

Blackpool Council  
Housing Related Support  
Commissioning Strategy 2014 – 2016

Blackpool Council



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## 1. Introduction and overview

This Housing Related Support Commissioning Strategy (HRSCS) outlines our commissioning intentions for the next two years. The aim of the strategy is to set out Blackpool's vision and establish the key priorities for development. Commissioners are keen to develop and deliver a range of integrated services which work actively to promote choice and independence.

## 2. What is housing related support?

The Housing Related Support (HRS) programme (formally Supporting People programme) began on 1st April 2003. Housing Related Support Services are defined as "support services which are provided to any person for the purpose of developing that person's capacity to live independently in accommodation or sustaining his/her capacity to do so". Housing related support is provided to prevent people from needing more intensive forms of support. It can be provided in supported accommodation based services or in a person's own home regardless of tenure (floating support).

Housing Related Support Services are not services which are intended either to meet a statutory duty under community care legislation or which are being used to discharge statutory duties in relation to after-care services as a result of hospital discharge.

## 3. Achievements since the last strategy

Blackpool's Supporting People Strategy 2005 - 2010 set the direction for the programme and resulted in a number of changes to the way in which services were delivered in order to fit more strategically with local need. The strategy led to remodelling and tendering of some services:

- Extra Care Sheltered Housing Scheme
- Generic floating support service
- Direct access shelter for people over the age of 25 years

Since 2010 services have developed in line with local and national strategy. This has led to:

- Housing Related Support Needs Assessment 2011
- Supported Lodging Scheme for Young People
- Mentoring Scheme for Young People
- Commissioning a Single Point of Access Scheme for Housing Related Support Services
- Review and remodel of Blackpool Coastal Housing Sheltered Housing
- Application of the local connection criteria for HRS services
- Where appropriate the merging of funding e.g. Telecare and Extra Care Housing

## 4. Changes to housing related support

### 4.1. Nationally

Since the implementation of the Supporting People (SP) Programme in 2003 there have been many changes including; budget changes and the removal of certain reporting requirements. This commissioning strategy has considered these changes.

In June 2010 the Supporting People Administration Grant paid to local authorities to offset the costs of employing Supporting People teams was abolished. The Government announced that funding for the SP programme would continue to be made available to local authorities but that this would no

longer be ring fenced and would instead be paid as part of the Formula Grant. However, due to the realities of budgetary pressures on local authorities, many authorities, including Blackpool, had to make decisions about levels of savings and these inevitably affected SP services. The removal of the ring fence of the SP budget has meant a gradual dilution of the programme nationally.

From 2011, the requirement for local authorities to collect Key Performance Indicator data and Client Record Data Forms was removed. Blackpool providers have however continued to complete Client Record Data Forms and provide quarterly Key Performance Information to Commissioners.

#### 4.2 Locally

In April 2013 responsibility for the commissioning of HRS was moved to Adult Services, Commissioning and Contracting Team and the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care.

As with all local authorities Blackpool Council has had to make difficult decisions as to how to apply budget savings and these have inevitably affected HRS Services, with Providers being asked to apply budget reductions to their services. Providers have worked with Commissioners to achieve these savings by redesigning how they deliver services, reducing the number of hours of support provided to service users or by reducing the number of units being delivered. The Council has, however, chosen to keep its commitment to spending in this sector, whilst the current financial envelope permits.

#### 5. Future challenges

Significant challenges will need to be faced during the years that this strategy covers. There continues to be pressure on the Council's budgets, with further anticipated reductions to the funding available to deliver HRS.

Government policy and legislative changes including the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Localism Act 2011 will have a salient impact on the nature of services required to support people to live independently in their own tenancies. The changes to welfare benefits will impact negatively on Blackpool and potentially increase the number of homeless households, increasing demand for HRS. The Localism Act give local authorities more powers to set their own eligibility criteria for accepting people on their housing registers. In Blackpool, the Council has used the discretion allowed within the act to increase the local connection for non-statutory homelessness cases, to having lived in Blackpool for the last 3 consecutive years.

#### 6. National and local strategic relevance

This Commissioning Strategy has been developed with consideration to the wider context of national and local policy and across a range of agendas, including the following:

- Blackpool Council's Vision, Mission and Priorities 2013
- Blackpool's Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013
- Blackpool Housing Statement 2009 – 2012
- Blackpool Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2012 – 2015
- Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide (2011)
- Making every contact count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness (2012)

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment ([www.blackpooljsna.org.uk](http://www.blackpooljsna.org.uk)) process provides guidance for Commissioners and suggests a key point for consideration is to meet the housing and support needs and promote the independence of Blackpool's most vulnerable residents, including housing for vulnerable people and enhanced housing options for people at risk of homelessness. This Commissioning Strategy supports this.

## 7. Outcomes for housing related support

The benefits of providing HRS and the outcomes which can be achieved are well documented. Reducing budgets requires more outcome focused services and contracts which prioritise achieving outcomes. Consultation has taken place with providers and service users and identified future priority outcomes as below:

- Service users are able to maintain accommodation and avoid eviction.
- Service users are supported/able to access appropriate move on accommodation.
- Service users are signposted and know how to access information regarding the services available to meet their needs.
- Service users are supported/able to maximise their income.

Priority outcomes will be explicit in new contracts or contract variations and services will be monitored against these.

## 8. Commissioning promise

It is important that this Commissioning Strategy delivers maximum impact on the lives of service users. The strategy will support Commissioners to do this by:

- Ensuring that the Council's corporate priorities are at the forefront of the strategy and are guiding principles which underpin the way we commission services.
- Creating a joint commissioning/thinking/visionary ethos
- Ensuring all services are of a high quality, with identified minimum standards to be adhered to
- Making sure engagement with service users and providers is a golden thread throughout commissioning activity
- Making the best use of and maximising resources
- Identifying how we support local activity
- Ensuring a commitment to co production as an approach to the development and delivery of services encouraging community involvement and service user engagement.
- Understanding the demand on Commissioning and Contracting roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
- Developing positive relationships with the provider sector

## 9. Commissioning priorities

A Needs Assessment undertaken in 2011 and work undertaken following this has helped shape the priorities for future commissioning. The key themes for Blackpool are:

- Target HRS at those who are most vulnerable and in need, continue to use HRS commissioning to fund preventative services and ensure funding is only used for eligible tasks
- To continue to develop the pathway model for targeted client groups
- To ensure that HRS services form part of a 'Whole System' approach and are not commissioned in isolation; and that where care services and HRS services form part of a service, they are commissioned together
- To ensure that the services commissioned are designed to increase service user choice and control and ensure service users are involved in decisions about their services
- Ensure services are of a high quality, value for money and delivering the required outcomes

## 10. 2013/2014 projected spend on housing related support services

Table 1: 2012 – 2013 Spend on HRS

Client Group	Type of Provision	Number of units	Total Annual Spend £	% of Total HRS funding
Single Homeless Including rough sleepers (25 years +)	Accommodation	99	632,847	22.1
Young People at risk including rough sleepers (16 – 25 years)	Accommodation Including direct access	76 + Up to 20 supported lodgings	555,596	19.5
Teenage Parents	Accommodation	20	151,617	5.3
Frail Elderly/Older Adults (Sheltered and Alarms)	Accommodation and Alarms	1076	469,863	16.5
Women Escaping Domestic Abuse	Accommodation	5	78,191	2.7
Homeless Families	Accommodation	40	69,994	2.6
Learning Disability	Accommodation	5	58,156	2.0
Mental Health	Accommodation	40	332,754	11.6
	Floating Support	48	54,239	1.9
Generic	Floating Support	86	169,714	5.9
High Risk Offenders	Floating Support	40	96,585	3.4
Drug/Alcohol	Floating Support	61	105,209	3.7
All service user groups	Single Point of Access		80,000	2.8
			<b>2,854,765</b>	

## 11. Projected spend on housing related support

Council budgets for 2014/2016 onwards have yet to be finalised, but it is certain that substantial savings will have to be made over the next 3 years. To minimise the impact that budget reductions have on service users, the HRS landscape will need to change. The key challenge will be to meet future demand within the resources that are available. This will mean commissioning services that deliver value for money and improved outcomes for service users, seeking to minimise the time people spend in services. Clients in short term accommodation will need to be supported to move on to general needs accommodation more quickly and to develop the skills to sustain their tenancies when they do move. Commissioners are accountable for spending public monies and will have a process in place to ensure that all service users meet access criteria for HRS services and that service users are tracked to make sure that positive outcomes are achieved. Future contracts will reflect this. An assessment panel will be developed to approve those cases that need to stay longer in service.

## 12. Homelessness in Blackpool

Communities and Local Government January to March 2013 (England) gave a summary of national homelessness trends in the past 12 months:

- During the financial year 2012-2013 there was an increase of 6% in the number of people accepted as being owed a duty under homelessness legislation.
- 55,300 households were in temporary accommodation on 31/3/13, which is 10% higher than the previous year.

An analysis of the Council's statistics on statutory homelessness, rough sleeping and homelessness prevention and relief for 2011 – 2012 and 2012 – 2013 shows that Blackpool in some ways is continuing to go against national trends on homelessness.

Table2: Number of presentations in Blackpool 2011 - 2013

Period	Number of presentations	Cases accepted as owing a duty
2011 - 2012	438	30 (7%)
2012 - 2013	285	30 (11%)

The number of people presenting to the Council as homeless in both 2011 – 2012 and 2012 – 2013 was 438 and 285 respectively. 30 in each year were accepted as being owed a statutory duty to re-house, however as the number of presentations had reduced; there was a percentage increase of 4%, which was lower than the national average by 2%.

In 2012-2013, 89% of people presenting to the Council as homeless were not owed a duty by the Council. In these cases alternative interventions were implemented, either to prevent homelessness from happening, or to relieve homelessness when it has happened. A summary of this intervention can be found in tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3: Method of prevention 2011 - 2013

Method of Prevention	2011-2012 Number	2012-2013 Number
Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence	170	149
PRS accommodation with landlord incentive (such as bond, deposit payment etc)	115*	104*
Referral to supported accommodation	55	49
Mediation	26	19
Resolving rent arrears	18	20
Conciliation	14	
Accommodation found with friends/relatives	10	8
Help with Housing Benefit problem		7
Help to resolve debt problem		4
Help with mortgage arrears		3
Providing assistance for someone to remain in their accommodation	6	
Crisis intervention		2
Referral to hostel/HMO with or without support	6	2
Homeless prevention fund payment		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>368</b>

Table 4: Method of relief 2011 - 2013

Method of Relief	2011-2012 Number	2012-2013 Number
Referral to hostel/HMO	59	50
Referral to supported accommodation	29	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>52</b>

\*For the prevention cases it should be noted that during this time the authority's rent bond scheme was stopped prior to the introduction of BC Lettings in quarter 2 of 2012-3, therefore it is reasonable to assume that the landlord incentive figure would have been higher had there been continuity of service.

In contrast with figures published nationally, there is over both years a predominance of domestic abuse sanctuary measures and landlord incentive as a means of prevention. For both years referrals to supported housing of one type or another is a commonly recorded intervention for both prevention and relief.

The use of prevention as a method of proactively tackling potential homelessness continues to be successful and effective in reducing stress and instability for service users.

### **13. Housing related support in Blackpool**

In 2011 the Commissioning Team completed a Supporting People Needs Assessment and over the last two years has, and continues to, review HRS services to ensure high quality outcomes and value for money.

In September 2013 Blackpool's Local Connection Policy for non statutory homeless increased from 6 consecutive months to 3 consecutive years. The direct access Night Shelter for young people aged 16 years to 25 years had previously been exempt from the local connection rules, however this was changed in January 2014. This means that to access an accommodation based service or emergency accommodation people need to:

- have lived in Blackpool for the last 3 consecutive years
- or
- have a close adult family member living in Blackpool who has lived here for the last 5 years. A close family member is defined as a Mother/Father/Adult Sibling.
- or
- have permanent work in Blackpool (over 16 hours a week)

The implementation of a Single Point of Access (SPA) for HRS in December 2012 has supported the application of the local connection. It is unclear how the change from 6 months to 3 years will affect the numbers using HRS services. A snapshot of service users receiving an accommodation based service in August 2013 suggests a reduction of 20% in eligible service users.

During the period 1st April 2013 – 31st December 2013 the SPA undertook 448 assessments for people wishing to access housing related support, of these 110 people (24.5%) did not have a local connection. Prior to the implementation of the SPA these people would have directly accessed services and many would not have presented at South King Street. The number of assessments undertaken since the beginning September 2013, when the new local connection was introduced have reduced by 26.5%. The number of people presenting who did not have a local connection has increased from 17% to 36%.

Key performance information (KPI) for HRS services in Blackpool is gathered from three sources: St Andrews University, quarterly performance information provided by providers directly to the council and more recently (1<sup>st</sup> April 2013) through the Single Point of Access for short term accommodation based services. An analysis of the data for the last two years highlighted gaps and duplication in the information provided by St Andrews and on quarterly key performance information provided by providers. Key Performance Information requested from providers has been amended and more detailed information is being provided via the SPA.

To reduce duplication and the administrative burden on providers, we will remove the requirement of providers to supply to St Andrews.

### 13.1 Single Point of Access (SPA)

The Needs Assessment in 2011 identified a lack of an existing pathway through homelessness services and evidenced a gap in understanding and knowledge about people presenting to HRS services. The assessment recommended the implementation of a managed process for placing people in services (SPA) using the existing Blackpool Council Housing Options Service. Its aim is to provide a first point of contact and assessment, manage referrals into housing related support services and provide a local tracking service. In 2012 the SPA was commissioned and is now fully operational. Phase 1 entailed all referrals to hostels for people aged between 16 years and 25 years going through the Single Point of Access. Phase 2 saw the inclusion of accommodation for hostels for people over the age of 18 years.

#### Single Point of Access Implementation

Phase 1 – December 2012
Phase 2 - February 2013
Review – Completed January 2014
Phase 3 – Controlled placement mechanisms in place for all HRS services April 2014

There have been concerns raised by provider about the introduction and implementation of this system. Commissioners are currently undertaking a Commissioning Review of the SPA which will inform how the Council will manage referrals into services in the future.

### 13.2 Floating support

14.9% (£425,747) of the housing related support budget is spent on floating support services. 235 units are provided by 6 providers. Weekly unit prices vary across all services. There is no set number of hours making up a unit as the levels of support required by individuals varies. Throughout 2012/2013 all providers have experienced times when they have had waiting lists, but these have not been extensive. Services are limited in that they are provided Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm.

Table: 5: Breakdown of providers and weekly units

Provider	Service group	user	Number of weekly units	New Service Users 2012/2013*	Service users leaving the service 2012/2013*
Barnados	Generic		45	123	142
Creative Support	Generic		41	51	94
Richmond Fellowship	Mental Health		32	19	18
NACRO	Offenders		40	50	49
Making Space	Mental Health		16	5	8
Inward House	Drug and Alcohol		61	92	83

- figures used are from KPIs provided by providers

Currently floating support services are not fully aligned with homelessness pathways. Specialist services tend to be part of the pathways linked to their specialism i.e. Criminal Justice, Substance misuse. Referral sources into the two generic services are more varied than those into the specialist provision. The specialist services are more likely to receive referrals either from other specialist services or internally. NACRO receives all of their referrals from Probation, Inward House have majority of referrals from Horizons and Making Space from the Community Mental Health Team. Richmond Fellowship referrals are from more varied sources. Generic floating support services are

also supporting people with offending, drug and alcohol and mental health issues, providing a first tier of support for the specialist floating support services.

Future commissioning will focus on increasing the number of people receiving non accommodation based housing related support.

Non accommodation based support provision will no longer be commissioned in units but we will commission a flexible generic model of support which will focus on early intervention and prevention; include short interventions, training, awareness raising and mentoring, in addition to the more structured support which has previously been the focus.

### **13.3 Domestic abuse**

2.7% (£78,191) of the HRS budget is spent on supported accommodation for women and children escaping domestic abuse. 5 units are available, provided at a 'confidential address' by Fylde Coast Women's Aid for women and children who are at risk of domestic abuse. KPI information provided by the provider for 2012/2013 show a high demand for this service. 114 referrals were received and the service was able to provide accommodation for 34 of these referrals. This service is not part of the pathway through the SPA. Referrals are made by a range of organisations including, a network of Women's Aid refuges. The local connection policy is not applied to this service.

In addition to the refuge provision, Blackpool's Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Team also provide the following:

- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)
- Independent Domestic Violence Service (IDVA)
- Childrens IDVA Service
- 2 bedroom safe house with intensive support from IDVA service for families unable to access refuge
- Group support for 17 – 25 year olds
- Police Community Support Officer support for domestic abuse

The 2011 Needs Assessment found that this service falls outside the normal range HRS services and as such should be reviewed separately. A review has not taken place since 2011 therefore a commissioning review will be undertaken in 2014/2015 which will consider the service delivered and how this contributes to the strategic direction of domestic abuse services and housing needs in Blackpool.

### **13.4 Single homeless accommodation for over 18 years**

17.8% (£508,834) of the HRS budget is spent on supported accommodation for single homeless people. 91 units are provided by 3 providers. Weekly unit prices vary across all services. There is no set number of hours of support identified for each service user and the level of need of services users in each of the projects can range from low to complex. Complexity of need is not reflected in the any unit price. Accommodation at the Ashley Foundation and Vincent House has shared facilities including the provision of meals which are paid for by services users. Both these services support people who are aged 18 years of age and above. William Lyons House accommodation mainly consists of independent flats in addition to 4 rooms which share a communal kitchen. William Lyons House supports people who are 25 years of age and above.

Table 6: Admissions and exits 2012 – 2013

Provider	Number of weekly units	New Admissions 2012/2013*	Planned Exits 2012/2013*	Unplanned Exits 2012/2013*	% unplanned exits as % total exits
Ashley Foundation	62 (3 projects)	225	134	87	39.4%
Vincent House (Caritas Care)	15	29	22	8	26.6%
William Lyons House	14	17	14	2	12.5%

\* figures used are from KPIs provided by providers

Table 7: Bed occupancy April 2013 – July 2013\*

Provider	Total Bed Nights Available	Unoccupied Bed Nights	% Voids
Ashley Foundation	7564	199	2.6%
Vincent House (Caritas Care)	1830	64	3.5%
William Lyons House	1708	189	11%

\*Provided by SPA

There are inconsistencies in how providers record move on information on KPIs. In addition the SPA has highlighted that the length of time a service takes to accept referrals can differ from immediate acceptance to six weeks, this means that in some instances emergency accommodation is being used whilst there is a void in the accommodation that the service user has been referred to.

Commissioners will continue to develop a sharper and quicker pathway into services, improve outcomes and reduce the amount of time service users remain in services. This will avoid the unnecessary use of emergency accommodation and provide the opportunity to reduce the number of commissioned units both in short term hostel accommodation and emergency accommodation. New service contracts will be explicit about expected referral timescales and move on targets. Providers will be monitored against these. New Key Performance guidance will minimise ambiguity regarding planned and unplanned move on. New contracts will be awarded using a needs led standard tariff. This will mean that there will be a standard hourly rate for support. The number of hours of support provided to each service user will be a varying factor and differ according the service user groups and service model.

### 13.5 Emergency direct access accommodation for people over the age of 18 years

4.3% (£124,013) of the HRS budget is spent on emergency direct access for over 18s. The Oasis Night Shelter provides 8 units at a cost which is substantially more than all hostel accommodation for this age group. Referrals to this service go through the SPA. Direct referrals are accepted each night if there are vacant beds. Service users who are provided with a bed through direct access are seen by the SPA the following day and assessed accordingly. During the year 2012-2013 the provider reported 320 admissions. Service users stayed from between 1 day and 48 days with the average length of stay being 9 days.

The shelter is opens at night and opportunities for the provider to engage with service users during the day have been limited by budget cuts. Service users rely on other services which are open during the day for support with their housing and other needs.

The SPA has highlighted that service users are sometimes staying for a number of nights at the shelter when there are vacancies in more permanent hostel accommodation. The number of people using the shelter has reduced following the implementation of the SPA and the new 3 year local

connection criteria. During the 6 month period April - September 2013 occupancy levels have been 59%.

Emergency accommodation and assessment will continue to be provided as part of the pathway into homelessness services.

A retender of HRS services will be undertaken and how we provide more cost effective emergency accommodation for people over the age of 18 years will be considered during this process. We will ensure that provision is targeted at service users who have a local connection, are willing to engage in support and take responsibility for changing their situation at a level appropriate to their vulnerability. A new model for providing emergency accommodation will negate the necessity to use emergency accommodation when there is hostel accommodation available.

### 13.6 Short term accommodation for young people at risk – 16 years to 25 years

15% (£427,957) of the HRS budget is spent on short term accommodation for young people at risk aged from 16 year to 25 years. 68 units are provided by 2 providers.

Table 8: Breakdown of providers

Provider	No of units	Age group
Great Places – Foyer	38	16 – 25 years
Bay Housing Association		
• Clare Street	6	16 – 17 years
• Bay House	14	16 – 25 years
• Common Edge	4	16 – 25 years
• Alexandra Road	6	16 – 25 years

The two services provided by Bay Housing Association at Common Edge and Alexandra Road are used as move on accommodation for Bay House and the support is equivalent to that provided by a floating support service. Clare Street, Bay House and Foyer each provide self contained accommodation units. Weekly unit costs for these services vary.

Table 9: Admissions and exits 2012 – 2013

Provider	Number of weekly units	New Admissions 2012/2013*	Planned Exits 2012/2013*	Unplanned Exits 2012/2013*	% unplanned exits as % total exits
Great Places Foyer	38	47	48	0	0%
Clare Street	6	9	7	3	42%
Bay House	14	38	35	6	17%
Common Edge Road	4	3	3	0	0%
Alexander Road	6	12	11	0	0%

\* figures used are from KPIs provided by providers

Table 10: Void Levels April 2013 – July 2013\*

Provider	Total Bed Nights Available	Vacant Bed Nights in Period	% Voids
Great Places Foyer	4636	231	5%
Clare Street	726	28	3.8%
Bay House	1698	96	5.6%

Common Edge Road	488	7	1.4%
Alexander Road	732	63	8.6%

\*Provided by SPA

As with accommodation for the over 18s Commissioners intend to continue to develop sharper and quicker pathway into these services, improve outcomes and reduce the amount of time service users remain in services. This will avoid the unnecessary use of emergency accommodation and provide the opportunity to reduce the number of commissioned units both in short term hostel accommodation and emergency accommodation for young people.

New service contracts will be explicit about expected referral timescales and move on targets. Providers will be monitored against these. New Key Performance guidance will minimise ambiguity regarding planned and unplanned move on. New contracts will be awarded using a needs led standard tariff. This will mean that there will be a standard hourly rate for support. The number of hours of support provided to each service user will be a varying factor and differ according the service user groups and service model.

### **13.7 Emergency direct access accommodation for young people aged 16 year to 25 years**

2.9% (£82,639) of the HRS budget is spent on emergency direct access for young people ages 16 years to 25 years. Streetlife Shelter provides 8 beds at a weekly cost which is more costly than the majority of the hostel accommodation for young people. Referrals into this service are made through the SPA. This service was excluded from the local connection rules in 2005; however this policy has now been updated to include this service. Service users with a local connection are accommodated in the shelter whilst more permanent interventions are arranged. In order to ensure that emergency shelter is available to those who would otherwise end up on the streets; service users without a local connection may be given accommodation for 1 – 3 nights prior to being assisted by Housing Options to return home, if that is what they choose to do.

People can refer themselves each night by presenting at the entrance at 7 pm (direct access). Service users who are provided with a bed through direct access will be seen by the SPA the following day and assessed accordingly. During the year 2012-2013 the provider reported 73% occupancy rate. Service users stayed from between 1 day and 40 days with the average length of stay being 6 days.

The shelter is only open at night and the provider has a day time service for young people 'The Base' which they can attend for support, funded from alternative sources. Housing Options are also engaging with young people providing mediation as a means of re-connecting them with their families.

The number of young people using the shelter has reduced following the implementation of the SPA. During the six months April 2013 – September 2013 occupancy levels for the service were 49.5%. The majority of service users still come into the shelter using the direct access route. An analysis of the people using the shelter in this period showed that the majority of people using the shelter are over the age of 18 years.

Emergency accommodation and assessment for this service user group will continue to be provided as part of the pathway into homelessness services.

A retender of accommodation based services for young people will be undertaken and how we provide emergency accommodation for people under the age of 18 years will be considered during this process. We will ensure that provision is targeted at those service users who have a local connection, are willing to engage in support and take responsibility for changing their situation. A new model for providing hostel and emergency accommodation will negate the necessity to use emergency accommodation when there is hostel accommodation available.

Commissioners will explore alternative models for providing emergency accommodation which are aligned more closely to the current homelessness pathway and support the Council’s strategic priorities and a culture of prevention and early intervention.

It is our intention as Commissioners to continue to secure the necessary resources to invest in early intervention and prevention of homelessness. There is a strong case for supporting young people to remain at home with their families or in wider family networks, when it is safe to do so. Early action by all professionals and an increased focus on preventative intervention are areas we hope to develop further.

### 13.8 Teenage parents

5.3% (£151,617) of the HRS budget is spent on supported accommodation for teenage parents. Two providers provide 20 units for teenage parents and their children. All of the accommodation is in self contained units. Stonham provides a higher level of support with 24 hour cover (sleep in arrangement). The Place provides lower level support during the day time. Weekly unit costs for these services vary.

Table 11: Admissions and exits 2012 – 2013

Provider	Number of weekly units	New Admissions 2012/2013*	Planned Exits 2012/2013*	Unplanned Exits 2012/2013*	% unplanned exits as % total exits
Places for People – The Place	8	9	5	1	20%
Stonham	12	16	16	0	0

\* figures used are from KPIs provided by providers

Table 12: Void Levels April 2013 – July 2013

Provider	Total Bed Nights Available	Vacant Bed Nights in Period	% Voids
Places for People – The Place	854	38	4.4%
Stonham	1464	8	0.5%

\*Provided by SPA

Referrals into these two services come through the SPA. Both providers reported having service users on a waiting list throughout 2012 – 2013 (53 throughout the year) At the end of the first quarter of 2013 – 2014 the SPA reported 4 people on a waiting list for these services. The people on the waiting list are reported as living with family and friends or sometimes in an alternative hostel accommodation (during pregnancy). Following the implementation of the single point of access there has been a reduction in the number of referrals into these services, with some evidence to suggest that teenage parents are opting for alternative housing provision e.g. moving straight from parents home into own tenancy or remaining at home.

Accommodation based services for young parents will be re-tendered. Commissioners will explore alternative models for providing HRS to teenage parents which are aligned closely to current homelessness pathway and support the Council’s strategic priorities and a culture of prevention and early intervention. New contracts will be awarded using a needs led standard tariff. This will mean that there will be a standard hourly rate for support. The number of hours of support provided to each service user will be a varying factor and differ according the service user groups and service model.

## 12.9 Accommodation Homeless Families

2.6% (£69,994) of the HRS budget is spent on accommodation for homeless families. This is used as emergency and temporary accommodation for priority families and single people who are owed a homelessness duty by the Council. The service is provided by Blackpool Coastal Housing and all referrals are from the Council's Housing Options Team. 40 weekly units are provided at on 3 sites (Central Drive, Gorton Street and Grasmere Road).

In 2012 – 2013 there was a reduction in the use of the service from approximately 75% in the previous year to 49.5%. In the last 12 – 18 months the balance of households owed a duty and in need of temporary accommodation has changed with a higher number of single priority homeless being placed in the service. As a result of this, a review of provision has been undertaken and the following changes recommended and agreed by Council Members in June 2013:

- Central Drive property will be re-configured into 6 self contained suites for families with children.
- The number of units at Gorton Street will increase from 20 units to 25 units.
- Grasmere Road will be de-commissioned.
- Up to 30% of spare capacity to be used for vulnerable people not owed a statutory duty

Commissioners will work closely with Blackpool Coastal Housing and Housing Options throughout the implementation of these changes to ensure appropriate continuation of service provision for priority homeless and monitor future usage.

## 12.10 Sheltered accommodation/alerts

16.5% (£469,863) of the housing related support budget is spent on sheltered housing and alarm services for the frail elderly. 1076 units are provided by 5 providers.

Table 13: Breakdown of providers

Provider	Total Units	Type of Provision
Blackpool Coast Housing	808	Sheltered
Great Places Housing	117	Sheltered
	57	Alarm
Housing 21	33	Alarm
Muir Housing	7	Alarm
Places for People	53	Alarm

Weekly unit prices for alarm services and sheltered accommodation varies. These services are provided to older adults in long term accommodation to enable them to sustain their independence.

A commissioning review of sheltered housing and alarm services will be undertaken during 2014/2015.

## 12.11 Accommodation for people with mental health conditions

11.6% (£332,754) of the HRS budget is spent on short term accommodation based services for people with a mental health condition. Referrals into these services go through the Mental Health Accommodation Panel. There are 40 weekly units providing various levels of support. Weekly unit costs vary for these services.

Mental health accommodation services will be considered in a wider review of mental health accommodation based services, as part of the mental health pathway.

### **12.12 Supported accommodation for people a learning disability**

2% (£58,156) of the HRS budget is spent on supported accommodation for people with a learning disability. Units are provided by 2 providers. Service users in these services also receive Social Care Funding. In the future the budget for these services will be combined with social care budgets.

## **14 Consultation with stakeholders**

In 2011 commissioners completed a Strategic Needs Assessment of Housing Related Support in Blackpool. The Needs Assessment was to ensure that services which had been provided unchanged for many years were still relevant both to current and future demands. The Needs Assessment identified opportunities to streamline the development of services to ensure that the needs of service users are being met. A number of key issues were identified and recommendations made. Since 2011, work has taken place to implement a number of these recommendations and also to understand the market and the needs of all stakeholders.

Specific consultation events have taken place with frontline staff and wider stakeholders; there have been group interviews with service users and individual conversations with service managers as part of the Needs Assessment. Consultations with managers, staff and service users were also included as part of the Service review process. In addition two individual projects were undertaken: one focusing on young women entering homeless services and the other focusing on the experiences of adults in accommodation based services.

Managers and front line staff reported significant impacts of the recent reductions in funding not only in terms of their own service but in the wider services. It was widely felt that the profile of the services had changed in recent years; service users were increasingly chaotic, misuse of substances was more prolific, and a growing number of service users had mental health problems.

Wider stakeholders recognised:

- An increase in the number of women entering homeless services
- Certain service users appeared to be 'stuck' in the system
- Lack of suitable move on accommodation.
- Lack of access to/support from mental health and substance misuse services.
- No clear pathways into Housing Related Services
- Lack of quality accommodation in the Private Rented Sector.
- Services not as outcome focused as they could be.
- Not enough emphasis on prevention.
- More holistic approach is required.

Group interviews held with service users found that in general people felt safe within the services and valued the support and the practical help received from services. Wider stakeholders felt that more coordinated support could be provided using a whole family approach, implementing protocols and sharing information more effectively.

More recently providers have been consulted in workshops relating to the development of this strategy, outcomes for housing related support and quality. Service users have been consulted with by providers regarding priority outcomes.

## **15. Commissioning Strategy Delivery Plan**

The following Delivery Plan will be implemented during the period this Commissioning Strategy covers and monitored by Adult Services Adult Executive.

**COMMISSIONING STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN  
2013-2015**

**Priority 1**

Target housing related support at those who are most vulnerable and in need, continue to use HRS commissioning to fund preventative services and ensure funding is only used for eligible tasks

Action No.	Action	By when	Responsible Officer	Update
1.1	Ensure that eligible tasks for HRS are clearly defined in all new HRS contracts	March 2015	HRS Commissioning Manager	
1.2	Following the re-tender of services, develop an assessment panel to oversee and authorise accommodation extensions.	November 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	
1.3	Where appropriate undertake Impact Analysis when making changes to or decommissioning services	Ongoing	HRS Commissioning Manager	
1.4	Use findings from service reviews and needs assessment to remodel housing related support services to be provided within the available budgets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re- model and re-commission non accommodation based housing related support - align with homelessness pathway</li> </ul>	July 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-model and re-commission short term accommodation based services/Emergency access for single homeless age 18 years and above.</li> </ul>	September 2014		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-model and re-commission short term accommodation based services/emergency access for young single homeless.</li> </ul>	September 2014		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-model and re-commission accommodation based services for teenage parents</li> </ul>	September 2014		
1.5	Decommission services that do not meet the Council's priorities, are not meeting housing related eligibility criteria, have poor	On going	HRS Commissioning	

	performance or do not deliver value for money.		Manager	
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### Priority 2

To continue to develop the pathway model for targeted client groups

Action No.	Action	By when	Responsible Officer	Update
2.1	Undertake a review of the Single Point of Access	Feb 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	
2.2	Ensure that HRS services are accessed through a local authority managed mechanism	Ongoing	HRS Commissioning Manager	
2.3	Develop appropriate pathways between service providers.	September 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	

### Priority 3

To ensure that housing related support services form part of a 'Whole System' approach and are not commissioned in isolation and that where care services and housing related support services form part of a service, they are commissioned together

Action No.	Action	By when	Responsible Officer	Update
3.1	<p>Support the delivery of Blackpool's Homeless Prevention Strategy 2013, through the provision of housing related support services, with particular regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A focus on local connection.</li> <li>• Achieving a strong alignment of homelessness prevention with all services providing support to vulnerable people.</li> <li>• Establishing a coherent approach to dealing with the housing needs of vulnerable 16 &amp; 17 year olds</li> <li>• Ensuring an effective approach to dealing with rough sleeping which balances the 'need to unsettle' while never giving up on the most vulnerable.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	HRS Commissioning Manager	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieving appropriate balance of support for those who most need it and encouraging personal responsibility</li> <li>Fully embed comprehensive housing pathways that enable people to move from homelessness to settled accommodation and from support to independent living.</li> </ul>			
3.2	Ensure that HRS services for people with mental health conditions are regarded as part of the mental health pathway and considered during the review of mental health services in Blackpool	October 2014	Mental Health Commissioning Manager	
3.3	Ensure that the services provided by 'Private Individuals' are considered in the commissioning review of supported living services to understand relevance and need.	September 2014	Supported Living Commissioning Manager	
3.4	Combine housing related support and social care budgets for those services/people where social care and housing related support are provided together.	April 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	
3.5	Undertake a review of the Refuge Service for women at risk of domestic abuse and ensure that this service is regarded as part of Blackpool's pathway of services for women escaping domestic abuse.	October 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	

#### Priority 4

To ensure that the services commissioned are designed to increase service user's choice and control and ensure service users are involved in decisions about their services

Action No.	Action	By when	Responsible Officer	Update
4.1	Where appropriate involve service users in reviews and planning improvements to services	Ongoing	HRS Commissioning Manager	
4.2	Ensure that housing related support contracts are explicit in the requirement for providers to increase services users' choice and control and to be involved in decision making processes.	Ongoing	HRS Commissioning Manager	

## Priority 5

Ensure services are of a high quality, value for money and delivering the required outcomes

Action No.	Action	By when	Responsible Officer	Update
5.1	Develop a risk based approach to managing contracts. Those providers achieving a higher risk rating will have a more rigorous monitoring framework	March 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	
5.2	Undertake contract monitoring meetings and service reviews based on provider's risk ratings. Provide a timetable for contract monitoring.	April 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	
5.3	In partnership with providers develop and implement a Quality Assessment Framework and process which will promote continuous improvement of service provision.	April 2014	Quality Manager	
5.4	Review the current methods of collecting Key Performance Indicator to ensure that there is no duplication.	April 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	
5.5	De-commission data collection function of St Andrews.	April 2014	HRS Commissioning Manager	
5.6	Consider the use of standardised tariffs during the procurement of services.	On going throughout process	HRS Commissioning Manager	