

Cardiff Multi-Agency Strategy & Advisory Planning Group for People Who Are Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homeless

Report to Supporting People Planning Group 15/01/04

**Topic: Ex-offenders, Women experiencing domestic abuse and
Single parents**

EX-OFFENDERS

The permanent housing of offenders is often arranged through existing agreements with private sector landlords. However just under a quarter of those seeking support through the National Probation Service's Accommodation Unit are still on waiting lists for social housing. Within secondary supported housing provision, Tai Trothwy provides the majority of the 55 beds available from the recently refurbished Janner House, although other schemes include offending issues as part of the support criteria.

The National Probation service Accommodation Unit collects regular statistics on the ex-offenders referred to them and the following table shows the reasons why housing advice and support is required:

2002/03 Figures	2003/04 (Apr-Sept)
In 2002/3, 45% of ex-offenders could be considered as homeless	This equates to 30% so far in 2003/4
A further 21.6% had some form of accommodation but needed to move	So far in 2003/4 this figure is 22.9%
14.9% needed advice or advocacy	This figure is 14.3% so far in 2003/4

The table below records the outcome following intervention by the Probation Accommodation Unit:

2002/03 Figures	2003/04
In 2002/3, 13% of ex-offenders could be considered to have made a positive move into permanent accommodation	This equates to only 4.9% so far in 2003/4.
A further 3.3% had remained within their existing accommodation.	So far in 2003/4 this figure is the same at 3.3% .
The majority of 46.2% were waiting to go into more permanent independent accommodation.	This figure is 57.5% so far in 2003/4.

The number of ex-offenders presenting at the Council's Homelessness Service has increased in the last couple of years, due to the extension of the priority need categories. It is recognised that prison leavers can find it difficult to access any form of accommodation, least of all in the private rented sector but, through the Probation

Accommodation Unit, relationships have been formed with a number of private landlords to accommodate ex-offenders.

Need: Additional floating support to sustain tenancies is required.

Information recorded from the statutory homelessness service indicates the number of cases accepted by the Council where the categories are as follows:

	2001 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2002 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2003 Q1	Q2
Prison Leaver	N/A	7	10	12	9	10	13	14	5	13
TOTALS	29 ACCEPTED CASES				46 ACCEPTED CASES				18 SO FAR	
The above relates to priority needs categories and 'prison leaver' was only introduced in Q2 of 2001.										

Advice to prevent homelessness at sentencing and prior to release is being addressed in partnership with Tai Trothwy, the Prison Service and the National Probation Service.

Many of those being released will not have held a tenancy previously or will not have received appropriate support, especially young offenders. These are often more likely to be excluded from the Council’s waiting list, therefore putting more pressure upon the homelessness services.

Need: a 6-bed short-term accommodation unit with floating support to undertake a full assessment of their ability to sustain a tenancy.

There has been a marked increase in the number of ex-offenders presenting as homeless who pose a serious risk. There is often no suitable/appropriate accommodation available which leads often to inappropriate and unsafe placement in either statutory or voluntary accommodation.

Need: this is subject to a separate report but this does highlight the need for specific supported accommodation for this client group to be made available.

Domestic Abuse

It is recognised that domestic abuse can affect men as well as women, and can also occur in single-sex relationships. However, the majority of services in Cardiff are aimed at women, with or without children, and are themselves very limited.

The Cardiff branch of the national Women’s Aid group currently utilise 3 directly accessible refuges across the city and 1 second stage refuge, whilst BAWSO has only 1, but quite large refuge. In total, provision exists for 3 units for women only and 26 units for women and up to 4 children under the age of 16. In addition many women access the services simply for advice, information, counselling and outreach services. Through the Council’s Tenant Support Scheme a further 67 women fleeing domestic abuse are supported in tenancies.

In 2002/03, 231 requests for refuge with Cardiff Women's Aid were received, although only 56.7% were actually placed in a Cardiff Women's Aid refuge. The following breakdown shows the reason why the remainder were not accommodated:

	2002/03 (Full year)	Apr-Sep 2003 (Half year)
Wished to be placed outside Cardiff	5%	3%
Considered not suitable for refuge living	25%	16%
Considered as not safe in a Cardiff refuge	3%	4%
Lack of spaces	65%	74%
Refused to be placed outside Cardiff	2%	3%

Cardiff Women's Aid also records the outcomes following a stay in refuge:

2002/03	2003/04 (Apr-Sept)
16% of women were settled into permanent tenancies or back into their own home safely.	So far this figure is 15.8%.
A total of 55% of women showed an outcome where the accommodation was of a temporary or vulnerable nature.	38.6% to date.
21.4% returned home to their partner.	26.3% so far in 2003/04.

For the small number with domestic abuse issues that can be identified from those within Frontline services, analysis of the detail showed that this referred to past, rather than current issues. Surprisingly though, the figures showed that 11 females and 10 males had highlighted this.

Information recorded from the statutory homelessness service indicates the number of cases accepted by the Council where the categories are as follows:

	2001 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2002 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2003 Q1	Q2
Fleeing Domestic Violence	0	3	3	4	11	8	14	10	9	19
TOTALS	10 CASES ACCEPTED				43 CASES ACCEPTED				46 SO FAR	

'Fleeing domestic violence' as a priority needs category has seen a large increase in accepted cases over the past three years and with the large numbers of people unable to access refuge accommodation.

Need: additional refuge accommodation is required.

Need: the demand for an intake type project where the needs of women can be properly assessed has already been addressed as a priority in the 2003 SPOP. An intake house would allow women to be moved to the project that would best suit their needs following a more in-depth assessment. The intake project would allow beds to be freed up in the existing refuges, thus reducing the numbers of people that are currently being turned away (74% in the first 6 months of 2003). Should this not be

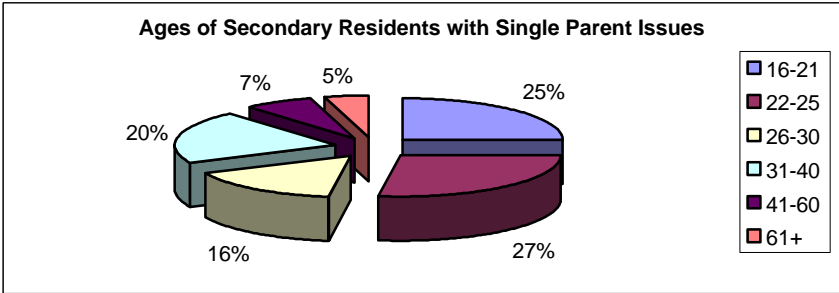
successful in being awarded funding, there would still be a need for this type of provision.

The Intake scheme would also allow more women and children to stay in the family home through being a coordination point for outreach services and from where the 'secure home' service, a scheme allowing women and their children threatened with domestic abuse from outside the home to remain in the family home, rather than relocate to refuge.

Single Parents

The provision for women who are currently pregnant and for men or women with dependant children currently amounts to 68 bedspaces within secondary provision. YWHA, Welcare and Barnardo’s all provide specialist accommodation for predominantly young mothers-to-be or parents with their children in self-contained flats. Cardiff Women’s Aid and BAWSO both accept women and their children into their refuges but this depends upon the numbers of children already housed.

The age ranges of single parents in secondary provision is shown below:



The largest proportion (52%) fall within the 16-25 age range which indicated a high instance of young single parents.

Single parents account for 68% of the total family households placed by the Council in temporary accommodation. The following table shows the proportion of these service users accepted by the Council’s Services:

Single Parent Family Accepted Cases

Accepted Cases	QTR 1	QTR 2	QTR 3	QTR 4	Totals
Total cases per quarter	240	222	307	202	971
Total number of cases where household type is known	210	174	173	79	636
Single parent household with dependent children – females	85	56	67	34	242
Single parent household with dependent children - males	3	12	10	0	25

Single mothers are clearly the largest group but single fathers account for a noticeable 9.4% of all single parent households. Of those single mothers accepted, this equates to 38.1% as a proportion of all acceptances where the household type is known. This could increase to 58.1% if the proportion of those unknown household types is taken into account in the same way.

Need: The vast majority of single parent families fall into the 16-25 age group and therefore require significant support to sustain their tenancies.

The Council's Homelessness Service provides a hostel specifically for families at Green Farm in Ely and at the YMCA's Ambassador Hotel. As at 26.11.03 there were 38 single parents with 71 children in hostel and B&B accommodation, with a further 7 single parents with 16 children at Greenfarm Hostel. The majority of cases accepted by the Council are families and therefore this huge demand on temporary accommodation has led to the Council being forced to use bed and breakfast facilities. This is clearly unsuitable for children as there are no local amenities such as playgrounds or schools. Families living in B&Bs, where they have to leave the building during the day, have nowhere to go.

Need: provision of additional hostel accommodation.