



Tackling homelessness

executive summary

Who are the G15?

We are a group of 15 independent housing associations working in London. At the moment, 700,000 Londoners live in a G15 home. Between 2003 and 2008, G15 housing associations have invested over £6.55 billion building new homes and supporting local communities. About 50% of all lettings by housing associations in London are currently made by G15 associations.



The G15 aims to build diverse and sustainable communities, places where people want to live now and in the future. To this end they combine their housing activities with a variety of innovative community and economic development programmes. The G15 works closely with central, regional, and local government; with private and voluntary partners; and with residents to improve the quality of life for Londoners.

The G15 comprises: Affinity Sutton, AmicusHorizon Group, Catalyst Housing Group, Circle Anglia, A2Dominion Group, East Thames Group, Family Mosaic Homes, Genesis Housing Group, The Hyde Group, The L&Q Group, Metropolitan Housing Partnership, Network Housing Group, Notting Hill Housing Group, Peabody Trust and Southern Housing Group.

Our Offer to London

There has been significant progress made in the last few years towards meeting London's temporary housing reduction target; however, homelessness remains a pressing issue for London. The figures alone do not reveal the devastating impact that this can have on people's lives.

In addition to meeting our commitments to nominations agreements, the G15 has worked over many years with London Boroughs and other partners to deliver a wide range of social and economic programmes aimed at tackling homelessness. However, despite this track record, we recognise that more can be done and we have worked to assemble a tackling homelessness 'Offer' to London. Our *Offer* is intended to further strengthen our partnership working and direct contribution to homelessness prevention. Moreover, this *Offer* sets out our track record to date and shares our wider thoughts on the issue.

The full *Offer* document (available via our website <http://www.g15.org.uk>) summarises our record to date, highlights the key issues which we believe need to be tackled and how we think we can work with central government and the London Boroughs to address these across London.

Why we are making this Offer

Our *Offer* on tackling homelessness aims to demonstrate that G15 fully supports the drive to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010. We are keen to further develop our dialogue with the Boroughs, London Councils and other stakeholders to overcome any barriers to achieving this and to support stronger partnerships.

Some of the issues identified in our *Offer* will require sustained joint working with our national and local partners over the medium to longer term in order to realise the potential benefits.

We view our *Offer* as a long-term commitment to improve housing options through more focused partnership working. We also hope that the partnership agenda will remain a core priority for the Homes and Communities Agency and the Tenant Services Authority. In this context our *Offer* aims to complement and where possible anticipate the work of these bodies.



What does the G15 Offer propose?

The G15 *Offer* comprises three key themes:

1. Housing homeless households through:

- Nominations and lettings to permanent homes;
- Lettings to temporary homes;
- Best use of stock to provide more homes; and
- Specific initiatives to meet the needs of vulnerable households.

2. Prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment through:

- Housing advice;
- Family mediation;
- Domestic violence support; and
- Supporting ex-offenders.

3. Working more closely with our local authority partners and other stakeholders through:

- Establishing local authority relationship managers;
- Developing an action plan to support this *Offer*; and
- Closely monitoring the progress of our *Offer* through a sub-group of G15 Directors.

1. Housing Homeless Households

G15 significantly exceeds the national average with regards to nominations to local authorities and is meeting its commitment to house people nominated by local authorities in accordance with '*Partners in meeting housing need*' requirements. When permanent housing is not available, then temporary housing through the private sector is secured. The G15 currently house more than one in three households in temporary accommodation in London and strives to convert these into permanent settled homes whenever possible. Our *Offer* aims to increase the amount of both permanent and temporary housing available to homeless households.

Our Proposals:

- G15 believe that if we continue to perform to the '*Partners in meeting housing need*' agreements we can help local authorities achieve their temporary accommodation targets.
- However in order for London to meet its temporary accommodation target, G15 must ensure that at least 35% of its nominations are to homeless households. At the moment, 27% of our nominations are allocated to homeless households across London, so we will work with our local authority partners to ensure that we achieve an 8% increase over the next 24 months and therefore house a further 2,729 homeless families each year.
- G15 will engage with local authorities to remove the barriers and minimise the bureaucracy associated with the delivery of temporary to settled schemes.
- We will work with local authorities and others to tackle worklessness in our temporary homes, through incentives and appropriate support for individuals wishing to enter employment.
- Wherever possible we will convert temporary housing to more settled accommodation and with others identify ways in which temporary to settled homes can make a more significant contribution to achieving temporary accommodation targets.
- In order to be able to sustain these tenancies, the G15 will need to be better informed about the needs of the incoming households. This will require local authorities to implement the Housing Corporation's Information Sharing Protocol and for the G15 to put in place appropriate support packages for incoming households in partnership with them.
- The G15 will actively engage in the development of Choice Based Lettings (CBL) and Common Housing Registers (CHRs) systems, as a way of increasing choice for homeless households.
- G15 will continue work on initiatives to reduce illegal occupation, reduce over-crowding and release under-occupied homes and we will look at ways of developing locality based jointly funded schemes to achieve this.

2. Prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment

In London, in 2005/06, the G15 housed over 3,700 households with support needs and 49% of those households were classified as 'homeless'. We are committed to providing the specific services required to vulnerable homeless households, such as housing advice, family mediation, domestic violence support and floating support services. We will also continue to provide homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment services, such as worklessness projects and assistance with financial management and budgets.

Our Proposals:

- The G15 will continue to develop initiatives such as sanctuary projects to complement other domestic violence services.
- We will continue to offer services to help residents sustain their tenancies.
- We will continue collaborating on tackling worklessness and financial inclusion amongst our residents through projects that assist in debt management or help homeless people to develop skills, for example.
- As part of our commitment to CHRs and to CBL, G15 will work with the boroughs to deliver the *Accessible Housing Register* which helps disabled Londoners to have housing choice.

3. Working more closely with our local authority partners and other stakeholders

The G15 is tackling homelessness through the provision of permanent and temporary homes and the delivery of specific services, as well as preventing homelessness through tenancy support and advice. However, none of this can be effectively achieved without a commitment to working in partnership.

Our Proposals:

- We will establish local authority relationship managers for each borough. Their role will be to act as a local link on the delivery of our *Offer*.
- We will resource the delivery of these offers by establishing a detailed action plan which will be overseen by the G15 Housing Directors Group.

We hope that our *Offer* on homelessness will be welcomed by our partners and that they will work with us to help deliver it. In return, we would like to engage with our stakeholders in order to plan for the longer term; ensuring that we can balance rehousing needs with existing pressures in our stock through jointly agreed plans that recognise these growing concerns and are more responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

For further information please contact:

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