

# MOVE▶ON

Alternatives Project



**Executive summary** - July 2005

## What is MAP ?

The Move-on Alternatives Project (MAP) is a collaborative venture initiated by a group of local authorities, support providers, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Association of London Government (ALG) to respond to the widespread concern about the lack of housing available for move-on from hostels and other supported housing in London. Building on the success of an earlier phase, MAP now seeks to develop strategic and practical approaches to tackle the current problems with move-on.

The ODPM, ALG and the Mayor of London fund the project and it is managed by a project board involving Circle 33 Housing Trust, the Single Homeless Project, the London Boroughs of Camden and Barnet, and the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the ODPM.

The project considers move-on from all types of supported temporary accommodation.

While initially focusing on move-on problems in the North London sub-region (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, Islington, and Westminster), the project seeks to devise solutions that could be adopted across London.

## Acknowledgments

The MAP Board would like to thank everyone who provided information for this report, took the time to complete our questionnaire and participated in either the focus groups or interviews.

We are also grateful to ODPM, ALG and GLA for funding this work.



## Move-on Alternatives Project

### **Breaking Down the Barriers**

#### **Executive summary**

Dave's marriage broke down when his wife could no longer cope with his drinking. Thrown out of the family home, Dave spent a year moving between friends' flats or sleeping rough. Getting into a hostel gave Dave a chance - he tried to control his drinking, but surrounded by drinkers, he couldn't stop. After a year he moved into supported housing where, with support, he stopped drinking and started a course at a local college. That was two years ago. Dave doesn't need support now - he hasn't for eighteen months. What he needs is somewhere to live independently so he can get regular access to his child. He's getting depressed by his situation - it makes him want to drink - but there's nowhere for him to move to. He knows it 'costs' to keep him where he is, and he knows there are people who need accommodation he's blocking. The council says he's got 'no priority' for a council or housing association flat and Dave doesn't think he'll have a chance with a private landlord - he hasn't even got a deposit.

Dave is not an isolated case. There are too many people trapped in supported housing, getting services they no longer need. While they have moved on personally they just can't move out.



## North London's move-on problem

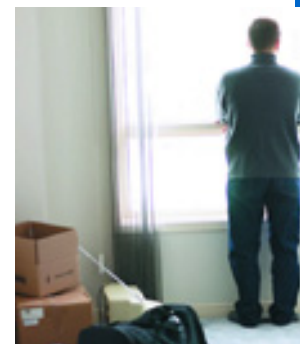
London faces an acute shortage of opportunities for people to move-on from supported housing and hostels. It is a problem that is recognised by London boroughs, the Greater London Authority, the capital's registered social landlords, support providers and their representative bodies such as Homeless Link. Addressing the move-on problem is one of the aims of the 2005 *London Housing Strategy*.

Previous research estimates that over 40 per cent of North London's supported housing is occupied by residents who no longer require the services they are receiving, but instead require move-on accommodation with no or low support. The work of the Move-on Alternatives Project (MAP) suggests the problem may actually be more acute, with up to two thirds of residents of supported housing - 4,000 people - seeking to move-on every year unable to find a permanent home.

MAP has built on the findings of previous research to gain a greater understanding of the issues that underlie, and the impact of, the move-on problem. With the support and co-operation of key stakeholders in the North London sub-region, MAP has developed a number of proposals, contained within this report, that will ensure a strategic response to the problem and deliver solutions that will benefit residents of supported housing and hostel accommodation and assist the work of support providers, registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities.

This is an opportunity for London councils, as strategic housing authorities, to show leadership, respond to the needs of individuals, improve the delivery of services and ensure value for money in public expenditure. Tackling the current move-on problem will also require ownership of the problem by other stakeholders. In particular, providers of supported housing services and registered social landlords have the opportunity through this consultation to make a commitment to shaping change.

The need for change is pressing. The inability to move on from supported housing can undermine the progress of individual service users and the valuable work of their supported housing providers. It blocks access to support for others in need (including vulnerable single people living in unsuitable bed and breakfast hotels). It also results in valuable resources being ineffectively used; we estimate that as much as £31 million across the North London sub-region may be spent every year on housing related support for people who no longer require it. With pressure on Supporting People resources, and with many in desperate need of supported housing, this is a situation that requires immediate action.



## Recommendation 1

### Strategic management

#### The need for leadership

Move-on arrangements across London have developed incrementally and without any overall plan. In the main, they have been built on the partnerships between different RSLs and support providers as an attempt to address the needs of residents who need to move on from supported housing. Initiatives to tackle the move-on problem do exist, but they are ad-hoc, are not underpinned by a strategic response and their contribution, while valuable to some individual providers or client groups, has not been the foundation for more widespread improvements.

A planned and co-ordinated response to meeting these needs is now required. The key players are local authorities, who in their role as strategic housing authorities, need to manage the move-on problem and take the lead role in driving forward change.

Success will depend on the ownership of the solutions by RSLs and supported housing providers. These organisations must also embrace change and work in partnership with local authorities, recognising that they have a key role in transforming the housing expectations of residents, and in designing and implementing solutions to improve move-on arrangements and opportunities.

#### Recommendation 1

- Local authorities mobilise and drive change by incorporating specific proposals to address the problem in the *North London Housing Strategy*
- Local authorities establish a North London sub regional move-on group (including key stakeholders such as registered social landlords and providers) reporting to the North London Housing Directors. The group will have the responsibility to develop, oversee and review the improvements to move-on that the MAP project seeks and proposes
- Local authorities designate an individual responsible for driving a move-on strategy and publicising the problem within their own areas
- RSLs and providers actively participate in developing, managing and implementing the solutions to move-on.



## Recommendations 2 & 3

### Simplifying the system

#### Rationalising routes into social housing move-on accommodation

Research evidence reveals an array of move-on mechanisms and arrangements for accessing social housing, that have developed over time and between partners without strategic direction. There are both formal and informal nominations agreements, borough level quota systems, reciprocal agreements, and allocations under homelessness legislation. The system appears to be a lottery, without a commonly accepted means for deciding how residents of supported housing are prioritised for social housing. The arrangements need to be fair, transparent and relate to the range of local strategies and plans to assist homeless people.

In the context of scarcity, the mechanism for allocating social housing for move-on needs to prioritise those residents who would most benefit from this opportunity. Under the present arrangements, a resident in supported housing who would be found to be in priority need under homelessness legislation can be disadvantaged for not having accessed homelessness services through the local Council.

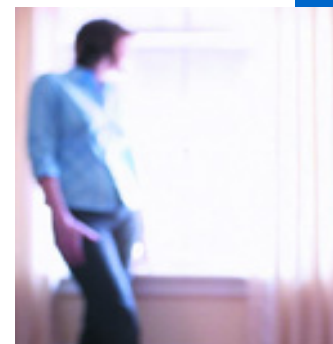
MAP presents an opportunity to reshape move-on arrangements, to provide access to a scarce supply of social housing based on a transparent system with a fair rationale for prioritising those who will benefit from social sector move-on. In doing so, stakeholders must also take the lead in providing parallel services and options to meet the needs of those not prioritised.

#### Recommendation 2

- All social landlords operating in the North London sub-region should adopt a common criteria for determining which supported housing residents get access to social housing nominations.

#### Recommendation 3

- Local authorities and participating RSLs in North London should set out their approach - within the current choice based lettings scheme (Home Connections) - to moving residents on from supported housing. As part of this we believe there is merit in setting a North London sub regional target for social lettings to people moving-on that is not less than the allocations achieved under current arrangements. This may initially just encompass housing let through Home Connections. However, the longer term goal should be to encourage a 'single pot' approach to move-on.



## Recommendations 4, 5 & 6

### Broadening horizons

#### Considering all housing options

The social rented sector is unable to meet every (or even most) demand for move-on accommodation. Whilst many stakeholders acknowledge this fact, this has not led to the development of suitable alternative options for many residents of supported housing.

The continued over-reliance on the social rented sector for move-on accommodation is based on historic relationships and circumstances that are no longer tenable in the context of increasing gaps between supply and demand. In 2003/04 alone, North London borough waiting lists grew by over 10 per cent to 68,000 households. With 16,000 households in temporary accommodation and Government targets to halve this number by 2010, it is unrealistic to imagine that the social sector can provide for all those seeking move-on.

Focusing on the social rented sector to provide move-on accommodation has also tended to make supported housing residents passive players in solving their housing problems. Under the current practice, many have just waited for an offer of social housing to come through. We believe that scope exists to get residents actively involved in their future housing options, based on realistic expectations, and clear understating of the mechanisms and priorities that exist. A start has already been made because those seeking move-on can 'bid' for housing under choice based lettings, but such schemes offer little rationale for which residents needing to move-on should be prioritised to access the scarce supply of social housing.

#### Recommendation 4

- Local authority Supporting People administering authorities should incorporate in their contracts a requirement that every service has a move-on plan, including, for example, an in-depth housing assessment for every service-user which explicitly sets out how move-on housing will be procured. Tenants should be actively involved in exploring the options themselves so that they have an informed understanding about what they can realistically expect to get.

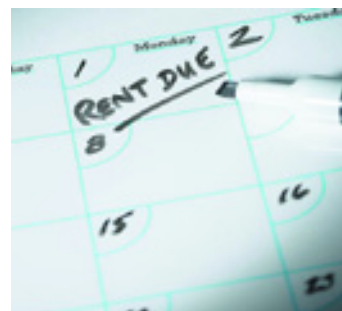


### Recommendation 5

- Protocols between supported housing providers and local authority homelessness and advice teams should be adopted to ensure that existing prevention, advice and accommodation services are fully utilised and consistently address the needs of supported housing residents. Protocols should include training for supported housing staff on topics such as homelessness legislation and local authority housing services and joint working groups should be established to streamline assessment and referral arrangements, exchange information and share good practice. Local authorities are considered best placed to lead on this.

### Recommendation 6

- All North London authorities should offer private rented sector access services to residents seeking move-on and provide specific support to the needs of this group. Where such services exist in housing options/homelessness services, local authorities could consider expanding these to meet these needs, offering clear agreed access routes. These should build on the successes of models that offer landlord incentives, Housing Benefit fast track and mandatory periods of floating support. RSLs and providers should consider their role in the provision or commissioning of such services.



## Recommendations 7 & 8

### Using resources efficiently

#### Reviewing investment in housing related support services

Effective investment in some support services is being undermined because so many residents no longer in need of support are awaiting move-on.

Supporting People commissioning bodies should work with providers to establish whether and how investment in services could be redirected to improve the outcomes for those receiving housing related support services.

There is no evidence that there is any excess in the supply of support services, but there are clearly better ways to configure existing services and consequent scope to re-invest a proportion of the potential savings in new front line services.

The potential may exist for some services with a large proportion of residents waiting to move-on to be recommissioned as permanent accommodation, so providing a longer term solution to their housing needs. Remodelling of supported housing may require capital investment.

Floating support is also critical to the success of services supporting individuals into independent tenancies in the private rented sector. For this source of move-on accommodation to be sustainable, residents, supported housing providers and private sector landlords need the assurance of support being available and delivered to residents in their independent tenancy.

#### Recommendation 7

- Supporting People Commissioning Bodies should consider whether there is scope, based on an assessment of future needs, to remodel any supported housing to provide permanent housing. Any decision should be preceded by careful consideration of future supported housing needs and close partnership working with asset owners.

#### Recommendation 8

- Supporting People commissioning bodies should consider a strategic level review of the need for floating support, and particularly, its role in lowering the demand for accommodation based support and increasing the availability of support for those moving on from supported housing into other tenures
- Evolving sub-regional and local authority Supporting People strategies and annual plans should address move-on, providing clarity and incentives to supported housing providers with regard to their role in addressing the move-on problem.



## Moving on

There is clearly both the scope and the need to establish better systems to manage move-on into social housing and other sectors. We believe our proposals for doing so are realistic, beneficial and can be developed for implementation over the next two years. However, this can only be achieved with robust commitment and strategic leadership, and the support and participation of every organisation with a part to play.

We need:

- Local authorities to take the lead in driving forward move-on solutions, devoting the time and resources to developing a systematic framework for move-on and galvanising support from all organisations with a contribution to make
- Supporting People commissioning bodies to examine existing housing support services and demonstrate in their Supporting People Annual Plans how they will contribute to solving the move-on problem
- RSLs and supported housing providers to acknowledge and accept the need for change and actively participate in the initiatives we recommend.

***Our action plan is set out overleaf.***

During the next three months - until 31 October 2005 - we will be actively seeking feedback on both the MAP Board's proposals and action plan. We intend to meet with key groups and organisations throughout this period to discuss how and with whom the project can be taken forward. The responses we receive will be reviewed and a revised MAP action plan published by 1 December 2005. We then intend to move-on to the implementation of our recommendations - under the direction of the North London Housing Directors' Group from January 2006.

Comments and suggestions should be made to Wendy Hayhurst, E mail: [wendy.hayhurst@dtz.com](mailto:wendy.hayhurst@dtz.com). Copies of the full report can also be requested through this contact.

Copies of the full report together with progress reports and further information will be available to download from MAP's website at [www.yourmovenext.co.uk](http://www.yourmovenext.co.uk).



# MAP's Action Plan

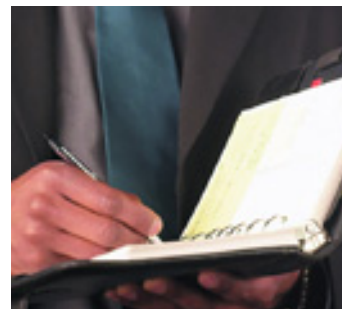
Proposal	Why ?	Lead	Participate	Achieve
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## Strategic management - The need for leadership

Recommendation 1	Why ?	Lead	Participate	Achieve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate an individual in each LA responsible for driving a move-on strategy</li> </ul>	Present system is incoherent	Local authorities	RSLs, supported housing providers	Oct 05
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a North London sub regional move-on group reporting to the North London directors</li> </ul>	Solving the move-on problem needs to be strategically managed			Oct 05
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate specific measurable objectives to tackle move-on into the North London Housing Strategy and their individual housing strategies</li> </ul>	Failure to take action means continuing waste of resources.			Dec 05

## Simplifying the system - Rationalising the routes into social housing move-on accommodation

Recommendation 2	Why ?	Lead	Participate	Achieve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All landlords operating in North London should adopt common criteria for deciding which supported housing residents get access to social housing</li> </ul>	There are a plethora of arrangements to facilitate move-on. Prioritisation of applicants is not based on a common principles. The system is difficult to understand, lacks transparency and is probably unfair	Local authorities	RSLs, supported housing providers	April 06
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The North London sub region explicitly sets out its plans to moving on residents from supported housing by setting an annual target for lettings to this group - initially focusing on lettings made under the Home Connections scheme</li> </ul>				April 06



# MAP's Action Plan

Proposal	Why ?	Lead	Participate	Achieve
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## Broadening horizons - Considering all housing options

<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting People contracts with supported housing providers should incorporate an in-depth housing assessment and move-on plan for every resident</li> </ul>	Expectations about what the social rented sector can provide is far too high	Local authorities supported housing providers, SP commissioning bodies	April 06
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protocols between supported housing providers and local authority homelessness and advice teams must be negotiated to ensure that existing prevention, advice and accommodation services are fully utilised by supported housing residents</li> </ul>	Unless housing options are broadened, many supported housing residents will continue to silt up accommodation		April 06
<p><b>Recommendation 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to the private rented sector is actively encouraged and promoted through the development of at least one specific project to increase its use by people moving on from supported housing</li> </ul>	Existing services are not being fully utilised by supported housing residents		Oct 06

## Using resources efficiently - Reviewing investment in housing related support services

<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioning Bodies should consider carrying out a strategic level review of housing related support services to the client group are delivered</li> <li>Commissioning bodies should demonstrate in their Supporting People plans how move-on will be addressed</li> <li>Commissioning bodies should consider whether SP contracts could include performance targets in relation to move-on</li> <li>RSLs and providers should actively participate in any review of housing related support</li> </ul>	<p>Resources are being spent on people who no longer require the support services being received.</p> <p>Some services are already changing in nature simply because they are occupied by people no longer requiring the original services</p> <p>There is a suggestion that providing more floating support may help reduce the move-on bottleneck.</p>	Supporting People Commissioning Bodies	RSLs, LAs, Supported Housing Providers	April 06
<p><b>Recommendation 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioning Bodies should consider whether there is scope to remodel any supported housing to provide permanent housing</li> </ul>	Funding of existing services may be at risk if present system is not changed			April 07

Comments and suggestions should be made to:

**Wendy Hayhurst**

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E-mail: [wendy.hayhurst@dtz.com](mailto:wendy.hayhurst@dtz.com)

Copies of the full report can also be requested through this contact.

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Alternatives Project

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