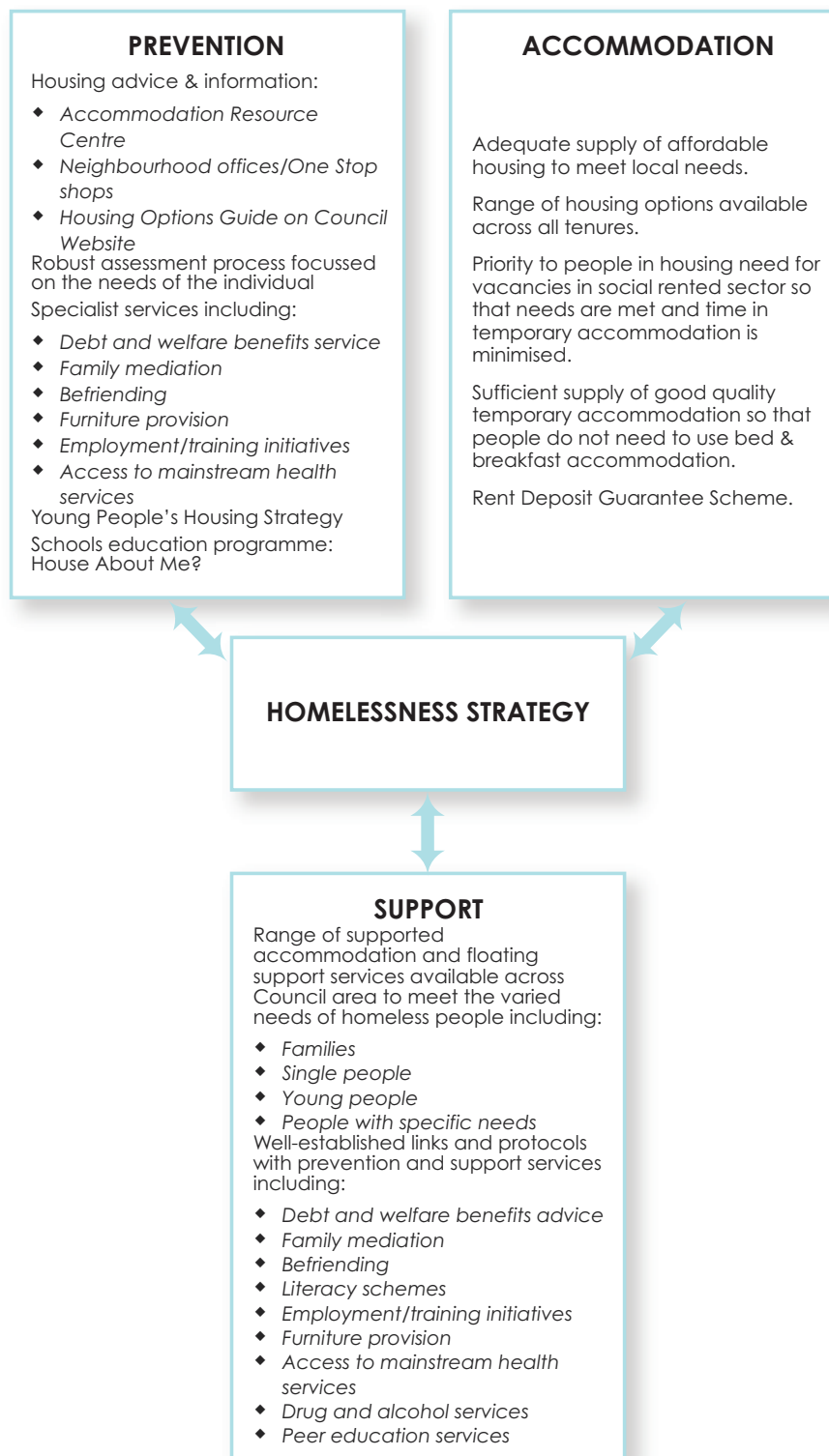
- ◆ Developing a "housing options" approach to meeting housing needs by exploring the full range of housing opportunities available to any individual,
- ◆ Extending the range of housing options available locally by working with potential partners in all housing sectors,
- ◆ Reviewing the priority awarded to homeless people under Council and Housing Associations' allocations policies,
- ◆ Reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation,
- ◆ Reducing the time people spend in temporary accommodation,
- ◆ Improving the quality of our temporary accommodation,

SUPPORT

- ◆ Reviewing the supported accommodation and housing support services available to ensure that they can meet local needs up to 2012 and beyond,

- ◆ Reviewing inter-Service/agency protocols to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the needs of homeless people,
- ◆ Implementing the Forth Valley Health and Homelessness Action Plan as it relates to the Falkirk Council area,
- ◆ Improving homeless people's access to primary health care services,
- ◆ Increasing the awareness of staff across all agencies that work with homeless people about the issues that they face and the help available in the Council area.

The chart opposite sets out how services for homeless people will develop during the course of this Strategy:



Comments and Feedback

We welcome your feedback and comments on the Falkirk Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 and we would also like to hear from you if you are interested in participating in future consultation exercises or wish to be notified of events undertaken as part of the process of implementing the Strategy.

You can get in touch with us in a variety of ways. You can write, telephone, email or fax using the details opposite:

Corporate and Neighbourhood Services
Suite 4
The Forum
Callendar Business Park
Falkirk
FK1 1XR

T: 01324 590780
F: 01324 590781
E: cns.supportservices@falkirk.gov.uk

You can download a full copy of the Strategy from the Council's website:
<http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/homelessness>

If you would like this information in another language, Braille, LARGE PRINT or audio, please speak to member of staff at the Accommodation Resource Centre.

Arabic

اي توضح قلب جسم وا قري بك فرح ا , لي رب , يرخ ا ؤ غلب تا مول عمل ا هذه يلع لوصح لالاب ب غرت تنك اذا كنم او جرن

نكسلا رداصم زكرم يف ان يفظوم دح ا عم ملكتلا

Chinese

如果你需要這個信息其他版本，如：另一種語言文字，盲人用點字，大字體印刷或者錄音版本，請你聯系房屋資源信息中心的工作人員。

Lithuanian

Jeigu jūs norėtumėte gauti šią informaciją kita kalba, Brailio raštu, stambiu šriftu ar įgarsintą, prašome kreipkitės į Gyvenamųjų Patalpų Fondo darbuotoją.

Polish

Jeśli Śyczą sobie Państwo tych informacji w innym języku, Braillem, DUŚYM DRUKIEM lub w wersji audio, prosimy zwrócić się do pracownika Accommodation Resource Centre.

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس معلومات کی اور بھی زبانوں میں یا آڈیو یا بریل یا بڑے فونٹ میں یا کسی اور زبان میں ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم ہمیں مطلع کریں۔
اگر آپ کو اس معلومات کی اور بھی زبانوں میں یا آڈیو یا بریل یا بڑے فونٹ میں یا کسی اور زبان میں ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم ہمیں مطلع کریں۔

Punjabi

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਂ
ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਫੋਂਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ: