

Committee:	Dated:
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee – For Information	06/12/2021
Subject: Private Rented Sector Framework Summary Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
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Summary

This report presents the background information to the creation of the City of London Private Rented Sector Move-on Scheme (the scheme), which began its four-year contract on 1 April 2021. As an introduction to the scheme, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the framework and core elements of the specification will be discussed, as well as the statistics achieved in quarters 1 and 2 (Q1 and Q2).

Over the two quarters, 13 individuals have been housed, with 85% of the people housed having sustained their tenancies by the end of Q2. The private rented sector (PRS) partners in the scheme are asked to source a good standard of properties, develop relationships with trusted landlords and to support clients to sustain their tenancies for a minimum of 12 months, including welfare, financial and health support where needed, and to troubleshoot any concerns that can threaten a client’s tenancy, such as rent arrears.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The No First Night Out (NFNO) rough sleeping prevention project ran for four years, providing interim and longer-term support for people at risk of sleeping rough for the first time. The aim was to provide intervention in these cases to prevent the effects of deteriorating health and trauma caused by long-term rough sleeping.
2. The NFNO model was a research-based project, intending in the longer term to provide the boroughs, City of London (CoL), London Borough of Tower Hamlets and London Borough of Hackney (for the first two years of the project) with the tools

from the outcomes and learning gained from the project. Independent researcher Becky Rice conducted interviews with people entering No Second Night Out hubs with connections to the three boroughs who had either visited their respective housing options teams, or sought prevention advice elsewhere, but subsequently went on to sleep rough.

3. The NFNO model went on to develop its pathways, to provide interim support, such as access to emergency hotels and discretionary temporary accommodation placements, as well as commissioning various PRS partners to help source good standard properties and provide support to the client throughout the tenancy. The interim solutions formed part of the CoL's agreement with the PRS partners to provide a safe space and allow maximum engagement with the process.
4. In January 2020, Campbell Tickell management consultancy, who specialise in statutory and not-for-profit sectors, provided an evaluation of the service and recommendations for the two remaining local authorities working with NFNO once the project was due to end in March 2021. From this, the scheme was identified to continue, progress and develop the work of NFNO. The request for PRS providers to join the scheme went out to tender, with three of the four commissioned PRS providers (as of the last year) of the project applying for and successfully winning the contract.

Current Position

5. NFNO provision for CoL over the last few years of the project had adapted to better represent the cohort with regards to how 'prevention' had been defined. For CoL, the majority of people had much longer rough sleeping histories, whereas the 'traditional' NFNO model was defined as a person having low to medium support needs and someone who had not slept rough at all, or not for more than five days over the course of a year. This meant redefining 'prevention' in this sense; to provide accommodation and support to prevent people from returning to the streets. As such, the PRS partners had begun earlier in the process to better support clients who may have been exhibiting signs of trauma or ill health.
6. The scheme is currently six months into a four-year contract with the PRS partners. Monitoring takes place quarterly, with interim meetings involving all partners arranged and overseen by the CoL Pathway Co-ordinator to be able to share information and exchange good practice and ensure a high level of consistency. The scheme specification requires all partners to provide the same level of support to those aged over 18 years old.
7. Over the two quarters, the scheme has housed 13 people. Referrals are sent to the Pathways team from City-commissioned or linked services as well as from within the CoL hostel pathway.
8. The specification asks that partners commit to a minimum of five tenancies per year to be sustained for a minimum of 12 months.
9. Current referrals to the scheme include two people currently in discretionary temporary accommodation (TA) placements, two in the City Assessment Service

ready to move, and a potential further five European Economic Area (EEA) clients who are awaiting the outcomes of their European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications, which should reflect Q3 and Q4.

Key Data

10. The key specifics of the scheme are as follows (the specifications are available on request):

- The CoL to pay the sum of £2,000.00 per placement (based on cost breakdowns provided by the four commissioned NFNO partners in the previous financial year and an average of the fees charged)
- PRS partners to provide a minimum of 12 months tenancy sustainment
- Clients are referred using a rotational system – the highest scoring provider as determined at the tender evaluation will receive the first referral and, if rejected, will be referred to the next partner in line. The second referral will go to the second-highest scoring partner, and so on.

11. The KPIs for the scheme are as follows (with a 100% expectation for all, apart from where specified):

Referral targets:

- Referral to be accepted or rejected within two days
- Interviews to be offered within two days of the referral being accepted
- Meeting with client to discuss housing plan to take place within two weeks
- Signed tenancy within six weeks from date of referral.

Tenancy sustainment targets:

- Pre-tenancy support
- Five tenancies sustained at the 12-month mark
- Number of people housed at the 12-month mark (70% of all referrals made).

12. Other expectations include quarterly reviews of housing plans, clients having a nominated lead worker, and that the PRS partner will provide a minimum of 12 months' tenancy sustainment, checking in with clients on a fortnightly basis as a minimum. Although we have only reached the six-month mark of this scheme, each partner has confirmed that they will always go beyond this. Assurance of this had been provided previously within the contract monitoring delivered throughout the NFNO service, where each PRS partner had been asked to present this largely positive information for the purposes of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) – formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government – to demonstrate the CoL's commitment to helping people sustain long-term tenancies within an ethical PRS setting.

13. Monitoring the data for the scheme is currently measured through a CoL-produced document with a specific formula to ascertain the percentage of the KPIs, as well as tracking other elements of the specification regarding the sustainment of tenancies. These latter elements are measured in increments of three, six and 12 months, so data and statistics are subject to change across the course of the four-

year scheme as a whole, where tenancies might break down or clients have moved on independently.

14. Partners have stated that, by Q2, in discussion with some clients, contact every fortnight was seen to be intrusive and was not always needed. Therefore, the contact in some cases will be reduced if the partner feels that strong enough relationships and rapport have been built and they feel comfortable with this.
15. The monitoring document has also been adjusted to reflect when contact has been attempted to arrange assessments or housing plans and not if they have taken place within the timeframe. This is because the KPIs can be skewed if an assessment is not conducted within the required timing, for example, due to not being able to reach a client. The partners are not asked to provide proof of this for each client but have been made aware that they will need to keep records of their attempted communications for audit purposes.
16. The monitoring document is currently under review to ensure maximum reporting accuracy, but the current format is available on request.
17. In Q1, 23 referrals were made across the three partners. However, it should be noted that, due to the rotational system, some clients have been referred to several providers so the number does not reflect 23 different people. This is due to either a client being rejected from the one partner and being moved on to the next one in line, or being referred back into the scheme after a period of non-engagement, where CoL are trying to ensure there is not a return to rough sleeping.
18. Statistics have shown that the partners within the scheme achieved in Q1:
 - 60% of accepted referrals
 - 83% of all referrals achieving the referral target KPIs as outlined above
19. Of the accepted referrals, some clients were not able to continue with the scheme. This was due to changes to work status meaning that clients could no longer afford to rent and found themselves with no recourse to public funds (these clients were then brought back into the pathway to assist with finding housing alternatives, such as access to CoL commissioned/RSI funded beds and access to employment schemes) or where CoL had withdrawn the applications due to a review of new information impacting a client's right to rent, or of their support needs and lack of engagement with the process.
20. The remaining 40% of referrals that were not able to access the scheme from the outset were due to support needs being considered too high with little engagement with other services to address any concerns, which would be a requirement for the partners to feel that the PRS would be a safe environment for them.
21. In Q2, 11 referrals were made across the three partners. This drop has highlighted a need to promote the benefits of the scheme more to City partners and work is underway to do this. It also reflects that, during this time there were a lot less people identified by services as having a PRS offer being suitable for them. In addition, some cases in Q2 had also been re-opened from the previous quarter which meant

no fresh referrals were made for these individuals, but any positive outcomes would be reflected in the following quarters.

22. In Q2, the data shows:

- An average of 74% of accepted referrals
- 100% of referral KPI targets

23. This 14% increase in accepted referrals shows that partners are working harder to provide a more flexible approach and continuously developing their own network of support services to feel confident in accepting those with seemingly higher needs. Of the 36% that were rejected from the outset, this has been due to clients presenting with a much higher level of support need than the partners feel can be managed in the PRS, especially where a client is not engaging with support services.

24. It should also be noted that, where clients have previously not been eligible, if circumstances change, the partners have been willing to re-open cases rather than have the clients re-referred into the scheme, meaning this will reflect on the positive outcomes with regards to tenancy signing but can cause the overall percentage of accepted referrals per quarter to fluctuate. This can happen often where we see clients who want to re-engage with the process and where the CoL wants to avoid a return to the streets.

25. Of the housed clients, two tenancies across two providers in Q1 broke down. On these occasions, clients have had to leave their tenancies early due to support needs presented to the PRS partners that previous support workers had not been aware of or could not have anticipated to contingency plan for. Partners, as per the specification, are expected to have partnerships with various support services (such as for substance use or mental health). Respective PRS partners offered both clients this support (including access to a support service that ran in one client's native language) or they have worked alongside the client to reassess their needs to ascertain what the client feels would best fit them. One client has been referred back to the City Assessment Service due to suddenly being without recourse to public funds and has been provided with support regarding their needs and the other has successfully moved into a supported hostel within the CoL pathway.

26. As outlined in the tender request as well as the CoL's commissioning suggestions, PRS partners are asked to report on the social value of their organisation and well as their development, ideas and suggestions with regards to co-production and partnership working, which is also monitored quarterly. These have included volunteering and paid work opportunities for current and former tenants, commitment to reducing detrimental environmental impacts and the positives that can be taken from new working arrangements due to the impact of COVID-19.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

There are no corporate and strategic implications:

- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

27. The dedicated PRS partners have reported over the months that they are constantly developing their support packages to provide a robust wraparound service if needed to build up the confidence of their clients to take the step into independent living.

28. Current plans include a PRS workshop with both the PRS and referring partners to gain a better understanding of the scheme and to confidently input into credible offers for clients. This workshop will then help to inform resource guides and workshops for clients to get a better understanding of the PRS and to dispel the current fears around privately renting, where less easily accessible but higher regarded social or housing associations tenancies are preferred. These fears may include rogue landlords or poorly written tenancies or having to navigate multiple services such as utilities companies and the Department for Work and Pensions while maintaining their own wellbeing and knowing their renting rights. The partners will navigate this on behalf of and with the clients, easing them into the process to encourage independence, as well as being their advocates should anything go awry within the tenancy.

Appendices

- None

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