

Shelter conference, 3 March 2010

***Support – the key to
preventing
homelessness***

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Basics - 3 keys to tackling homelessness

Housing

Support

Ability to pay

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Support – who needs it?

We all do!

Groups with unmet need:

- Young people
- Homeless people
- People with additional needs
- People isolated from 'normal' support networks

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Housing Bill - opportunity

Assessment of support needs

- Introduce as part of homelessness assessment
- Agree package to meet identified need

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Support works

- Prevents abandonment/tenancy breakdown
- Reduces neighbour disputes/anti-social behaviour
- Routes to health, training, employment services
- Promotes independent living

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Costs of tenancy failure

- Cost to central government of a homeless person who could be working: benefit payments, foregone tax and national insurance, health and social care costs **£26,000 pa**
- Cost to local authority of empty tenancy: lost rent, re-let/repairs, admin & legal costs; storage of possessions, temporary accommodation **up to £23,856**
- **Personal costs – beyond calculation...**

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Variety of support 1

- **Settling in** –
furniture; starter packs;
decorating; handling privacy
- **Sustaining a tenancy** –
cooking & household skills;
budgeting; physical care
where needed; neighbour
mediation

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Variety of support 2

- **Access to services** – health; rehab; employment & training; benefits
- **Social networks** – breaking down isolation; building positive links

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Partnerships and joint work

Support providers:

- Council
- Housing association
- Voluntary sector
- Health & other public services

Opportunities for variety and choice

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Objections

Too expensive – but what about the costs of not providing?

Too time-consuming – but best to get it right first time

Raise expectations that can't be met – but do we do nothing because we can't do everything?

Incentive to 'go homeless' – really??!

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In conclusion...

- Support – a key response to homelessness
- Get support right, and we save money and help reach 2012 target
- Housing Bill – the opportunity to introduce assessment of support needs alongside housing needs

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