

Committee:	Dated:
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	25/02/2020
Subject: Winter Programme Update Report	Public
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Summary

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken to date at the City of London Winter Programme at St Katherine Cree Church, Leadenhall Street, which commenced on the evening of 18 December 2019. This report covers the period from 18 December 2019 to 17 January 2020 – the first month of operation.

As well as information relating to client stays and outcomes, this report will also provide a brief summary of the commissioning process, and a description of the service model itself.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The origin of the current Winter Programme model can be found in the former Pop-up Assessment Hub.
2. The City of London commenced operating a Pop-up Hub for rough sleepers in 2012. The initial funding from the Homelessness Transition Fund provided for 10 hubs across two years. In 2014, the tempo settled to quarterly as funding moved to the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) Fund. Activity temporarily ceased when this funding came to an end but recommenced in 2017 with the introduction of new monies into the 'Pathway Model'. From August 2018, the Pop-up Hub (now referred to as the City of London Assessment Hub) was co-funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) RSI Fund which successfully increased scope and tempo. The most recent Hubs operated on a monthly basis from St Botolph without Aldgate (St Botolph's Aldgate).
3. Funding is provided by the MHCLG through underspend in the RSI fund allocation for 2019/20 and budget already allocated to Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP).

4. The MHCLG made further funding available through its Cold Weather Fund (CWF) in mid-2019. This fund seeks to assist local authorities with helping rough sleepers through winter months, particularly where it supports existing SWEP arrangements.
5. Through discussion with our MHCLG advisor, we proposed building on the existing Pop-up Hub model, while addressing one of its key weaknesses – the tempo of one week of operation on every four. The proposal to the MHCLG CWF sought funding for a seven-day assessment service to operate throughout the winter, while also strengthening our local SWEP offer.
6. The Diocese of London was engaged to provide a suitable space. An open procurement approach was adopted to secure a specialist support provider.
7. A service specification was initially advertised on 30 July 2019, but this failed to yield a viable provider. Market engagement was undertaken, and a revised specification advertised on 3 October 2019. Providence Row Housing Association (PRHA) were awarded a contract on 22 October 2019.
8. Our initial ambition was to launch the service on 1 November 2019. A combination of the first failed procurement process and delays in drafting and agreeing a licence agreement between the City of London Corporation and the Diocese of London meant that this was impossible. The service became operational on 18 December 2019 and will run to 31 March, 2020.

Current Position

9. The service is available to all individuals found rough sleeping in the City of London, with no automatic exclusions.
10. There is a separate space to enable a flexible approach to sleep arrangements, including offering a female-only area where this is necessary.
11. A psychologically informed approach is taken to creating a welcoming environment for rough sleepers, including those with long rough sleeping histories and high levels of street attachment.
12. The service's co-ordinator states:

“Most of the guests complain that certain shelters had a clinical way of operating, and they would see different staff on shift. We have tried to eliminate this by using a person-centred approach in the way we help a guest's recovery.”

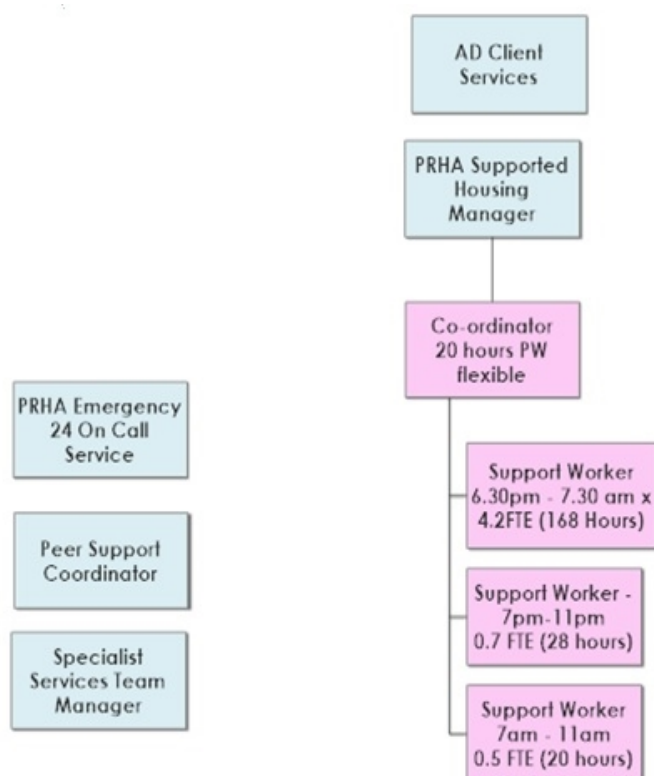
13. Upon entry to the service, a full assessment of an individual is undertaken to direct ongoing support into accommodation.
14. Casework is developed and delivered by a specialist staff team with the aim of connecting individuals into accommodation within 14 days.

Staff Team

15. The staff team implemented by PRHA is comprised of posts funded by the contract awarded for the Winter Assessment Service (WAS), staffing already available in PRHA.

16. A service co-ordinator has been appointed to oversee the case management for the entire client group, as well as to interface with existing City of London commissioned rough sleeping services.

17. The structure of the staff team is as follows:



Data Related to the First Month of Service Delivery

18. Nine individuals were brought into the service between 18 December 2019 and 17 January 2020. Of these nine individuals, one person was supported into long-term accommodation.

19. The assessed support needs service users were:

Needs profiles of clients using the service	Number	As a proportion of those supported in the period
o SMU - Substance Misuse	4	44%
o AMU - Alcohol Misuse	2	22%
o MH - Mental Health	7	78%
o PH - Physical Health	1	11%
o DV - Victim of Domestic Violence	0	0%
o LD - Learning Difficulties/Disabilities	0	0%
o NRPF - No recourse to public funds	3	33%
o BEN - Support with benefits	3	33%
o ROF - Risk of Offending	0	0%
o Other	0	0%

Challenges in Delivery

20. Challenges in securing a move-on for clients have been:

- a. Several clients left the service over the Christmas period to attend 'crisis at Christmas', a voluntary sector provision of overnight accommodation.
- b. The high level of mental health support needs within the group has made it difficult to source suitable onwards accommodation.
- c. The relatively high instance of individuals without recourse to public funds presents significant challenge in securing accommodation.
- d. A high number of individuals have been assessed as being particularly street attached, posing difficulty in moving away from street-based lifestyles and into permanent accommodation.
- e. A great number of service users have had previous negative relationships with services. The service's co-ordinator states: *"One of the challenging things that the WAS has worked hard to overcome is that many of our guests have a distrust of services"*

Partner and Service User Views

21. The service co-ordinator has been supportive of the model:

"I believe that the service is very valuable for clients as it provides not only a safe place to stay, but we take into account their needs and what they would like from us. We allow the guests to tailor their recovery in a way which they feel benefits them. As I have found throughout my time in PRHA, this brings about the best results and minimises risks of past events and behaviours, which is the best outcome for anyone who is experiencing homelessness."

22. In relation to service user engagement, the service co-ordinator states:

"Guests overall have been very positive about the service. From the beginning we have run the WAS in a way which the guests would like for it to be run, and in a way which brings us results. The WAS has already helped a guest travel back to his home in the North and see his mother, who he has not seen for the past 10 years."

23. Individuals accessing the service have been supportive of what they have been offered. In interview, one individual stated:

"I am getting help from staff to attend appointments. When other agencies see homeless people, they discriminate, but knowing that staff here will attend with me and make sure my voice is heard is the best thing I could have asked for."

24. The individual continued, stating:

"I am happy I have a warm place to stay during the night, this makes me feel excited... when I first came into the WAS, there was a guest who was complaining about drug addicts. I overheard what he was saying but I chose to do nothing. Staff handled this in a good way and I feel supported. I really want to work with the staff team and move on to a good place. I feel that staff are approachable and this makes it better for me to work with them."

25. The curate of St Katherine Cree Church is particularly supportive of the service. He states:

“We are very pleased with progress... parties are working together very well to ensure this is successful. Action plans we believe are clear on all sides as to what else needs to be done ... to ensure the best outcomes.”

Conclusion

26. In the first month of operation, the WAS has provided a safe and secure space away from the streets for individuals who would likely have remained rough sleeping over the period of its operation to date.
27. Longer-term outcomes have been low, though this is borne out of significant operational challenge in securing onwards accommodation for those with challenging support needs.
28. Consensus between partners and service users is that the service is positive and making positive impacts, even with relatively low levels of ‘hard’ outcomes.

Appendices

- None

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