Until there’s a home for everyone

Working with Homeless Children and Families

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What we will cover:

• Shelter’s Children’s Service
• Current context of homelessness
• The Impact of Welfare Reform
• Changing World
• Next Steps
Shelter’s Children’s Service

• Million Children Campaign
• Keys to the Future
• Regional Coordinators
• Children’s Service Advice Line
• Children’s Legal Service
Current Context of Homelessness

➢ Over 28,000 households with dependent children
Quick Quiz – True or False?

If you have children the Council have to give you a house if you become homeless

A private landlord can evict you even if you have done nothing wrong

You are only homeless if you have to sleep on the streets

If you get a notice seeking possession you have to leave immediately

The Council can’t evict you if you have children
Every Child Matters

- Being healthy
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Economic wellbeing
- Staying safe
Regional Context
Midlands and the East of England

Top 3 issues:

1) Possession action: rent arrears
2) Homelessness
3) Rent arrears

2010 households with dependent children accepted as homeless & priority need:
East Midlands – 2,594
West Midlands – 5,662
East of England – 2,871
Welfare Reform

• Local Housing Allowance set to 30th percentile of local market rents
  ➢ Likely to affect 774,790 households
  ➢ Estimated £12 per week average drop in income

• £15 excess payments scrapped (April 2011)

• LHA capped at 4 bedroom rate

• Increase in non dependent deductions

• Cap on maximum benefit entitlements (2013)
Case Study

• Jane is a 36 year old single parent of 6 children ranging from 4 to 15 years of age.

• The family have complex and multiple needs

Government legislation that will soon come into force will negatively impact upon the family’s income:

1) Jane is required to seek work when her youngest child reaches 7 years of age

2) Housing Benefit Cap
Localism Bill

• Local Authorities discharging homelessness duty via the Private Rented Sector.
  ➢ Cost
  ➢ Quality
  ➢ Lack of security

• Higher rent levels for new social housing tenants (80% of market rents).

• Abolition of social housing ‘tenancy for life’.
Changing World of Children’s Services.

• Frank Field / Graham Allen Reviews

*Foundation Years*

*Broader remit of Health Visitor Role*

*Early Intervention*
Next Steps

Is there scope to…

• Provide specialist housing advice within Children’s Centres

• Set up arrangements with housing to share information about new vulnerable families moving into your area

• Work intensively with families placed in temporary accommodation

• Allocate a Housing Specialist role to a FSW to coordinate work with Housing Options Teams
You can.....

• Develop links with your Housing Officers

• Hold reciprocal awareness sessions with housing staff and accommodation providers

• Use the Children’s Service Advice Line

• Use good practice guidance and briefings
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Round Up And Questions