

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	Dated: 25/02/2020
Subject: Pathway End of Stays Report	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

This report presents the reasons leading to individuals leaving accommodation provided as part of the City of London Rough Sleeping Pathway. It explores qualitative data highlighting the specific challenges of supporting individuals with particularly complex needs.

When considering the reasons for failed stays, this report looks at the geography of the pathway, how a person's supports needs affects their stay and the level of support available within the pathway to meet the needs of City rough sleepers.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Rough sleeping in the City of London increased in the financial year 2017/18.
2. To reduce the increase in rough sleeping, a pathway of accommodation for rough sleepers was developed.
3. The pathway comprises provision within different local authority areas.
4. Each hostel that forms part of the pathway offers a different level of support to individuals.
5. The majority of available bed spaces are within hostels that offer support to individuals with low/medium support needs.
6. The majority of individuals within the pathway present as requiring medium/high support needs.
7. A high percentage of stays within the pathway end with an individual returning to rough sleeping.

Current Position

8. Between 2015 and October 2019 there were 129 recorded stays in the City of London supported accommodation pathway
9. In this period there were 92 recorded moves out of the pathway.
10. 29.5% of stays, or 38 individual moves, were recorded as 'return to Rough Sleeping'
11. 18 of these individual moves do not have recorded support needs. These cases pre-date the system used by City of London to monitor pathway stays.
12. Excluding these 18 individuals, there are 26 individuals with one or more recorded support needs. Only two individuals presented as having support needs that were not prevalent enough to require specific reporting.
13. This data suggests that there are high levels of support needs in those who fail to sustain their accommodation. Generally, we see high levels of support needs in the pathway overall. This is supported qualitatively by management of projects; Great Guildford Street's (GGS) management, for example, states: "Most City clients referred to GGS are entrenched street homeless clients with complex needs [related to] physical health, substance use, mental health, not wanting to engage with the staff team or not using their bed space."
14. The manager of Crimscott Street, the hostel with the highest number of bed spaces available to City of London rough sleepers, states: "The support needs are mainly alcohol, mental & physical health, drug (cannabis)... [a] few cases of class A drugs... difficulty/not understanding benefits system, hoarding, gambling etc." and "One of the challenges, as far as I'm concerned, is the struggle to get referrals with no class A [usage]."
15. Higher levels of support need, particularly where individuals have more than one support need often result in a number of challenges, which can lead to a return to rough sleeping or a failed stay.

Ending of Placements Due to Unsafe Behaviours

16. Often individuals with high levels of support needs behave in ways that place staff, other individuals, and themselves at risk. The projects all attempt to minimise any risk using various methods. Higher support need services are better equipped to do this than lower support need services. Sometimes this is related to staffing levels, but can also be due to building infrastructure.
17. Accommodating rough sleepers with higher levels of support needs can result in behaviours presenting which are unable to be safely managed within accommodation. This sometimes means it is necessary to evict an individual in order to safeguard other residents, staff, and the individual engaged in these behaviours. The manager of Crimscott Street hostel states: "Usually we evict because of ASB [anti-social behaviour]."
18. This sentiment is echoed by management of GGS: "Historically City clients have been evicted for extreme levels of anti-social behaviour towards staff."
19. Anti-social behaviour seen at projects includes violence towards staff and other residents, damage to property, threatening behaviours, and substance misuse which cannot be managed or monitored safely within a project.

20. There are times when unsafe behaviours also result in other individuals leaving services to return to rough sleeping. GGS reflects that: “We have had one City client abandon because she stated that she was being bullied by another resident.”

Ending Placements Related to Street Attachment

21. Generally high levels of support needs, particularly high levels of multiple support needs, are an indication of high levels of street attachment. We are also aware that there are a number of rough sleepers found within the Square Mile who have been rough sleeping for a particularly long time and who will be very connected to the lifestyles they have led while homeless.
22. High levels of street attachment can often lead to a return to rough sleeping, either due to abandonment of a project or the closing of a bed space due to a lack of usage. Regarding this, one of the managers of GGS states: “We have had clients who, after being booked in, only stay in the project 25% of the time and the only way for the staff team to communicate with them is through contact with City Outreach Team/Navigator who meet with them at their begging/sleeping site. After discussions with City Outreach Team, we will advise the client that they need to use their room and that we will be monitoring for weeks. If they are not seen, we book them out after discussing each case with the City Outreach Team.”
23. We are aware that a number of individuals are particularly attached to street-based lifestyles due to the specifics of substance misuse. Begging in the City of London can be lucrative and can often ensure a continuous ability to fund the procurement of substances.
24. Engaging individuals in services to reduce substance misuse can be particularly challenging when individuals are not present to discuss alternatives to usage. Regarding engagement in keywork sessions, where these discussions can be had most productively, management of GGS state: “It [is] difficult to get City clients to attend booked key working sessions ... support is daily or when required. Key working sessions are targeted to address direct support needs.”
25. Beyond low bed space usage and the eventual booking out of individuals that do not use accommodation offered to them, we see a number of individuals deciding to leave projects related to their connection to rough sleeping.
26. The manager of Crimscott Street suggests that levels of abandonment of their project are mainly related to higher levels of street attachment, and previous usage of services: “All abandonments we have had were with tenants who had a history of abandoning.”

Arrears

27. Arrears often form a reason someone leaves a project to return to rough sleeping. Challenging engagements with services, sometimes related to street attachment, can often lead to Housing Benefit not being secured for individuals. This is because they do not engage in the application process, or they do not engage with support provided to overcome other obstacles, such as securing ID. Management at GGS reflect on this when they state they often see individuals: “... not providing information for benefits” or having “... no ID to support Housing Benefit/Universal Credit claim.”
28. Unfortunately, Housing Benefit is necessary for projects to continue to offer services to individuals. There is an amount of flexibility that projects can provide but, ultimately, the

costs of offering provision remain for services and, if they do not have the income to ensure that this is covered, a service cannot operate.

29. It can often be the case that support needs create a challenge in individuals engaging with the welfare benefits system. Unfortunately, this might become apparent after a placement in services. As the majority of accommodation services that we commission are of a lower level of support, it can be the case that individuals in this situation are not able to access the level of support they need to ensure that rental income is available.

Geographical Challenges

30. The spot purchase approach we have adopted to expand our accommodation stock has led to a geographical fragmentation of the pathway
31. We do not have much provision that is not in South London. Mare Street, the Dellow centre, King George's Hostel, Anchor House and Edward Allsop Court are the only projects that are not situated in a South London borough. This amounts to eight bed spaces.
32. Additionally, each of these hostels offer longer-term 24-month placements. As such, they are often not available for an individual to move into. It is often only possible to refer individuals to projects that are within South London boroughs. Where this is the case, the City Outreach Team will attempt to influence individuals to accept this, as the dangers of rough sleeping make it important for work to be undertaken to ensure that individuals are safe away from the street. Often, however, this can result in abandonment of the project after initial placement once an individual begins to live with the reality of being in a geographical location they were initially against.
33. Sometimes geographical choices are not even as large as 'North' or 'South' London. There are occasions when individuals are particularly set on living in the Square Mile and this can also lead to an abandonment of services. Crimscott Street management suggest this by stating: "Clients do like Crimscott Street but have said that they wish it was in the City."

Abandonment Due to resettlement Challenges

34. Supporting homeless individuals into independent accommodation at the end of their journey through supported accommodation is also a challenge.
35. Private Rented Sector accommodation is one of the main sources of independent accommodation for people to move out of the pathway to, but residents are often unwilling to accept this offer owing to location. The manager of Crimscott street states "The ...challenge is the location of properties. We have a good number of tenants who were happy to move into Private Rented Sector (PRS) (No First Night Out (NFNO)); they all turned down the offer because of location (Zones 3 and 4). They all wanted to remain in Zone 2, walking distance to the City. Most of the tenants don't use public transport and moving far will make them feel isolated."
36. There is specialist independent accommodation for rough sleepers that is available through the Greater London Authority commissioned 'Clearing House'. Unfortunately waiting times for properties through this service can be substantial, owing to oversubscription. This can lead to disenfranchisement and disengagement on the part of the rough sleeper. The manager of Crimscott Street said that one person abandoned because they were: "... frustrated by the length of time it takes to get a nomination from Clearing House."

Conclusion

37. There are a significant number of individuals accommodated in the City of London rough sleeper accommodation pathway with complex support needs.
38. Quantitative data demonstrates that the majority of individuals leaving the pathway to rough sleep have complex support needs, often indicated by the presence of multiple support needs.
39. Qualitative data suggests that complex support needs give rise to unsafe behaviours and accrual of arrears, which can lead to individuals returning to rough sleep.
40. Qualitative data suggests that there is a high level of street attachment which often results in abandonment of projects, or non-usage of bed space, and a return to rough sleeping.
41. There is a limited geographical spread of accommodation, which can affect individual engagement in City of London pathway services.
42. The geographical location of independent move-on accommodation, and high waiting times for this accommodation, can lead to individuals abandoning services and returning to rough sleep rather than moving positively away from projects.
43. There is a disparity between the levels of support offered by the City of London pathway and the presenting needs of rough sleepers found within the Square Mile and placed in the pathway. This disparity can cause challenges in ensuring that support needs are addressed properly to avoid a return to rough sleeping.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

- Rough Sleeping Pathway Impact – 04/12/19

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