

### Local Authority Homelessness Prevention Priorities and Funding

- **Establishing and maintaining 20 Furnished Accommodation units to reduce the use of Bed & Breakfast for homeless households.**

The Homelessness Implementation Fund was used to set up 20 furnished accommodation units around Cheltenham, comprising 1, 2 and 3 bedroom furnished and part-furnished flats. The Homelessness Implementation Fund has also continued to be used to maintain the furnished accommodation scheme (replacing worn out/damaged stock) and ensuring these properties are let to the required standard.

- **The Deposit Loan Scheme**

A particular success is the Housing Options Service's Deposit Loan Scheme. This Scheme enables households under threat of homelessness to access the private rented sector more easily, by providing them with an interest-free loan to meet (or part-meet) the cost of the initial deposit on a privately rented property.

- **The Sanctuary Scheme**

This Scheme enables households who are living in fear because of threats of violence or domestic violence from outside their home the option of remaining in there, if they wish to, by making their homes safer, through various adaptations, such as strengthened doors, etc.

- **Supporting Homelessness Forum Initiatives**

The Housing Option Service provides an annual grant of £5,000 for any initiative considered by our partners represented at the Homelessness Forum to best meet our homelessness prevention objectives. This grant is currently being used to ensure that single people who are in supported housing, but ready for independent living, are given the best start in their new home, by ensuring that they are able to purchase a few basic essentials, up to the value of £125, as soon as they move into their new accommodation. This also ensures that the tenants are able to live in their property immediately, and reduces the risk of these tenancies failing at a very early stage.

- **Supporting YMCA**

The Housing Options Service also provides an annual grant to the YMCA to support their contribution in tackling homelessness amongst young people, in particular, through their resettlement and eventual move-on into independent housing.

- **Credit Checks**

A small amount of funding is also used each year to carry out credit checks on homeless households. This has been beneficial in that it has helped officers to gauge whether households can realistically afford to take on a loan deposit. It can also act as a useful trigger for discussing with the client whether a referral to another agency for money/debt advice is appropriate.

- **Mediation Services**

The Housing Options Service has commissioned a new type of mediation service, specifically designed to meet the needs of young people experiencing relationship difficulties in the family home. This service went live from 1/10/10.