

Appendix 3: Good Practice Guide

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This document provides examples of good practice which DHOG may find helpful when implementing some of the actions from the Homelessness Strategy. For ease of reference, each of the good practice examples are listed under the relevant strategic priority heading.

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Make homelessness everyone's responsibility through a system-wide approach

Homelessness Charter

Greater Manchester Homelessness Charter

Greater Manchester have developed a homelessness charter <https://charter.streetsupport.net/read-the-charter/> which sets out a clear vision and objectives in relation to homelessness, which it asks partners and individuals to make a pledge as to how they can do something towards ending homelessness using their own "unique skills and resources".

Vision: To end homelessness in Manchester.

Values: While homelessness remains, this charter provides guiding principles concerning the rights of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

We believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to:

- A safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life.
- Safety from violence, abuse, theft, and discrimination, and the full protection of the law.

**Embed
homeless
prevention
across public
services**

**Secure system-wide
commitment to
transform services
in recognition that
homelessness
is everyone's
responsibility**

- Respect and a good standard of service everywhere.
- Equality of access to information and services.
- Equality of opportunity to employment, training, volunteering, leisure, and creative activities.

We believe that those who work with homeless people have a collective responsibility to ensure that:

- Good communication, coordination, and a consistent approach is delivered across all services.
- People with experience of homelessness have a voice and involvement in determining the solutions to their own issues, to homelessness, and in wider society.

Commitment to Collaborate

Partnership Working – West Midlands combined authority commitment to collaborate

The West Midlands Combined Authority has set up a Taskforce is to “design out homelessness”; that is to identify and tackle the structural, policy, and operational factors that lead to homelessness or fail to protect against homelessness. The model adopted by the Taskforce, is based upon the Positive Pathway Models for Young People, which identify and enhance the protective factors within the universal space and target homeless prevention at the earliest possible opportunity. The Taskforce in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Housing and Crisis and have used the Pathway model to improve understanding and encourage other public sector bodies and their partners to develop a voluntary Commitment to Collaborate (C2C) to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Substance Misuse

Cardiff: Bupropion

Within Cardiff support for people with substance misuse improved as a result of the pandemic. Prescribing that had previously taken 12-17 weeks wait for a script, moved to a rapid prescribing model where scripts could be done within a week – which has been hugely beneficial to the client and agencies working with the client. It is also reported that the delivery of medication to hostels has also worked really well.

A huge improvement in drug treatment during the pandemic has been the introduction of Bupropion. It is reported widely by both Council staff and partner agencies that it has had a very positive impact in working with clients, and there is a hope that this will still be funded in the future.

Work is underway to ensure the ongoing use of Bupropion across Cardiff.

Prevent homelessness and respond to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions

Pre-56 days prevention

Cambridgeshire trailblazer initiative – upstream prevention

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’s homelessness prevention trailblazer project was initially funded by MHCLG for two years to look at new and creative ways to reduce homelessness in the area, with a particular focus on early intervention and prevention.

The vision of the service is that “by empowering all public facing staff to identify the risk of homelessness and work together to prevent it, we make homelessness the unacceptable outcome”.

The Trailblazer partnership works to ensure that:

- Homelessness becomes the “unacceptable outcome”.
- Homelessness specialists are employed who link housing advice and other early help teams, to spot potential homelessness and coordinate actions to prevent it.

Intervene earlier to ensure opportunities for homelessness prevention are maximised with effective and targeted tools in place.

- Public-facing staff get homelessness prevention training, supported by e-learning.
- Partners are helped to spot early warning signs of homelessness, and know who to turn to for help, for example through a housing health-check tool.
- Frontline staff get training to enable them to deal with “difficult interactions” and help secure better long-term outcomes for the people they are helping.

The Trailblazer team aims to help people who have more than 56 days’ notice of homelessness. Local authority Housing Options teams will deal with anyone who has

56 days’ notice or less. Where there is a threat of homelessness in advance of the 56 day threat, the Trailblazer team will work to try and prevent the homelessness through early intervention work.

Promote customer choice in developing bespoke housing solutions.

Trailblazer officers give advice to public sector professionals on legislation and other housing matters, giving staff in other professions the skills needed so they can deal with homelessness queries themselves.

The Trailblazer service has helped to create new pathways so there is “no wrong front door” meaning if people need help, they will find it. The team works to signpost and refer people to other agencies where appropriate.

There are two distinct strands of the Trailblazer work. The first is very much about improving partnership responses, through a range of work – including the development of joint protocols, which will provide an ongoing legacy; and the second is the casework response working directly with anyone at risk of homelessness, taking referrals from District teams and wider partner agencies.

Integrated Homelessness and Wellbeing Assessment

Cardiff City Council integrated homeless and wellbeing assessment

Cardiff City Council has developed an integrated Homeless and Wellbeing Assessment. The assessment form focuses on both the essential information required to understand and address the housing situation, but also focuses in depth on the client’s wider support and wellbeing needs.

A section of the form is dedicated to personal outcomes and what matters most to the customer, and includes questions such as:

- What matters to you, what are you trying to achieve?
- What is important, what personal outcomes are you trying to achieve?
- What do you hope for if things can improve?
- What would be happening to make you a little less concerned?
- What are your thoughts about next steps?

Prison Leavers

Gwynedd Council – Resettlement Officer

Gwynedd Council Housing Solutions Service has a dedicated prison resettlement worker based within the team. Following the implementation

of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Welsh Government developed a national pathway for homeless services

to children, young people, and adults in the secure estate, often referred to as the ‘Prisoner Pathway’. The pathway aims to help individuals avoid homelessness on release from custody. It was introduced with the aim of providing prisoners facing homelessness with support from 56 days before their release. The pathway also clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all the agencies and organisations involved in the process, resulting in a more coordinated approach and better support for people leaving custody.

Release from prison is the second biggest cause of homelessness across Gwynedd. In order to address this and ensure the Prisoner Pathway works effectively at a local level, the council made the decision to fund a prison resettlement officer.

The resettlement officer works with prisoners prior to release to undertake the Section 62 assessment (in order to determine what duty is owed) and develop a personal housing plan with the prisoner. The officer works with prisoners 12 weeks prior to release and seeks to find settled housing solutions prior to release. Individuals in custody will be advised if the council has an interim duty to accommodate them – this ensures that the customer has realistic expectations as to the range of options available to them and can begin to plan, with the support of the resettlement officer, prior to release.

Alongside working to find settled housing solutions prior to release the resettlement officer will work with prisoners who are recalled to ensure that, where possible, existing accommodation can be retained, and housing benefit put in place to prevent arrears accruing.

This post has been very successful in achieving settled housing solutions for individuals, often with a troubled housing history and complex support needs, prior to release. The officer has been able to successfully develop strong relationships with clients based on trust and honesty. The officer has also established very positive working relationships with prisons and probation.

Hospital Discharge

NHS in-patient service – Conwy County Borough Council

“Health and Housing 2025” is a collaborative movement with a shared purpose of ending avoidable health inequalities in North Wales. Its membership includes representatives from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), public health, housing associations, local authorities, and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The 2025 partners have identified five priority work areas that can contribute to tackling health inequalities, and one of these is around hospital discharge.

This has resulted in the creation of a ‘step down’ team. This is a new pathway to improving patient flow within Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and the community hospitals serviced by the acute site. Following increasing numbers of patients accessing the health service and an unprecedented amount of those patients being unable to be safely discharged to appropriate accommodation, BCUHB approached Conwy Housing Solutions to introduce a specialist housing officer who would be embedded within the step down team.

The housing solutions officer works alongside discharge liaison nurses, occupational therapists, district nurses, and physiotherapists, and is directly managed by the matron of the step down team. The role of the housing officer is to identify patients in housing crisis which is likely to delay their discharge from the site. Early intervention to establish the nature of the housing crisis and to determine the barriers to discharge were the main focus of work.

Significant amount of time was spent ‘walking the wards’ and attending ward rounds. This was vital to promote the role of the housing officer, and also for the housing officer to familiarise themselves with the hospital layout, jargon and ways of working unique to that environment.

The housing officer worked closely with ward managers to develop trust and understanding of each other’s roles and to ensure that the highest standard of service could be offered. The housing officer developed a simple referral system within the busy emergency department which ensured that patients could be highlighted during admission, with minimal disruption to the difficult task of nursing. This system was developed over time and has proved successful in being able to

work with a patient through their journey and ensure that appropriate services are considered for the patient’s needs.

The estimated savings by having this post in place is in the region of £163,200 within the first six-month period.

Social Housing Evictions

Clwyd Alyn – Reducing evictions in social housing

Clwyd Alyn, North Wales Housing Association, has 6,000 homes across seven counties in North Wales, as well as supported living schemes, care services, and other tenures. Until last year, it had been evicting about 19 or 20 households a year, however in April 2019 the association brought in its new policy – working towards no evictions. Since then, it has evicted only three households, two of whom were no longer living at the property. This new approach has led an 80% reduction in evictions.

Wales & West Housing Association had developed a similar approach about eight years ago. The association, which has about 12,500 homes, serves around 20 notices seeking possession a year now, this approach has led to a reduction of evictions from 40 -50 annually to low single figures.

Clwyd Alyn have re-examined the organisational mission, “what we are here for”. The answer, the association decided, was poverty. The organisation considered the statistics on the areas in which it operates and saw that people in the poorest neighbourhoods still had a lower life expectancy.

The organisation reviewed its “negative spend” – money the association was pouring into chasing rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, repairing properties, pursuing evictions, and then allocating the homes again once they are empty. The aim was to avoid spending some of this money and instead redirect it into activities that can sustain tenancies and alleviate poverty. The housing association recognised that evicting does not really solve the problem for that individual or family, as they will still need to be accommodated.

Over eight months the organisation has made small changes, by approaching tenancy problems in a different way, and fundamentally changing the culture of the organisation. The approach has been to develop a better relationship with tenants, and to intervene early – when the first rent payment is missed rather than when arrears are out of hand.

Suzanne Mazzone, Head of Income and Service Improvement at Clwyd Alyn, says: "If they've gone over by £500 or £1,000, it's beyond people's ability to think how they're going to manage that. When the first payment is missed, we need to find out why and offer support. It's much easier to manage then."

Housing officers also meet every four weeks and discuss cases. If things are not working, the answer is not to send out demand letters. Instead, they try different approaches, which could involve switching the case to a different housing officer, for example. The solution might be helping the tenant move to a more affordable or suitable property. A move may also be used to help in anti-social behaviour cases if the problem is localised.

The approach moves away from adversarial relationship, with tenants getting letters through the door demanding payment, instead the approach is a rapid personal response based on "you've missed a payment, how can we help you?". Both Clwyd Alyn and Wales & West speak of looking at each case individually and considering if the cause is "can't pay" or "won't pay". The latter makes up only a few cases.

Managing Arrears: Prevention pilot – Flintshire County Council

In response to an increase in rent arrears for council tenants – Housing Solutions, supporting people, and estate management have worked together to develop an early response for any council housing tenant across Flintshire who falls into rent arrears.

The aim of the project is to: -

- Maximise the rent income to the council.
- Reduce the level of arrears and the number of households falling into arrears.
- Reduce the number of households referred to housing solutions at risk of homelessness as a result of non-payment of rent.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Develop and pilot a delivery model through a multi-team approach.

- Target activity at those tenants in the early stages of arrears.
- Develop a range of interventions which have the most impact in terms of sustaining tenancies.
- Evaluate the project after 6 and 12 months to establish which elements of the project can inform wider team approaches.

The aim of this service is to provide early intervention and prevent rent arrears building up. The hub is made up of 2 Housing Solutions Support Officers and 2 income officers. The team focuses on addressing rent arrears whilst they are at a low level before they become unmanageable.

Tenants who miss one month's rent payment trigger an intervention from the team, who will contact them, including undertaking home visits to understand the reason why the arrears have begun to accumulate. The team will work proactively with the tenant and put any necessary support or measures in place to help them manage their money and maximise their incomes, and at the same time ensure that tenants understand their rent responsibilities and ensure rent payments or arrangements are made.

This early engagement helps the team to identify the tenants who can't pay from those that won't pay. Court action will follow for tenants who won't pay.

Whilst the hub is very much in its early days the team has been successful in addressing low level rent arrears by having different kinds of conversations with tenants at a much earlier stage. The initial results of the pilot over an initial two-week

period has shown significant improvements in collections, with £7.9k being recovered in just 55 hours of work. As a cost benefit exercise, the pilot shows a 9:1 return on investment.

Supported Housing Evictions

Newcastle – Preventing evictions from supported accommodation protocol.

In 2017/18, there were 184 evictions from commissioned accommodation (Crisis Accommodation, Supported Accommodation, Supported Accommodation for Young People, and Supported Accommodation for people with mental health problems) – and in the same period, the Street Outreach team found 84 people who said their primary reason for rough sleeping was being evicted from accommodation, or that they had abandoned their accommodation. These evictions and abandonments are almost exclusively from supported accommodation as opposed to independent tenancies.

The overarching aim of the protocol [https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Housing%20and%20homelessness/APPENDIX%202%20Prevention%20from%20Eviction%20\(supported%20accommodation\)%20Protocol.pdf](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Housing%20and%20homelessness/APPENDIX%202%20Prevention%20from%20Eviction%20(supported%20accommodation)%20Protocol.pdf) is to reduce the number of people leaving supported accommodation without alternative accommodation being made available to them to mitigate the risk of rough sleeping.

The protocol aims to achieve this by taking an outcome focussed adaptive management approach that is flexible and responsive to learning, and which:

- Develops a collaborative approach to preventing the eviction wherever possible, including open and transparent information sharing.
- Promotes multi-agency working by identifying partners who can support sustainment of accommodation.
- Is clear on what preventative action has been taken where someone is at risk of eviction.
- Is accountable for decision making and recognises the rights of residents to appeal the eviction.
- Ensures that immediate evictions are a last resort and only used when supported by Police action.
- Tests and learns from practice so that we can identify unmet need and opportunities to improve our responses for people with multiple and complex needs.

End Rough Sleeping and Repeat Homelessness

Outreach

Cardiff City Council – Outreach Service

The main street outreach service is delivered by the Council, and the team works across the City centre and is complimented by a Multi-Disciplinary Team. The team works with those sleeping rough and those accessing emergency accommodation provision.

The outreach team is split into a team of new Case Co-ordinators who take on a navigator role and co-ordinate the client through their homeless journey, with a smaller team of targeted outreach workers undertaking street outreach. This outreach is delivered in partnership with the Wallich and the Salvation Army.

The Outreach Service was restructured in late 2019, both increasing capacity and introducing an assertive approach and a casework structure. The team has increased from 5 outreach officers working with over 100 clients, to 15 Outreach Case Coordinators and 3 Targeted Outreach Officers, including 2 senior officers. These new defined roles are a much-improved way of working, reducing duplication, and providing capacity for meaningful casework.

This new structure provides the team with the ability to promptly respond to any reports of rough sleeping, regularly engage with any clients on the street in a targeted and collaborative way with the Wallich and Salvation Army, and provide a casework

approach ensuring that all clients have a single point of contact, providing consistency and ongoing support through their journey out of homelessness.

Reconnection

Cardiff City Council

The Salvation Army delivers the Cardiff Reconnection Service on behalf of the Council, and it is situated in the same office as the Outreach Team and there is good joint working between both agencies. Cardiff Reconnection Service aims

Deliver a multi-agency, trauma-informed approach to meet the multiple and complex needs of individuals through multi-disciplinary interventions

to support clients without a local connection, who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, to return in a planned and supportive way to an area where they have accommodation, support networks, or some other connection.

The service aims to avoid people travelling between areas to rough sleep and therefore avoid perpetuating street homelessness. The Reconnection Service has also developed a bank of landlords to help support individuals without a connection to move into the private rented sector. Cardiff Reconnection Service also provides support for EEA nationals who are at risk of rough sleeping, in conjunction with the Salvation Army EEA project and Ty Gobaith working pods.

The service advocates on behalf of clients, and where a local connection to Cardiff can be established will challenge the Local Authority's decision. The service is also able to issue waivers for clients with no local connection who may need to remain in Cardiff.

Alternative Giving

Manchester – A Bed Every Night

The Greater Manchester Authorities adopted the A Bed Every Night (ABEN) programme <https://gmmayorscharity.org.uk>, to provide a bed for any rough sleeper or individual at imminent

risk of rough sleeping not owed a statutory duty to temporary or other accommodation. This approach was adopted with full agreement of Local Authority leaders and also key partners from the region, confirmed through the Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Reform Board, and the Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network.

The focus of the ABEN programme is the provision of basic immediate-access, emergency accommodation. Its aim is to provide an immediate “pick-up” of vulnerable people from the streets and to prevent the need for rough sleeping for those at imminent risk.

The cohort of people served by ABEN are mostly single homeless people excluded from mainstream services, often through current or past behaviour linked to complex needs, or through the lack of any priority need in the statutory homelessness system or wider public services including probation and social care.

The project is linked to a website where members of the public can donate to the project and see what their donation can buy. There has been significant publicity surrounding the project with billboards carrying the slogan of ‘A bed every night, so no one sleeps rough in Manchester.’

Oxford – Greater Change

Oxford entrepreneur Alex McCallion has set up Greater Change <https://www.greaterchange.co.uk>, a smartphone app which members of the public can use to donate to homeless individuals. The inspiration behind the app was a need to respond to the need for cashless technology and to enable those experiencing homelessness to save for long-term goals – rather than being forced to spend their money on short-term solutions. The founder states that, despite the public giving “a significant amount of money” to those experiencing homelessness, the donations “rarely make a long-term difference” due to the cash seldom being “spent on long-term solutions.”

This focus on the longer-term financial goals, aimed at helping individuals escape homelessness, is hugely important. Everyone has the right to adequate housing – but with much of the change given to those experiencing homelessness going towards more immediate necessities (such as food and drink), the prospect of saving for a sustainable future of housing and employment can seem daunting.

Develop targeted rough sleeping prevention services and rapid accommodation and support

Prevent repeat homelessness through individually tailored accommodation and support options

People experiencing homelessness in Oxford who sign up to the scheme are given their own QR code, like the kind used for online ticketing. The code is linked to a restricted fund, similar to fundraising sites such as JustGiving. A caseworker co-manages the account to ensure the money is spent on targets that have been agreed on by the scheme and the individual.

When the QR code is scanned (either through the app or web browser on a smartphone) a page will pop up where you can learn more about the person, their goals, and their story. You can then donate any amount of money to go towards the individual’s aims. In addition to the code, app users can also search for a specific person by name, or be randomly taken to the page of someone in need.

It’s hoped that this form of donation will help individuals gain the financial and emotional stability to sustain their move back into a home or job.

Bristol – Tap for Bristol

Tap for Bristol <https://tapforbristol.org> is a contactless donation system to support people experiencing homelessness in Bristol. The initiative works to fundraise for homelessness prevention services as well as directly supporting people who are experiencing homelessness. The ‘TAP for Bristol’ points, that allow people to tap with a contactless credit or debit card to donate £3, are in shop windows and on hand-held devices.

Every time a member of the public uses 'TAP for Bristol' they will donate £3. One tap (£3) could support someone attending a job interview. Two taps could fund a one to one session with a support worker for a young person facing homelessness, and three taps can fund a prevention worker – working directly to navigate someone away from crisis or could fund an emergency deposit for a room.

Cardiff – Give DIFFerently

Give DIFFerently <https://www.forcardiff.com/givedifferently/> is a partnership approach to tackling homelessness in Cardiff between FOR Cardiff and existing homeless organisations and charities. Give DIFFerently has been created to shine a light on the wealth of services provided to help combat rough sleeping across the city, as well as fundraising to provide essential grants for particular individuals at risk.

People in Cardiff give frequently and generously to the people they see on the streets, but the UK is becoming an increasingly cashless society. Give DIFFerently provides an opportunity for people to think differently about how to support people experiencing homelessness when they feel compelled. By signing up to the Charter or giving through technology, the charities who receive the support can ensure it goes towards helping people stay off the streets for good.

The Give DIFFerently fund helps existing homeless charities support the people they work with through small grants. Through grants of up to £750 – which are to be spent on essentials that will aid a person's personal development plan – the aim is to provide individual solutions to individual issues.

Homeless Link

The Homeless Link report 'Responses to Begging' <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Responses%20to%20Begging%20Dec2016.pdf> may also be a useful resource.

Assessment Centres

London Borough of Lambeth

Lambeth has a well-established assessment centre. This is a standalone facility, including 28 beds in single rooms (though couples may double up). The length of stay is 28 days. Referrals are received from Street Outreach and

the Housing Options service. Move-on is into Lambeth's Supported Accommodation Pathway for single homeless people, private rented sector accommodation, or reconnection to home area. There is multi-agency input at the assessment centre from local mental health and substance misuse services.

This approach ensures that all service users receive a full and accurate needs assessment and also promotes access into support services. Having a standalone assessment centre is considered to promote a very responsive service – there is always

somewhere for outreach workers to take service users immediately – and ensures there is a single and consistent approach for all referral agencies.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets does not have a standalone assessment centre. Outreach staff are able to refer new rough sleepers to London 'No Second Night Out' hubs.

Assessment and placement within Tower Hamlets are carried out by HOST (housing options) staff. HOST carries out eligibility checks and make a decision about accommodation, which may include immediate supported hostel accommodation. In addition, there are a number of 28-day assessment beds within local hostels – which aim to offer a flexible route into accommodation for chaotic rough sleepers.

Westminster City Council

Westminster has a standalone 40-bed assessment center based within a former hostel. The service is run by a local day centre and opened in 2017. Service users may stay up to 30 days in the centre. This length of time is considered necessary to support relationship-building with rough sleepers, so that meaningful assessment can take place and is also a realistic timeframe for arranging move-on accommodation.

Westminster has developed the assessment centre in response to evidenced need for accommodation for rough sleepers who do not access other 'No Second Night Out' accommodation in London and who are at risk of becoming entrenched.

On-site mental health support at the assessment centre is provided via an externally commissioned organisation. This enables more effective diagnosis of long-term conditions and short-term psychosis and facilitates casework.

Westminster City Council considers the service model utilised within its assessment centre has been highly successful. During its first 18 months of operation there were 159 sustained reconnections – a significant increase on previous figures. The large number of reconnections from the centre has also positively impacted on levels of begging in Westminster.

Cardiff City Council

Cardiff opened their assessment centre in early 2021 following a review of rough sleeping services by Homeless Link. The new Assessment Centre provides 24-hour services, with multi-disciplinary assessment of need for single homeless people and will also provide good quality emergency accommodation for short term use. Where necessary this accommodation will also allow clients to stay longer to allow them to stabilise and for their needs to be fully assessed.

The Assessment Centre comprises of a main building that hosts the outreach team, the Supported Housing Gateway team and the multi-disciplinary team. 19 self-contained modular units have been developed on the site to provide 'off the street' accommodation where the client's needs can be assessed over a period of time.

The Assessment Centre will be a co-ordination point for complex needs services including street and hostel outreach.

Education, Employment, and Training

Leeds – St. George's Crypt: Nurture – Social Enterprise

Nurture is the food and catering arm of St George's Crypt. It provides a platform of training and engagement for offenders, homeless service users, and anyone who has "difficultly moving their lives forward". The main objective of Nurture is to establish a safe and trusting environment in which to develop life skills and increase self-esteem and confidence. This is done through a structure catering diploma recording progress and outcomes.

Nurture caters for both the residents of St George's Crypt and members of the public in its Assisi café, which is open seven days a week. The team also provide catering for corporate events, weddings and other social gatherings.

By increasing self-confidence, communication

skills, and self-esteem, clients are more equipped to handle budgeting, healthy eating, and managing their tenancies and gaining the skills to live independently.

Volunteers work towards completing an industry standard qualification.

Multi-Agency Response: Rough Sleeping

Cheshire West and Cheshire – Multi-Agency Rough Sleeping (MARS)

The Multi Agency Rough Sleeping (MARS) project was developed in November 2020 to enable the Council and partners to provide a multi-agency approach to support those experiencing homelessness.

MARS is a group made up of partners from statutory and third sector agencies involved with those sleeping rough in and around the Cheshire West and Chester borough. The key focus of MARS is to build a person-centred, Trauma-Informed approach with the right agencies to ensure that the best and most suitable outcomes for the clients are achieved.

MARS works with those individuals who are not engaging with services and have the most entrenched behaviours. They are most likely to have several complex issues that require a joined up and multi-agency response and action plan.

The group meets every other week, and each case is discussed in detail with clear actions and responsibility agreed. MARS originally ran as a pilot for 6 months and following a review has been mainstreamed using Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.

The MARS review identified the following positive outcomes:

- Clients sustaining accommodation.
- Engaging with drug and alcohol services,
- Working with ForFutures and the Housing Options Team.
- Engaging with mental health services.
- Attending medical appointments.
- Increased bidding on West Cheshire Homes.
- A reduction in rough sleeping.
- A reduction in visible activity and anti-social behaviour in Chester.

Develop Sustainable Supported and Settled Housing Solutions

Supported Housing Gateway

Cardiff Single Persons Accommodation Pathway

The Single Persons Accommodation Gateway (‘the Gateway’) provides a centralised 24-hour point of access into accommodation for single people experiencing homelessness in Cardiff. The current Gateway has been in place since late 2015 and replaced previous arrangements under which supported accommodation providers accepted direct referrals from a range of projects/services.

As well as streamlining referral arrangements, the Gateway aims to ensure that people experiencing homelessness with particular issues or vulnerabilities can access the service best suited to their needs. It also seeks to help map people’s journeys through homelessness services, identify potentially unmet needs – and by applying this intelligence, reduce the likelihood of those experiencing homelessness falling through the net of local provision.

Develop, improve, then maintain the standards and management of supported housing provision to meet the needs of our homeless population

Advocate for higher standards in the regulation of supported housing at a national level

Improve access to affordable, quality, private sector homes to respond to homelessness

There is a Gateway Team that manages Pathway referrals and allocations and ensures this accommodation is accessed by eligible people, i.e., who are experiencing homelessness and have a local connection to Cardiff. However, it is understood that accommodation providers have a right of refusal over referrals received, and that the number of refusals are monitored by the Council.

The Gateway Team includes an Accommodation and Support Manager and two frontline Gateway Workers – with responsibilities around data processing, identifying voids and supporting allocations, liaising with accommodation providers, and ensuring that appropriate risk assessment and management plans are shared between providers.

Supported Accommodation: Complex Needs

Entrenched Rough Sleepers: Brydon Court, Riverside, Manchester

Brydon Court offers accommodation and support for people with long-term experiences of homelessness and is delivered by the housing provider Riverside. The service employs a high tolerance and personalised approach.

Brydon Court is a specialist service providing targeted accommodation and support for entrenched rough sleepers. Those targeted by this project have complex needs and problems with mental health, addiction, physical health, as well as with the criminal justice system. Most residents have repeated and long-term experiences of homelessness and have exhausted all other accommodation options. The aim and underlying ethos of Brydon Court is to save lives by preventing people from dying on the streets.

Those supported by Brydon Court present with very high level needs and face acute barriers in accessing and engaging with services. Even though Brydon Court is not a Housing First project, it does focus on removing these barriers by adopting the principles of Housing First. Once people have moved off the streets, staff will address people's critical health needs and living skills. The staff strive to be patient and flexible and understand that an individual's needs and journey can be complex.

The staff adopt a highly flexible relationship-focused approach, with the individual positioned at the centre of service provision and support built holistically around their needs and personal journeys. By focusing on people's successes and instilling a sense of routine and security, the hostel aims to stop the "revolving door" of services.

Brydon Court provides 13 rooms and 10 flats, with some rooms adapted for disabilities and wheelchair access. The residents move from rooms to flats as they gain confidence and prepare to move on from the hostel (although there is no time limit of how long people can stay). The service also has three emergency beds, allowing rough sleepers

to try out the hostel and gain an understanding of its structure and how it might work for them. Brydon Court has few rules except for service charges and a ban on violence towards both staff and residents. Harm reduction is prioritised, and clean syringes and sharp boxes are available on-site.

Residents for the most part access the hostel via a local outreach team. This team has an in-depth understanding of street homelessness in Manchester and builds relationships with rough sleepers, sometimes over long periods of time. If individuals move from the hostel back onto the street, the outreach worker will attempt to re-initiate contact and focus on what went wrong and

what can help them off the streets for a longer period of time.

Brydon Court's client engagement and participation processes are exemplary, with feedback from residents integrally influencing the services' redesign and delivery and providing an example of a service that is receptive to new approaches and styles of performance.

An example of Brydon Court's adoption of new approaches can be seen in the way wherein assessments, referrals and interviews are kept to an absolute minimum. The hostel first supports people in accessing and settling into the service before introducing any formal processes, with details on eligibility and priority obtained from the outreach team in the first instance. Most residents have been experiencing homelessness in Manchester for a long time and are already known to services. Hostel staff focus on getting to know individuals and their life stories and identifying what they need to thrive.

Ensure an adequate supply of temporary accommodation and minimise the use of B&B accommodation

Secure commitment from social housing providers to tackle homelessness as a corporate priority

Substance Dependent Entrenched Rough Sleepers: Hannah House, Bournemouth

Hannah House is 13-bed hostel that offers support and accommodation for substance-dependent, entrenched rough sleepers. The service is provided by Bournemouth Churches Housing Association, and focuses on creating sustainable solutions to homelessness, unemployment, and social exclusion.

Hannah House operates as an “alcohol intervention service”, providing accommodation and support for alcohol-dependent rough sleepers. The service is underpinned by an ethos of harm reduction and operates as a “wet house”, where residents are permitted to consume alcohol on-site. Staff adopt a needs-based approach when supporting people in addressing their addictions and physical and mental health needs.

Hannah House aims to provide a safe and welcoming space where people facing significant barriers in accessing and engaging with services can experience support

and acceptance. Most residents are not eligible for and/or have been previously evicted from other accommodation services.

The key principles of the service are to treat each person as an individual, fairness, respect, and an adherence to rules. In order to ensure the safety of residents the service additionally focuses on maintaining firm boundaries between staff and residents.

People can stay at the hostel for a maximum of two years, although this can be reassessed and extended on a case-by-case basis in agreement with Council funders. This has been particularly successful with clients deemed too vulnerable to live in other supported housing and even Housing First models, because of abuse concerns such as cuckooing.

Residents are permitted to consume alcohol on the premises with staff support to help minimise and/or regulate use. Some residents will for example store their alcohol in the staff office, to be accessed at intervals throughout the day. Spirits, the use of illegal drugs, and legal highs are not permitted, with only beer, lager, cider, and wine being allowed on the premises. This specific area of the service is still being developed and much work has gone into formulating support plans to assist in a gradual reduction of intake, while using

the time when a client gets a drink to engage in conversation about their drinking.

Staff will challenge residents about their lifestyles and choices while offering ongoing support in making changes, such as support in helping people maximise their income by claiming benefits and managing debt. Where appropriate residents receive support in reconnecting with their families. Significant staff time and energy is also dedicated to supporting residents in accessing other services. By working closely with residents over a period of time, behaviour, moods and health can be monitored and supported accordingly.

This service offers understanding and tolerance for extremely vulnerable individuals who have been excluded from other services. BCHA and Hannah House provide extensive and targeted ongoing floating support to all residents. Prior to move on each resident takes part in a floating support assessment process, determining people’s needs and the level of ongoing support which should be provided. There is no time limit for ex-residents to access Hannah House facilities once they have moved out. Former residents particularly valued Hannah’s House open door policy and its continued support.

Care and Reablement: Edwin House, Nottingham

Edwin House is a unique, modern, CQC registered care and reablement centre that provides high-quality, dignified care to people with complex health needs relation to long term misuse of alcohol and or drugs.

The service operates on a multidisciplinary approach from a high qualified and experienced staff team consisting of non-medical prescribers, registered general prescribers and mental health nurses, support workers, and volunteers.

The project provides specialist residential care for men and women whom – due to long term chaotic lifestyles coupled with extensive misuse of alcohol and other drugs – are now experiencing many of the problems normally associated with extreme old age, including forms of dementia, mental, emotional and physical ill health.

- Nursing and end of life care – 24 hour care for complex needs.
- Residential care.

The project provides a home to people for as long as they need and want to remain. Some residents may only need a short stay to help them with particular difficulties; others will stay for far longer and even end their lives there.

Multi-Disciplinary Team

Cardiff City Council Multi-Disciplinary Team

A multi-disciplinary team has been set up to support people who are sleeping rough and those who access emergency accommodation.

The multi-disciplinary team, which sits alongside the outreach service includes; Adult Services, Substance Misuse intervention (including Rapid Access Prescribing Service), Mental Health Nurse and Social Worker, Primary Care NHS nurse, therapeutic outreach and counselling service, training, education and diversionary activities staff, homeless advocate, and peer mentors. It has recently been expanded to include an Occupational Therapist and a Psychologist service as well as link workers from Police and Probation.

The team has seen significant success in being able to engage with some of the most entrenched rough sleepers.

Once an individual's needs have been assessed the necessary support will follow the client, wherever they are, on the street, in hostel or supported accommodation and will also follow them as they are rehoused into the community.

Cardiff City Council Multi-Disciplinary Team – Therapeutic Outreach

The primary role of the Therapeutic Outreach service is to develop relationships with services users, identify barriers to engagement and to support clients to move on from a life on the street, helping them to navigate through services. The Therapeutic outreach workers are the key bridge to other services, including those based within the multi-disciplinary team, alongside wider services.

The service uses therapeutic approaches to help people overcome barriers and achieve goals, alongside helping them to understand what counselling is and how it can help. The Therapeutic Outreach workers use counselling skills to provide continuous support to transition clients into treatment, support and counselling provision in Cardiff.

While the focus of outreach is on getting clients into accommodation, the therapeutic outreach focus is on the client's emotional, psychological, and therapeutic needs. Given that many clients that the multi-disciplinary team work with have experienced trauma at some point, the role of the therapeutic outreach is considered to be critical in relation to building relationships with clients and linking them to key services.

Referrals come through the multi-disciplinary team team, often therapeutic outreach will be the starting point for clients and other services and elements of the multi-disciplinary team will be brought in as appropriate. The weekly allocations meeting ensures that a client lead is agreed to prevent duplication and ensure ownership.

The Therapeutic Outreach approach successfully enables clients to be able to build relationships with the service by remaining calm, regulating responses and being dependable and consistent, so that clients know that they are there for them. The Officers also feel that the service helps to fill the gap for those who can't access mental health services.

Cardiff City Council Multi-Disciplinary Team – Occupational Therapist

The Occupational Therapist post helps people overcome the effects of disability caused by illness, ageing, or accident so that they can carry out everyday tasks or occupations. The post considers all of the patient's needs - physical, psychological, social and environmental. The role was established within the MDT team in October 2020

There are two key areas of assessment. The first focuses on clients' abilities to undertake everyday activities and manage daily and personal tasks, and the second looks at clients' roles, routines, meaningful activity and engagement. A key part of the role is engaging in communication and motivating clients to address any struggles or barriers clients identify in accessing and engaging with treatment being offered.

The work undertaken is structured, focused around achieving specific goals, aside from having a need for Occupational Therapist support, the only other criteria for accessing the service is that clients who are using substances must be accessing substance misuse services before they can access Occupational Therapist support.

Complex Needs – Doncaster Complex Needs Alliance

The Doncaster Complex Needs Alliance is a “whole-systems approach” to transform outcomes for people with complex lives, and in doing so aim to reduce the disproportionate demand and cost of public services which this relatively small group of people cause.

The holistic service offer is person-centred and asset based, emphasises prevention and early intervention, and manages demand through proactively identifying, engaging, supporting, and accommodating people living complex lives, allowing them to integrate, over time, into mainstream society.

The Complex Lives team is made up of a core dedicated front line outreach and case workers, providing capacity to identify, engage, triage, and provide a strong accommodation and support plan for people living complex lives – focused on recovery, resettlement, empowerment and inclusion.

The team will comprise a core group of staff who are responsible for outreach, engagement and the management and coordination of work with people living complex lives. They are described as ‘all - rounders’ - generalists with key skills in creating relationships and trust, with experience of managing interdependent issues like homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, mental ill health, offending behaviour and the chaotic and complex lifestyle issues surrounding this. The team will have a core membership with a number of connected elements:

- Engagement and outreach: Making connections with people on the streets or in vulnerable/unstable accommodation situations and supporting them to access services and support.
- Making Every Adult Matter caseworkers: Managing and coordinating very complex cases, with small caseloads of approximately 5-7.
- Navigators, managing, and coordinating less complex cases, with larger caseloads of 15-20.
- Amber workers: With a specialism in supporting sex workers (employed by Changing Lives).

The core team will work with a wider group of associate specialist staff from other disciplines,

for example drugs and alcohol, mental health, key workers in supported housing and floating support, welfare benefits and employment support - who will both deliver work directly to people living complex lives and act as consultants to case managers.

The complex lives team will be the consistent point of contact for people living complex lives and their champion in co-defining their assets, needs, and outcomes. They work flexibly and provide personalised responses to individual strengths and needs – a strongly asset based approach. They start by seeking stability, whilst trying to reconnect people into their networks (using the three conversations model), drawing upon an ecosystem of formal and informal support available in the community (see below).

When crisis occurs, the team manages step up into acute settings, ensuring the person maintains their connection into the community and is discharged as quickly as possible. They take a proactive approach, seeking to activate demand, meeting and working with people where they are. Their working hours go beyond a 9-5 window.

Access to the Private Rented Sector

Social Lettings Agency: Town Hall Lettings – Cambridge City Council

Cambridge Town Hall Lets is a social lettings agency run by Cambridge City Council. The local context is a competitive private rented market which makes it difficult for people experiencing homelessness and other low-income households to find good quality affordable housing.

The agency scheme procures and manages 1, 2, and 3-bed shared properties exclusively for people in housing need within Cambridge and surrounding areas. Tenancies are ASTs for one year and renewable annually.

The agency service for tenants includes property quality, suitability, and affordability checks, and a dedicated team who support new tenants during move-in and afterwards if problems arise. The agency service for landlords includes providing guarantees around rent and damage cover, full management service – including advice on property standards, drawing up tenancy agreements, and carrying out repairs, and tenant vetting.

All referrals are made via Housing Options. Applicants must be over 18, have a local connection to Cambridge or surrounding areas, and be able to manage independently in shared accommodation. Repairs are covered by a deposit bond equal to one month's guaranteed rent. Properties are owned by Cambridge City Housing Company, which has been set up to delivery intermediate rental homes, i.e., people with low priority for social housing, but who are struggling to pay for private rented accommodation in Cambridge. Town Hall Lettings manages these properties.

Private Sector Leasing: Shire Homes – South Cambridgeshire District Council

Shire Homes is the Council's Private Sector Leasing Scheme, which the Council established as a private company. It sits alongside the Housing Advice team, and currently leases 40 properties, including one Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO), which are then rented to Housing Advice customers on ASTs on either a 6- or 12-month term.

Shire Homes takes on all management responsibilities and offers the landlord a guaranteed rent. They will try to negotiate with the landlord to accept Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rent levels, however the Council will agree to a higher rent to have access to accommodation. The Council recognises that for the scheme to be successful it will need to invest in the scheme, but this is more sustainable than increasing the provision and cost of temporary accommodation.

Landlords are offered a three-year lease, with a break clause after one year. The scheme has been successful with landlords who are part of the scheme either bringing more properties into the scheme or directly purchasing properties to lease through the scheme.

A 4-bed HMO is currently being piloted, and an additional member of staff has been employed using funding from MHCLG to provide support to these clients. If this approach is successful further HMOs will be established, and the profit made from these can be used to provide long term funding for the staff member.

Access to the Private Rented Sector: Housing Benefit Plus – Cambridge City Council

Housing Benefit Plus has been introduced by the Council to assist clients to access the private

rented sector through paying a direct subsidy to top up the LHA to cover the market rent.

This scheme is aimed at clients who have a good chance of being able to access employment soon, which would then make the accommodation affordable and sustainable. The scheme will pay a subsidy of up to £300 a month for a maximum of 2 years.

This is funded through a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for clients who access accommodation within the city, and through Flexible Support Grant for those accessing accommodation outside of the city.

B&B / Nightly Paid Accommodation

Nightly Paid Emergency Accommodation – Huntingdonshire Council

Huntingdonshire Council can access nightly paid emergency accommodation through Rent Connect. This provides self-contained emergency accommodation that is spot purchased on a nightly basis as an alternative to B&B accommodation.

Temporary Accommodation

Temporary Accommodation: Keeping House, Leasing from Elderly Homeowners – Enfield Borough Council

The Keeping House Scheme has been set up by Enfield Borough Council for people living in long term care who own a vacant property in the borough of Enfield. The scheme works by leasing homes from elderly homeowners who are in long term care, for use as temporary accommodation.

The scheme enables people to lease their house to the local authority in return for a guaranteed rent, for a fixed period. The council offers grants towards the cost of any repairs needed to bring a home up to rental standard.

The scheme leased 15 homes in its first year and saved an estimated £90,000 – or £6,000 per household.

The initiative pairs increasing supply of properties for temporary accommodation with addressing some of the barriers that mean that the existing stock is used inefficiently.

We speak your language

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Mówimy Twoim językiem

Romanian

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