

Exeter Homelessness Collaboration
Draft Terms of Reference (as at 27.8.08)

1. Aims and Purpose of the Collaboration:

The aims of the Homelessness Collaboration project is to provide a means by which partner organisations can work collaboratively together for the benefit of homeless and vulnerably housed people in Exeter.

It aims to achieve this through:

- Meeting regularly to share information, build and maintain trust, improve communication and promote best practice
- Member organisations committing to working more closely together, to find more efficient and effective working practices that will benefit homeless and vulnerably housed people
- Being a mechanism through which organisations that work with homeless and vulnerably housed people in Exeter can discuss issues of mutual concern, feed into other forums and strategies, and act as a collective 'voice' to influence and inform local and national policy
- Identification and development of practical ways of meeting strategic objectives, such as developing new projects or areas of work
- Developing areas of joint working to minimise duplication of effort and competition, and making the best use of resources, such as through co-location, the development of joint projects, joint funding bids or consortium arrangements

2. Membership

a) Membership of the Homelessness Collaboration is aimed at those organisations, from the statutory or voluntary sector, that provide services:

- For homeless or vulnerably housed people (defined as those either without accommodation or in temporary or insecure accommodation, or those who are threatened with homelessness);
- in Exeter (but which may also provide services in surrounding districts);
- designed to either prevent homelessness or
- which provide practical advice, support, referral or other services that enable people to secure and sustain appropriate housing.

b) The Homelessness Collaboration Project aims to be as inclusive as possible, and intends for all organisations that work in related fields to be kept informed of developments and enabled to become involved as appropriate to the issues that the Project is addressing at any one time

3. Structure

a) Full Group meetings take place twice yearly, and act as a medium for sharing information between organisations, and for holding discussions on particular issues but not generally for decision-making. Organisations may have a number of representatives attending the Full Group meeting including trustees, managers, elected members, staff and volunteers.

b) A Steering Group meets quarterly. Its role is to steer the overall direction of the Project, hold Sub Groups to task and to be the main decision-making body on behalf of the member organisations (subject to any authorisation needed by trustees, higher management or elected members). Membership of the Steering Group is expected to be the Project/Senior Managers or equivalent of each member organisation.

c) Sub Groups are formed to progress identified tasks as appropriate. Membership of these sub groups is determined according to the skills, knowledge and interests of group members, and may include other appropriate individuals by invitation. Sub Groups meet as frequently as the task(s) in hand require.

d) Exeter Community Initiatives facilitates this Project and as such its role is to convene, Chair and provide administrative support to the Full Group and Steering Group meetings, and to progress any tasks as agreed by the group, subject to capacity. Further to this ECI's role is to act as an independent facilitator in bringing member organisations together, assisting and promoting open communication, collaborative working and collective commitment to the best interests of homeless and vulnerably housed people.

Laura Callaway, Exeter Community Initiatives, 27.8.08