

Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2013-2014

Task number: 1	Action: Herts Young Homeless – continuation and expansion of Schools Education Project. To include the Home Truths scheme and the Solve It Resolve It scheme.
Relevant Strategy Priority	a) Prevention of Homelessness.
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households homeless because of Parental Eviction
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	ii) To actively work with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs.
Project leads	Herts Young Homeless
Resources	Homelessness Grant
Timescale	Ongoing.
Description of project	<p>Educational establishments with whom Herts Young Homeless have worked include secondary schools, colleges, youth clubs and youth groups. The Home Truths programme provides education to young people to prepare them for the realities of leaving home and living independently. It informs them of the options, support and advice that is available. In providing this service, the aim is to reduce the occurrence of youth homelessness.</p> <p>Solve It Resolve It is a mediation service which aims to resolve and minimise conflict between young people and their parents or other family members. This aims to help young people to continue living in the family home.</p>
Outputs	<p>Herts Young Homeless are aiming to achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To educate 700 young people in Watford each year through the Home Truths project. • To deliver 24 Solve It Resolve It sessions at Watford educational establishments. <p>In addition, Herts Young Homeless will deliver the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarterly monitoring information ▪ Quarterly face-to-face operational meetings between WBC Officers and appropriate representatives for the organisation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective service user engagement ▪ Equality data as required under the Equality Act 2010.
Outcomes	<p>Young people and their families may see a social rented tenancy as their only route to independent living, and homelessness caused by parental eviction as the best method of achieving this or their only housing option in very difficult circumstances. The education programmes provided for secondary school age children by Herts Young Homeless aims to show young people the difficulties involved in taking this route, and also the fact that other housing-related options are available to achieve independence. The overall aim is to reduce homelessness caused by parental eviction. Mediation and conflict resolution also aims to minimise levels of parental eviction by assisting parents and young people to resolve disputes reasonably harmoniously.</p>

Task number: 2	Action: Implementing and monitoring of the HARI Homelessness Protocol
Relevant Strategy Priority	a) Prevention of Homelessness
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All homeless households
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<p>ii) To actively work with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs.</p> <p>v) To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support.</p> <p>viii) To have a Homelessness Strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness, and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs.</p>
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Strategy Officer ➤ Housing Demand Team ➤ Housing Supply Team ➤ HARI Co-ordinator ➤ Registered providers
Resources	Within existing resources.
Timescale	On-going

<p>Description of project</p>	<p>HARI is a well established forum for joint working between the two councils and registered providers operating in their areas. The Housing Management sub-group meets quarterly and is the relevant forum for dealing with most homelessness related issues.</p> <p>The primary objective of this agreement is to specify the approach to be taken by all Registered Providers (RPs) within the Watford and Three Rivers Housing and Regeneration Initiative (HARI) in seeking to prevent homelessness. The agreement covers the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Better partnership working ii) Sustainable and mixed communities iii) Preventing homelessness iv) Making best use of existing housing stock v) Directing investment vi) Good practice.
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>Implementation of actions within Themes Two and Three of the Protocol <i>Sustainable and Mixed Communities</i> and <i>Preventing Homelessness</i> and, in particular, ensuring the following are in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify the support needs of new tenants who are identified as high categories of risk; • Joint home visits between Registered Provider officers and Local Authority homelessness officers at breach of the first court order for suspended possession. • Partnership working between Registered Provider and Housing Benefit teams, particularly regarding communication on Discretionary Housing Benefit payments.
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>The overall aims of this project is to facilitate effective partnership working between Watford Borough Council, Three Rivers Borough Council and their partner registered providers in preventing and tackling homelessness.</p>

Task number: 3	Action: Understanding and improving methods of preventing illegal eviction in the private rented sector
Relevant Strategy Priority	a) Prevention of Homelessness
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households homeless because of the ending of a privately rented tenancy.
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<p>i) To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy-in across all local authority services.</p> <p>iii) To offer a housing options and homelessness prevention service, including written advice to all clients.</p>
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Strategy Officer ➤ Environmental Health Manager
Resources	Within existing resources. Homelessness Grant when required.
Timescale	<i>Specific date to be given.</i>
Description of project	<p>This project will look in more depth at the issue of illegal eviction in Watford. It will focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The numbers of, and reasons for, illegal eviction in the private rented sector • The areas of the borough in which illegal eviction in the private rented sector has occurred most frequently. • The history of tenancies which have led to illegal eviction. • The range of measures which can prevent illegal eviction. • The range of measures which can be taken against landlords who evict illegally.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence base and action plan collated and agreed for implementation. • Range of activities undertaken to tackle the issues identified.
Outcomes	The aim of this project is to see an overall fall in the numbers of evictions deemed to be illegal in the private rented sector.

Task number: 4	Action: Reviewing our Housing Advice Offer, including an assessment of front of house operations by the Customer Services Centre. The Government's Gold Standard for Homelessness Services will guide this.
Relevant Strategy Priority	a) Prevention of Homelessness
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All homeless households
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<p>i) To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy-in across all local authority services.</p> <p>iii) To offer a housing options and homelessness prevention service, including written advice to all clients.</p>
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Strategy Officer ➤ Housing Demand Manager ➤ Housing Supply Manager ➤ Customer Services Centre Manager
Resources	Within existing resources
Timescale	To be completed by May 2014.
Description of project	The project will involve joint working with between the Housing Demand Team and the Customer Services Team to improve the level of service which potentially homeless households receive at the first point of contact with the Council. The Gold Standard will provide guidance on the levels of service which should be achieved.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suite of baseline performance indicators • A suite of baseline customer satisfaction measures. <p>A new way of measuring customer satisfaction will be devised. A new form will be designed to gather information from both face-to-face interview and telephone calls.</p>

Outcomes	The aim of the project is to improve the customer experience at the first point of contact and to allow a good range of advice to be given without a referral to the Housing Demand Team being required. An additional aim is to manage expectations of customers by specifying in detail the services which are available.
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Task number: 5	Action: Introducing a programme of Home Visits for households who have applied for assistance under homelessness legislation.
Relevant Strategy Priority	a) Prevention of Homelessness
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households homeless because of Parental Eviction • Households homeless because of the ending of a Privately Rented Tenancy
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	iii) Offer a housing options and homelessness prevention service, including written advice to clients.
Project leads	Housing Demand Team
Resources	Within existing resources
Timescale	December 2013
Description of project	<p>This project will involve home visits to households after they have made an application for assistance under homelessness legislation. The Housing Officer will explain the following to the household:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The full implications of making a homelessness application. • The temporary accommodation service which is offered • The fact that the local authority's duty may not necessarily be discharged with an offer of a social rented tenancy; a private rented tenancy may be offered in order to discharge the duty. • The other housing options which are available.
Outputs	A full plan for home visits will be completed by October 2013. Monitoring mechanisms and targets will be set by December 2013.

Outcomes	The aim of this new system is to manage expectations and reduce any preconceptions that gaining a social rented tenancy is an easy process. Households who have made a homelessness application will be better informed on what the process involves and what services and housing options are available. Home visits may also facilitate the option to remain in the family home, if possible.

Task number: 6	Action: Implementing the Single Homelessness Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication methods ▪ Increasing the supply of Shared Housing
Relevant Strategy Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevention of Homelessness b) Making best use of temporary accommodation c) Improving access to settled accommodation d) Providing support to manage health and life issues
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single homeless people with an element of vulnerability
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) To actively work with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs. iii) To offer a housing options and homelessness prevention service, including written advice to all clients. v) To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support. vi) To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support for both clients and landlords.
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Section Head ➤ Housing Strategy Officer ➤ Single Homelessness Project Steering Group

Resources	County-wide Department of Communities and Local Government Homelessness Grant. Within existing resources.
Timescale	March 2014
Description of project	Nationally the sum of £20 million has been made available to local authorities by central government to ensure frontline provision prevents homelessness and rough sleeping among single people of any age. Herts Single Homelessness Project has been established by the ten district councils in Hertfordshire to administer the £367,000 grant funding allocation for the county. Watford Borough Council is the lead authority for the project. The grant conditions stipulate that the funding should be used to bolster frontline services across the county through co-ordinated initiatives and should not be divided between the district areas.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specification is completed. • The tendering process is completed.
Outcomes	Herts Single Homelessness Project will have commissioned services which will meet outcomes identified as key priorities through the local consultation and guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government which administers the grant. There will have been an increase in the number of services offered to single homeless people.

Task number: 7.	Action: Implementing the new Hospital Discharge Protocol and a programme of training for health professionals.
Relevant Strategy Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevention of homelessness b) Improving access to settled accommodation c) Providing support to manage health and life issues
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single homeless people with an element of vulnerability.
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) To actively work with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs. v) To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support.

Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Demand Team ➤ Prevention of Single Homelessness Group (PoSH). ➤ West Herts Hospital Trust.
Resources	Within existing resources.
Timescale	December 2013
Description of project	<p>This project is an agreement between Watford Council's Housing Team, Watford General Hospital Shrodells Discharge Team, Langley House and other medical establishments to assist people who are unable to leave hospital because they do not have a suitable home to which they can return. The protocol involves the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint assessments. • Training exercises for both parties.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed protocol with monitoring arrangements.
Outcomes	The aim of this protocol is to prevent cases of bed blocking where a patient cannot be discharged from hospital because they do not have a suitable home to which they can return, and also to improve communication between Watford Council's Housing Team and Watford General Hospital Shrodells Discharge Team and other medical establishments.

Task number: 8	Action: Investigate the possibilities of employment and training initiatives for homeless people with Job Centre Plus
Relevant Strategy Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevention of homelessness b) Making best use of temporary accommodation c) Providing support to manage health and life issues.
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households homeless because of Parental Eviction • Households in temporary accommodation • Single homeless people with an element of vulnerability
Relevance to Government's	ii) To actively work with voluntary sector and other partners to address support, education,

ten challenges.	employment and training needs.
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Strategy Officer ➤ Economic Development Officer ➤ Job Centre Plus
Resources	Within existing resources.
Timescale	October 2014
Description of project	<p>This project will aim to provide services related to education and employment to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homeless households, especially those in temporary accommodation. • households who are vulnerable to becoming homeless. <p>A significant feature of households accepted for assistance under homelessness legislation is the low level who contain a household member who is employed. A study of 102 households who were homeless because of parental eviction in 2012 and 2013 shows that 50% did not contain any member who was working. This is compared with an unemployment rate in Watford in July 2013 of 2.4%. It is possible that low aspirations relating to education and employment can lead to young people to follow the homelessness route in order to gain independence and their own home. Advice and support can also be provided to households who have already applied as homeless, especially those living in temporary accommodation while they are awaiting an offer of settled housing.</p>
Outputs	New routes to education or employment advice opportunities, or expansion of existing schemes.
Outcomes	The aim of the project is promote education and employment opportunities to young people who are most vulnerable to becoming homeless. This will be guided particularly by locations in the borough where households who make homeless applications tend to be most concentrated. It will also target residents of temporary accommodation in the borough.

Task number: 9	Action: Herts Young Homeless – expanded Dual Diagnosis Project
Relevant Strategy Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevention of Homelessness b) Providing support to manage health and life issues
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single homeless people with an element of vulnerability
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) To actively work with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs. v) To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support.
Project leads	Herts Young Homeless
Resources	Homelessness Grant
Timescale	March 2014.
Description of project	The Herts Young Homeless Dual Diagnosis Project supports people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have both mental health and substance misuse problems. People are supported to access services that will help them towards mental health recovery and abstinence from substances, as well as supporting them to access or maintain tenancies while they manage complex needs. Watford accounts for a large proportion of the demand for this county-wide service.
Outputs	<p>The funding assigned to this scheme in this action plan will enable the current service to be delivered in Watford to meet identified needs.</p> <p>Herts Young Homeless will deliver the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarterly monitoring information ▪ Quarterly face-to-face operational meetings between WBC Officers and appropriate representatives for the organisation. ▪ Effective service user engagement. ▪ Equality data as required under the Equality Act 2010.
Outcomes	The aim of this project is to reduce homelessness among people with both mental health problems and substance misuse problems, and also to minimise the need for other public sector organisations

	to use resources to support this group e.g. the Police, health organisations.
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Task number: 10	Action: Relaunch of the Prevention of Single Homelessness (PoSH) Group
Relevant Strategy Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevention of homelessness b) Making best use of temporary accommodation c) Improving access to settled accommodation d) Providing support to manage health and life issues
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single homeless people with an element of vulnerability
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy-in across all local authority services. ii) To actively work with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs. v) To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support.
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Strategy Officer ➤ The Prevention of Single Homelessness (PoSH) Group
Resources	Existing resources
Timescale	Ongoing
Description of project	<p>The Prevention of Single Homelessness Group (PoSH) was set up in 2008 to achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make optimum use of all available resources to tackle homelessness in Watford, identifying opportunities to work together. • To ensure agencies' policies and procedures prevent homelessness wherever possible and do not contribute to homelessness . • To address the wider problems of homeless clients, including health, support, advice, training, employment etc. • To stimulate open discussion, acknowledging the different pressures being experienced by

	<p>partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To concentrate on action, including delivery of Watford Borough Council's Homelessness Strategy and responding to local issues as they arise. • To monitor and report on successes, emerging issues and trends in homelessness. <p>The membership is from partner organisations including the YMCA, Herts Young Homeless, Watford New Hope Trust, GROW, Job Centre Plus, Watford Community Housing Trust, Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association.</p> <p>It has been decided to relaunch the group to ensure that it responds most effectively to current issues in Watford.</p>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Terms of Reference • Revised membership • A minimum of four meetings each year.
Outcomes	PoSH will act as a very effective vehicle for partnership working in Watford.

Task number: 11	Action: Investigating options to expand the portfolio of good standard temporary accommodation
Relevant Strategy Priority	a) Making best use of temporary accommodation.
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households in temporary accommodation
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<p>ix) To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.</p> <p>x) To not place families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than six weeks.</p>
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Supply Team ➤ Property

	➤ Buildings and Projects
Resources	Within existing resources. This will include both capital and revenue funding and leveraging in external funding as appropriate.
Timescale	Financial year 2013-2014.
Description of project	When a household applies for assistance under homelessness legislation, under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 they can be offered temporary accommodation. This will allow them to have somewhere to live while they are awaiting the outcome of investigations into their homelessness application and while they are awaiting an offer of settled accommodation. Watford Borough Council is seeking additional good standard temporary accommodation options to avoid the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Bed and Breakfast accommodation is both costly and a constricting temporary housing option.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in units available to meet demand which are good quality and more cost effective than at present. • Aiming for a maximum of 20 nightly lets and no Bed and Breakfast placements.
Outcomes	The use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation will be minimised. Households requiring temporary housing will be offered accommodation is a good standard and allow them to maintain their normal day-to-day activities. A more cost effective solution will be implemented than current arrangements.

Task number: 12	Action: Defining the Private Rented Sector offer for landlords and tenants, including the establishment of the HomeLet scheme and the launch of the Rent Deposit Scheme
Relevant Strategy Priority	a) Improving access to settled accommodation
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households homeless because of Parental Eviction • Households homeless because of the ending of a privately rented tenancy.

Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	vi) To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support for both clients and landlords.
Project leads	Housing Supply Team
Resources	Homelessness Grant
Timescale	Present to March 2014 – evaluation to take place using targets.
Description of project	<p>Local authorities are now able to discharge their duties to homeless households with the offer of a privately rented property, provided the accommodation meets particular standards. The consent of the homeless household is no longer required in order for this type of offer to be made. In response, Watford Council's Housing Supply Team has been working to provide incentives for private landlords to work in partnership with the local authority to allow nominates to their properties for households in housing need. The HomeLet scheme has been devised which provides the following incentives to private landlords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive payments • A bond to the value of two months • Registration on the National Landlords Association Landlord Associates Scheme • Tenants who have received money advice • Direct payment requests for Housing Benefit • Tenancy visits and a troubleshooting service.
Outputs	Aiming for 62 new HomeLet placements during 2013-2014 and 18 renewals.
Outcomes	The aim of this project is to increase the availability of good standard privately rented accommodation which is available for nominations of households in housing need.

Task number: 13	Action: Investigate new housing options for single females without dependants
Relevant Strategy Priority	a) Improving access to settled accommodation
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single homeless people with an element of vulnerability

Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	v) To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support.
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Strategy Officer ➤ Housing Demand Manager ➤ PoSH members
Resources	Further information to be provided.
Timescale	October 2014
Description of project	Supported housing for single homeless people in Watford tends to be male dominated and partner organisations have identified a need for more female-focused provision. One example of the need is where women have experienced domestic violence and may not feel safe in accommodation shared with a high proportion of men. Victims of domestic violence who <u>have</u> children receive a high level of support in Watford. This includes a women's refuge, support and legal advice from the Women's Centre, support from two independent Domestic Violence Advisers, funds to cover transportation, and two forums which focus on the needs of households with children who suffer from domestic violence. However, single females who experience domestic violence can be a more difficult group to assist, with less of a tendency to leave the perpetrator, less willingness to be accommodated in a women's refuge and more of a propensity to misuse alcohol and drugs. In addition, there is less provision for this group and partner organisations have reported that the number has shown a significant increase. This project will aim to create a bespoke accommodation and support service for single females without dependants who have or are experiencing domestic violence.
Outputs	Project plan to be devised.
Outcomes	The aim of this project is to provide a bespoke housing and support service for single women without dependants who have or are experiencing homelessness. This project will reduce homelessness among this group and promote a planned pathways to settled accommodation and improved wellbeing.

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Task number: 14	Action: Street Outreach Work
Relevant Strategy Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevention of homelessness b) Improving access to settled accommodation c) Providing support to manage health and life issues
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single people with an element of vulnerability
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) To actively work with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education employment and training. iv) To adopt a <i>No Second Night Out</i> model of an effective local alternative.
Project leads	Watford New Hope Trust
Resources	Homelessness Grant
Timescale	Ongoing
Description of project	<p>Historically, rough sleeping in Watford has been higher than average for the county of Hertfordshire. There are a number of reasons for this, including the presence of a mainline railway station connected to London in the town and the comparatively high number of agencies to help homeless people in the town. The majority of rough sleepers are single men. Since its establishment in 1989 Watford New Hope Trust has taken on a role of assisting this group. Its Outreach Team, based at the New Hope Trust Day Centre, goes out on the streets on a regular basis to support rough sleepers and to provide immediate support to meet their most pressing needs. Rough sleepers are then signposted to other sources of support such as the Day Centre, accommodation options, medical help and benefits advice in Watford and elsewhere. The Reconnections Services assists rough sleepers in returning to their area of origin.</p>
Outputs	<p>Watford New Hope Trust will deliver the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dedicated street outreach service. ▪ Quarterly monitoring information ▪ Quarterly face-to-face operational meetings between WBC Officers and appropriate

	<p>representatives for the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective service user engagement. ▪ Equality data under the Equality Act 2010.
Outcomes	The project will continue to provide a high level of support to people with the highest level of housing need. It will also reduce the need for resources from other public organisations such as the Police, Environmental Health and health bodies.

Task number: 15	Action: Lever in funding opportunities
Relevant Strategy Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevention of homelessness b) Making best use of temporary accommodation c) Improving access to settled accommodation d) Providing support to manage life and health issues
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All homeless households
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy-in across all local authority services. ii) To actively work with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs.
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Strategy Officer ➤ PoSH members ➤ Voluntary Funding Team
Resources	Within existing resources.
Timescale	Ongoing
Description of project	The Government periodically ringfences funding for projects which meet particular aims and then invites organisations to bid for money from this funds. In addition, there is a now a greater range of

	funding sources related to resolving issues connected to homelessness e.g. Health and Well-being, National Lottery funding. Homelessness organisations in Watford have reported the need for a more co-ordinated approach to applying for funding for projects.
Outputs	<p>The aim of this project is to create a more co-ordinated system by which homelessness organisations can apply for funding. The assistance which this new system will provide will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent information on the local context, showing the possible impact of any new proposals. • Details of how applications will fit with Council aims and objectives • Details of how applications will fit with and complement existing services and the work of other organisations in the borough. <p>We will work towards a minimum of two funding bids each year.</p>
Outcomes	Bids will have stronger evidence and be more closely aligned to shared priorities, thus increasing the chances of success and longer-term sustainability.

Task number: 16	Action: Introduce a pilot arrangement for an emergency fund with Watford Credit Union
Relevant Strategy Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevention of homelessness b) Improving access to settled accommodation
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All homeless households
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) To actively work with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs. iii) To offer a housing options and homelessness prevention service, including written advice to all clients.
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Housing Supply Team ➤ Watford Credit Union ➤ Environmental Health
Resources	Homelessness Grant
Timescale	Ongoing
Description of project	This project consists of an agreement between Watford Council's Housing Team and the Watford

	Credit Union. It will allow housing applicants who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or in high housing need to access housing related loans without completing the usual qualifying saving period. The loans are anticipated to be up to £1,000 in value. They would cover one-off costs to secure or retain accommodation, or necessary expenses associated with resolving or improving a housing situation. Recycling fund, once repaid, will enable a greater number of applicants to be assisted than the current system of non-repayable grants. This proposal was approved by Cabinet in July 2013.
Outputs	Agreement finalised and criteria for referral launched.
Outcomes	This project will allow households to access small amounts of money which will assist them in preventing their homelessness. These small amounts of money are often difficult to access from conventional sources. The aim is for households to resolve their own homelessness issues e.g. by providing a deposit or rent in advance to access the private rented sector.

Task number: 17	Action: Introduce a Tenancy Fraud Initiative. Produce a protocol to assist households who are evicted from a home which has been let due to Tenancy Fraud
Relevant Strategy Priority	a) Improving access to settled accommodation.
Relevant Priority Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All homeless households
Relevance to Government's ten challenges.	i) To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy-in across all local authority services.
Project leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ HARI-appointed Tenancy Fraud Officer ➤ HARI (Housing and Regeneration Initiative) ➤ Housing Strategy Officer (to monitor)
Resources	Local Government Association Grant
Timescale	Tenancy Fraud Investigator post to be funded July 2013-June 2014.

Description of project	<p>In late 2012 the Local Government Association invited the local HARI Group (Housing and Regeneration Initiative) in Watford and Three Rivers to bid for a fund which had been created to set up tenancy fraud projects. The HARI Group submitted a bid for the funding, with Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association and Watford Community Housing Trust acting as the lead register provider partners. A proposal for a Tenancy Fraud Investigator post was compiled. On 8 February 2013 HARI was advised by the Local Government Association that a total of £27,000 would be awarded for the use of employing a Tenancy Fraud Investigator in Watford and Three Rivers on a twelve month contract. Any outstanding costs would be met by HARI's funds. The Tenancy Fraud Investigator took up their post on 1 July 2013 and will be working in both local authority areas. Activities will include carrying out tenancy checks, creating data-sharing arrangements, overseeing legal action to recover possession of illegally-occupied properties, and raising awareness of the issue of tenancy fraud. Initial tasks will include developing policies, procedures and referrals mechanisms relating to tenancy fraud.</p>
Outputs	<p>A protocol for dealing with tenancy fraud cases will be agreed and implemented where there is a risk of homelessness.</p>
Outcomes	<p>The scheme will assist in preventing and tackling homelessness in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freeing-up social rented accommodation which has been occupied illegally, thereby providing accommodation for households in housing need. • Providing support and advice to households who have been occupying social rented homes illegally and assisting them to find accommodation options which they can occupy on a legitimate basis.