

Annual Review 2005–06



Frontline agencies in partnership

# Delivering change...



Delivering change...

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Homeless Link exists to bring about an end to homelessness. We are here to work with others, including Government, our members, partners, and homeless people themselves, to make homelessness a thing of the past.

Our member organisations provide a range of services, including: advice, temporary and permanent housing, move-on accommodation, day centres, medical and drug services and direct support for rough sleepers.

We work to combat the causes of homelessness, to reduce the risk of new people becoming homeless and to overcome the effects of homelessness.

## Our role is to:

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- raise standards in the sector that supports homeless people and tackles homelessness
- influence the development of policy, strategy and investment at all levels of government.

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Delivering change...

# ...and why it matters

A year ago we were in the midst of transforming ourselves, aiming to become a focused, light-touch and influential agent of change. Some work is still in progress, but you now find Homeless Link confident and committed, making a real impact and building its expertise and credibility.

As well as our long established national office and London team we also have a presence in each English region. This gives us a truly national reach, and the opportunity to pick up quickly on trends and issues in services so that we can make the quick loop back to our policy and influencing work. Our new people have been welcomed and supported by the sector. They are well-networked and can always find someone who can help suggest solutions to local problems and exemplify good practice.

Our increased membership, strengthened networks and information reinforce the credibility of the messages we communicate to policy makers. We have established strong and constructive relationships with ministers, officials and heads of national agencies. We focus on evidence-based argument, positive challenge and debate in the policy field.

In service delivery we aim to practice what we preach - to be open to feedback to improve performance, to be positive and rigorous, and always to focus on the changes that will most profoundly tackle homelessness and enable homeless people to move on in their lives.

Move on accommodation has been a long-standing concern for the sector. We gathered evidence, campaigned, engaged with Government and achieved funding to develop prototype move on plans, which are now being tried and tested with positive results.

Supporting People is a vital programme for tens of thousands of vulnerable homeless people and for the agencies that accommodate and support them. We are pleased with the indications that many sector concerns will be addressed in its future direction.

We talked to Government about the need for health services to be more responsive to the requirements of homeless people, and our health inclusion project has been working to bridge the gap to primary care services. We expect to see new guidelines on the admission and discharge of homeless people from hospital shortly.

We can only influence if we have our eyes and ears open and make good use of connections - picking up on emerging issues, undertaking research, and proposing solutions. As the voice for the sector we believe we are at our most effective as a voice of reason and a problem solver than as a megaphone.

We are delighted that our membership has increased by 25 per cent in 12 months. This is no accident. Our membership offer has strengthened and we aim to strengthen it still further. More people gain more benefit from being part of the Homeless Link family - through the website, e-newsletters, training, events, seminars, offers and networking to problem solve.

We've come a long way quickly and aspire to go further. Our four-year strategic plan sets out our four ambitions: to influence government strategy, investment and priorities; to influence service development; to be a strong membership organisation and to be one of the most effective national umbrella bodies. A year ago we were creating a structure and setting goals. Now we are focused on delivery.

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**“We’ve come a long way quickly and aspire to go further”**

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We are not there yet, but with your help, advice and challenge we can get there. We will never be content with where we are, because our vision calls us to do better. We aim to be, not the representative body for homelessness, but the catalyst for ending it.



**Jenny Edwards**  
Chief Executive

**Simon Wilson**  
Chair



Delivering change...

## ...when it matters

Homeless Link helps agencies to solve emerging and longstanding problems by offering them advice and access to effective models from their peers within the sector. We have identified strategic issues in consultation with the sector, sought evidence and presented it to policy makers. We aim to ensure that our policy development and campaigns are well timed, focused and targeted. We want to influence Government thinking and make an impact on the lives of people who are homeless or vulnerable to homelessness.



**“Homeless Link has been able to influence the agenda of the Department for Communities and Local Government - which we could never have achieved on our own.”**

Daniel Currie, Chief Executive  
St Giles Trust, London

Our report *No room to move?* revealed the number of people stuck in temporary accommodation. Following this, the Government’s Homelessness Innovation Fund supported our pilot programme to develop move on plan protocols. In this model, local authorities and their third sector partners, work together to develop jointly owned action plans. Ten pilot projects are developing and testing the protocol. If the evidence shows it works we hope that it will be adopted as the recommended national approach.

The Supporting People programme, crucial to so much of the work of the sector, is changing. We surveyed our members on their concerns, and stimulated debate at our conference *At the crossroads*, which coincided with the launch of the Government’s consultation on future directions of the programme. One important development that we had sought was the instruction from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to local authorities that local connection criteria should not apply for admission into Supporting People homelessness projects.

The issues of health and homelessness are closely related. Our health inclusion project, funded by the Department of Health, promotes effective partnerships to deliver improved health for homeless people and access to health services. We have worked over the year with the DCLG, Department of Health and London Network for Nurses and Midwives to produce a hospital admission and discharge protocol for homeless people.

Access to training, access to work and a smooth transition to work are important in people leaving homelessness. The welfare reform agenda needs to be right to enable this. Our conference, *Ways to work*, addressed by the Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MP, Minister of State for Welfare Reform anticipated the green paper, and explored key areas needing change for the future.

## What we’ve achieved

- We called for lead roles in Government to link health and homelessness. Two senior posts were created in the Department of Health and DCLG.
- We produced online resources for agencies to work with confidence on the issue of tuberculosis, funded by the Health Protection Agency.
- We worked with Kellogg College, Oxford to develop online training in homelessness for health professionals, which is now available.
- We sought the views of homeless people, including those on the street to inform the Department of Health Consultation on Your Health, Your Care, Your Say.
- Our methodology to audit the numbers and needs of older homeless people is now being piloted by six local authorities around the country.
- Our input to the Social Exclusion Unit was shown in its reports on young people, older people and frequent movers.
- We drew together the concept of a programme to help hostel residents into work and formed part of a partnership, which won Treasury Invest to Save funds for the pilot.
- We played an active role in the national Homelessness Strategy Delivery Group with Government.
- We promoted the English approach to third sector /government partnerships to solve homelessness at a conference organised by the Mayor of Paris.

## Our aims for next year

- We will launch a campaign to end homelessness by 2022, with an early target to end rough sleeping by 2012.
- All ten pilot schemes involved in the move on plans protocol project will carry out needs audits, develop action plans and work towards their targets. We will promote and share the learning.
- We will work for Government endorsement and publication of the hospital admission and discharge guidelines.
- Our Clean Break project, funded by London Housing Foundation, will work in partnership with two drug and alcohol action teams to address the lack of ‘clean’ accommodation for homeless people leaving detox.
- We will make the case for the value of work funded by the Supporting People programme to MPs and the public and gather a case to present to the Government’s Comprehensive Spending and Third Sector Reviews.
- We will work to deepen Government strategies towards people experiencing deep and complex exclusion, and with multiple needs.
- We will publish research on homelessness among accession state (A8) nationals, using it to raise public awareness and to seek solutions across Government departments.
- We will publish good practice guidance on working with A8 nationals and other homeless people without recourse to public funds.
- We will work with partners through our research forum to seek resources for longitudinal research looking at routes into and out of homelessness.

Delivering change...

## ...where it matters

One change over the last year happened right on our members' doorstep. With the development of a new team working across the country we are truly national, with staff in every English region. This keeps us closely in touch with work on the frontline, supporting, making connections and developing partnerships throughout the sector - where it matters.



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“Homeless Link has provided us with a national voice on key issues and a ready-made network of colleagues and specialists.”

Paul Bridges, Operations Manager -  
Young People, Focus Futures Birmingham

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We are very grateful for the support of DCLG, which has enabled us to put in place development workers in the nine English regions. In the East of England this work is subcontracted to Space East.

The team's practical, hands-on remit is to support colleagues in the sector to develop their services, problem solve and identify resources. Our staff are not office based but actively out-and-about in their region promoting good practice, trouble-shooting and bringing people and ideas together. Many more practice-sharing events are being held and e-newsletters help to spread interesting models and resources.

Our regular Spotlight meetings for London member agencies look at specific areas of practice, bringing together frontline staff from across the capital - last year these focused on issues of drugs, migration and service user involvement.

In Wales our team ran training for agencies, a health conference and a seminar on partnership working. We were involved in lobbying and consultation on health policy and published *Access to health for homeless people*. We began to transfer our policy remit to Cymorth Cymru, as the Welsh Assembly required.

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## What we've achieved

- We worked with many agencies that were within the Hostels Capital Improvement Programme (HCIP), to help ensure that the investment results in the delivery of lasting change in services.
- In London we researched the use of homelessness services by accession state (A8) nationals.
- We promoted service user involvement through seminars in Oxford and Preston.
- We held a regional conference on partnership working in Torquay.
- We ran events on homeless people's access to employment in Bristol, Bedford and Leicester, in partnership with OSW.
- We kept our London member agencies in touch with news, funding, training opportunities through our email bulletin London Link, circulated monthly to over 500 subscribers. The e-bulletin is now available in the North West and North East.
- We stressed the importance of addressing move on issues to the Greater London Authority and a commitment to a move on action plan appeared in the London Housing Strategy.

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## Our aims for next year

- We will ensure that HCIP results in sustainable change in services.
- In the English regions we will explore the issue of employability and support agencies in finding ways of helping service users into employment.
- We will draw together an overarching strategy for delivery change in services, focusing on key areas.
- We will bring the perspectives of London's vulnerable homeless people into the development of a Mayor's Housing strategy for London.
- We will develop links between arts, cultural and sports bodies and homelessness services, deepening our understanding of how activities help homeless people to create positive identity, self esteem and motivation.
- We will encourage debate and understanding of new models of practice involving psychological insights and evidence of impact.



Delivering change...

## ...and making it happen

We have reviewed the way we deliver services to members and to the wider sector. As a result we have created an Innovation and Good Practice team to deliver more targeted support on the issues that those using and working in homelessness services identify as priorities - so they are better equipped to enable the right changes to happen.



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**“Homeless Link has been a great help to us in assessing our service. Their staff have helped us to look at the aims and objectives of our project, and adopt a systematic approach to our quality assessment processes.”**

**Alistair Murray**  
North London Action for the Homeless

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We continued our work on quality with funding from four charitable trusts, following one-to-one discussions with agencies implementing quality systems.

After mapping existing training and qualifications within the sector, we developed the Skills Training Achievement and Recognition (STAR) project, offering frontline staff National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) at levels 2 and 3 equivalent. This will enable people working in the sector to accredit their competence in working with clients. The East London Learning and Skills Council funded pilot project will cover health and social care, housing and advice and guidance, and means that qualifications are available free of charge to small organisations in East London.

We are working with the Sector Skills Councils and the Learning and Skills Council to seek recognition of homelessness as a discrete sector with needs that do not fit easily into any of the existing models. We aim to broker partnerships between our sector and workforce development agencies.

We are developing an online database of resources and best practice in the sector alongside our toolkits for emergency accommodation, day centres and resettlement.

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## What we've achieved

- Following consultation with members we re-launched the quality project.
- We conducted extensive research into best practice in the sector and began to make this available online.
- We established an Innovation and Good Practice team.
- We developed the Skills Training Achievement and Recognition project, piloting National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3 equivalent.

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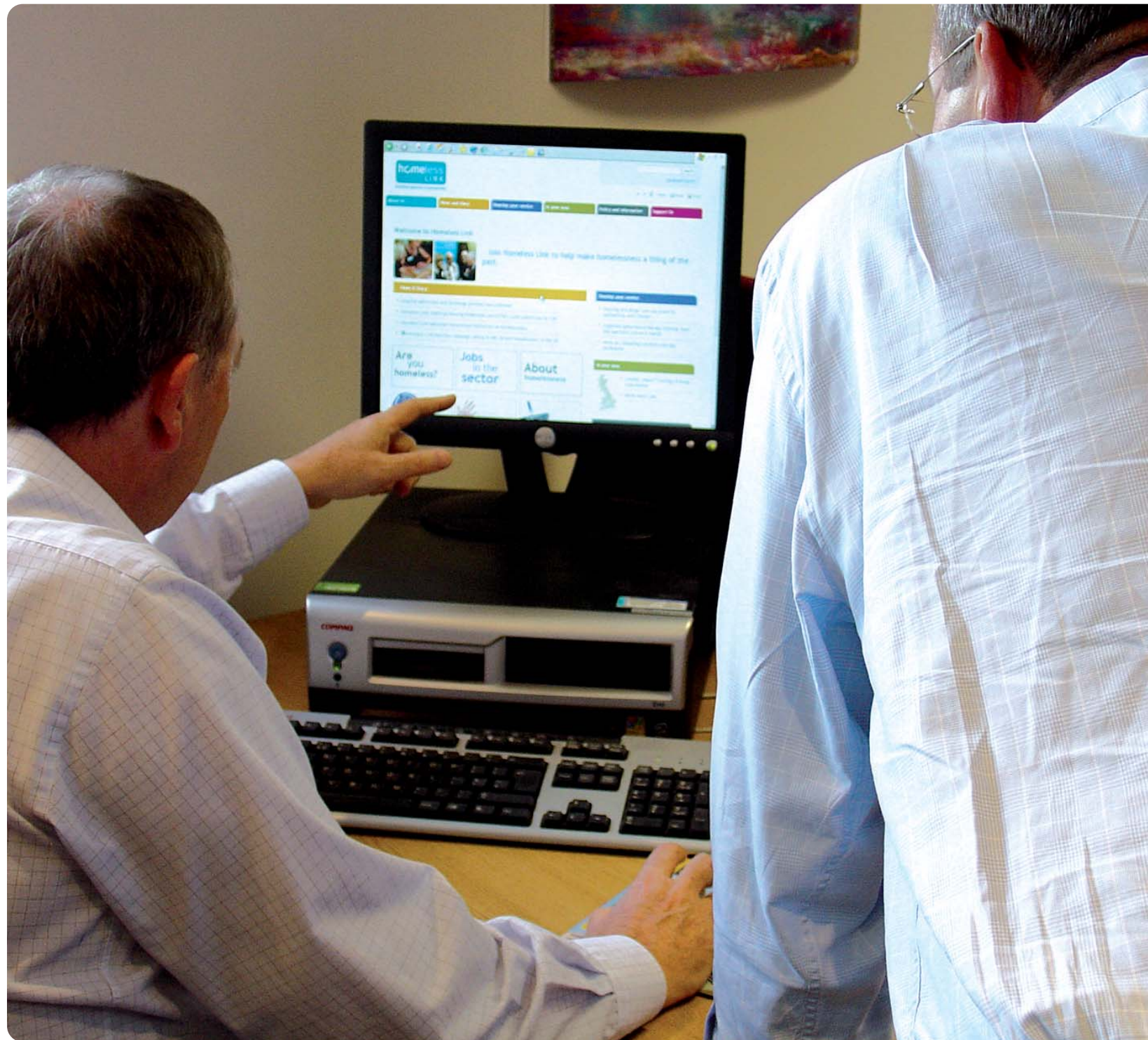
## Our aims for next year

- We will review and update our best practice toolkits and place them online. These cover emergency accommodation (hostels and night shelters), day centres and resettlement.
- Within the quality project we will run a series of regional seminars on quality and outcomes across the country to enable day centres and other organisations to learn from each other.
- We will produce series of online briefings including best practice case studies of how organisations deliver services to specific groups.
- We will offer short courses and qualifications to staff working in homelessness agencies and develop new courses in difficult and challenging behaviour and understanding homelessness law.
- We will develop the concept of high-level master classes.
- We will hold events looking at preventing homelessness and planning for emergencies.
- We will develop a strategy for creating change in services for homeless people.

Delivering change...

## ...delivering the message

Homeless Link's profile within the sector, in Government and beyond has grown substantially. We are a natural point of contact for Government, major agencies, media and other professionals seeking information about homelessness services and policy. The sector is increasingly seeing that telling us about issues, concerns and hopes results in that message reaching the people who can make a difference in the most productive way. Increasingly ministers turn to us for views, information and feedback.







Delivering change...

## ...to partners and colleagues

We support frontline services through a range of training courses and events. Training stretches from entry-level posts through middle management to senior strategic level. It makes a useful contribution to a developmental pathway for people working in the sector. We also enable people to enhance their practice via the learning, problem sharing and networking at seminars and conferences and in visits that our team co-ordinates to see innovative models.



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**“This was the most useful and practical training on the subject I have had. It was very informative and though-provoking and gave me new insights and tools.”**

**Midori Hol**  
Equinox

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We are gradually introducing new courses in more locations, with an expanding range of topics in response to demand. Our courses attract a mix of sectors, with increasing attendance from people working in the public sector and other areas of the voluntary sector - leading to a healthier debate and greater sharing of skills and experience. Our in-house training courses, sometimes shared by two or more organisations, are also increasingly popular.

Some of our events are policy-based, while others deal with specific frontline issues. Our conference on health and homelessness, held in Wales attracted some 60 delegates, and 300 attended our annual national conference in Nottingham. Two conferences sold out in advance: *Making the link* and *At the crossroads*. The Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MP, Minister of State for Welfare Reform, was a keynote speaker at *Ways to work*, which coincided with the Department for Work and Pensions' consultation on welfare reform.

## What we've achieved

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- We ran 53 short training courses and 63 in-house training days.
- 96 per cent of attendees rated our courses as 'very good' or 'excellent'.
- Our short course training days attracted over 600 people, with our in-house training serving over 700 delegates.
- We promoted major issue-based conferences on employment and welfare reform, health, research and Supporting People.
- We organised four seminars on outcomes approaches and three day centre seminars.

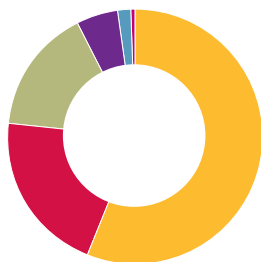
## Our aims for next year

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- We will develop our programme of events.
- We will review and develop our training programme to offer new levels and themes.
- We will increase the regional provision of training.
- We will develop a new master class format.
- We will complete the development of the 'homelessness' NVQ.

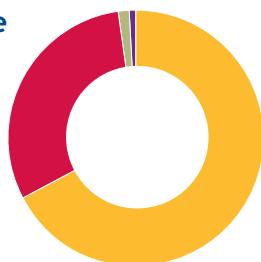
# financial report

## Our Income



Statutory Grants (Restricted)	1,082,786
Statutory Grants (Unrestricted)	400,000
Membership services	305,049
Trust Grants & Project Income	99,000
Other income	32,150
Donations	8,882

## Our Expenditure



Charitable activities (Restricted)	(1,166,562)
Charitable activities (Unrestricted)	(529,653)
Fundraising costs	(24,133)
Governance	(10,175)

## Independent Auditor's Statement 31 March 2006

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S STATEMENT

We have examined the summarised financial statements of Homeless Link

### RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND AUDITORS

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with the recommendations of the charities SORP.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements and Trustees' Annual Report. We also read the other information contained in the summarised annual report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

### BASIS OF OPINION

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 'The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement' issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom to the extent that it is relevant to the summary financial statements of a charitable company.

### OPINION

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full statements and the Trustees' report of Homeless Link for the year ended 31 March 2006.

Tenon Audit Limited  
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor  
Amberley Place  
107-111 Peascod Street  
Windsor  
Berkshire

## Income and Expenditure Statement For the year ended 31 March 2006

	April 2005 - March 2006			2005
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Restated Total £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
<b>Incoming resources from charitable activities</b>				
Grants From Statutory Bodies	400,000	1,082,786	1,482,786	844,238
Trust Grants & Project Income	-	99,000	99,000	215,170
Membership services	305,049	-	305,049	256,568
<b>Incoming resources from generated funds</b>				
Donations	8,882	-	8,882	11,704
Bank interest	23,101	-	23,101	25,859
Other incoming resources	9,049	-	9,049	5,585
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>746,081</b>	<b>1,181,786</b>	<b>1,927,867</b>	<b>1,359,124</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
<b>Costs of generating funds</b>				
Fundraising costs	(24,133)	-	(24,133)	(70,667)
Charitable activities	(529,653)	(1,166,562)	(1,696,215)	(1,546,442)
Governance	(10,175)	-	(10,175)	(9,072)
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>(563,961)</b>	<b>(1,166,562)</b>	<b>(1,730,523)</b>	<b>(1,626,181)</b>
<b>Net Movement In Funds</b>				
Transfers between funds	(59,082)	59,082	-	-
Fund balances at 01 April 2005	189,924	132,188	322,112	589,169
<b>Fund balances at 31 March 2006</b>	<b>312,962</b>	<b>206,494</b>	<b>519,456</b>	<b>322,112</b>

## Balance Sheet As at 31 March 2006

	2006	2005
	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible fixed assets	8,240	14,122
Investments	1	1
	<b>8,241</b>	<b>14,123</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors & prepayments	126,853	87,665
Cash at bank & in hand	780,016	555,49
	<b>906,869</b>	<b>643,164</b>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>(395,654)</b>	<b>(335,175)</b>
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>511,215</b>	<b>307,989</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>519,456</b>	<b>322,112</b>
<b>Represented by Funds</b>		
Unrestricted	255,659	126,739
Designated	57,303	63,185
Restricted	206,494	132,188
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>519,456</b>	<b>322,112</b>

Delivering change...

# ...our board and funders

## Board

Homeless Link's Board of Trustees

- Simon Wilson  
Independent member (Chair)
- Sharon Allen  
St Anne's Community Services
- Daniel Currie  
St Giles Trust
- Peter Channing  
Independent member (Treasurer)
- Lorna Esien  
St Basil's (resigned 10 October 2005)
- Richard Frame  
SOLAS
- Claire Grainger  
Nottingham Hostels Liaison Group
- Olly Grender  
Independent member
- Halford Hewitt  
Ipswich Housing Action Group
- Steve Johnson  
Independent member
- Christopher Munday  
Focus Futures (resigned 10 October 2005)
- Paul Nield  
Independent member
- Howard Sinclair  
Broadway

## Funders

With thanks to our major supporters:

### Statutory funders

- Department of Health
- ChangeUp funded by the Home Office
- Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate (Department for Communities and Local Government)
- London Councils (formerly Association of London Government)
- Learning & Skills Council
- Welsh Assembly Government

### Charitable trusts and companies

- The Baring Foundation
- Bridge House Trust
- CRASH
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Help The Aged
- Laing's Charitable Trust
- London Housing Foundation
- Lloyds TSB Foundation for England & Wales
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- The Tudor Trust
- The Vodafone (UK) Foundation
- Virgin Unite

We are grateful to our statutory and voluntary funders for their support, and to our colleagues throughout the sector and in the wider voluntary sector for their energy and commitment.

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Charity no. 1089173  
Company no. 4313826



Frontline agencies in partnership