

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	Dated: 09/12/2024
Subject: Homelessness Rough Sleeping Coproduction Programme – Introduction Report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	Diverse Engagement Communities Proving Excellent Services
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?	Yes
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services
Report author:	Kirsty Lowe, Rough Sleeping Services Manager

Summary

The report provides a summary of work carried out by the City of London’s (CoL’s) Rough Sleeping Team and commissioned specialist advocacy and coproduction services from 2019 to the present.

The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) grant fund continues to fund the coproduction service delivered by the homelessness charities, Groundswell, and Mayday Trust. Funding ends on 31 March 2025. However, where grant funding is confirmed, the intention is to extend the contract with the current providers for a further year.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In 2019, the Healthier City and Hackney Fund funded Groundswell, a leading homelessness advocacy organisation, to provide health assistance to City residents. The service was not able to fully deliver the work as intended, which resulted in an opportunity to repurpose an underspend of the budget elsewhere.
2. In 2020–2021 the Rough Sleeping Team repurposed the underspend and worked with Groundswell and an independent researcher, Becky Rice, to carry out interviews with those who had slept rough in the City and who had recently been accommodated in the temporary City Assessment Service (CAS). CAS was commissioned in response to the government's 'Every One In' approach to protect and preserve life due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All people who were met rough sleeping in the City were offered accommodation, predominately at CAS, which was the first rough sleeping accommodation within the Square Mile.
3. The aim of this piece of work was to hear from those with lived experience about why they had decided to come in off the streets and engage with services such as CAS, many for the first time. Groundswell and Becky Rice produced the *City Voices* report, which set out recommendations based on the wants and needs of the service user. The report went on to shape and guide decisions to commission the permanent assessment service, Snow Hill Court.
4. In 2021, the findings of *City Voices* was shared with senior City officers and Members from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee through a series of workshops facilitated by Groundswell. Members confirmed ongoing support of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Team's ambition to work and commission services in a more coproduced way.
5. Coproduction is a way of working together to create positive change. Coproduction seeks to maximise the involvement of people who have experienced a problem or challenge in identifying and solving that problem. This might include designing, commissioning, delivering, improving, or evaluating services.
6. 2022 marked the first year of the multi-year RSI grant funding. RSI funds enabled the City to commission a multi-year advocacy/coproduction service. Groundswell was awarded Phase 1 of the three-year plan in 2022. This involved consultation of a broader group of services users, including those currently sleeping rough and those across the accommodation pathway.
7. By 2023 the Phase 1 consultation report was complete. It recommended that the City directly commission a coproduction service. The contract was awarded to Mayday Trust and Groundswell.

Current Position

8. The coproduction service delivered by Mayday Trust and Groundswell began in November 2023. The focus for the first six months was to recruit the team, and all posts have now been filled. The team is made up of four staff members who deliver on three main areas:
 - a) **Advisory Group:** Members are made up of diverse individuals with lived experience of homelessness and/or rough sleeping. Members are working with, or have previously worked with City rough sleeping/homelessness services. The Advisory Group and City officers meet monthly to discuss the group's ambition to share insight, knowledge, and plan how the City and commissioned services can be improved and coproduced. There have been nine Advisory Group meetings between February 2024 and September 2024.
 - b) **Champions:** Each rough sleeping and accommodation support service has a nominated champion. Professionals meet every month to discuss the importance of coproduction, the ways in which their services deliver coproduction, and to highlight potential barriers to delivering coproduction. There have been seven champions meetings between February 2024 and September 2024.
 - c) **Workshops/promotion:** This group sets up and facilitates four coproduction workshops attended by leaders and decision-makers from across the CoL and all homelessness commissioned organisations. The workshops are an opportunity to share good practice but also to agree next steps for how the City will commission and deliver coproduced homelessness services. There have been two workshops delivered to date, with a running theme of 'power dynamics'. The first workshop focused on the importance of moving away from the traditional focus on 'curing' individuals by targeting mental health disorders. Instead, it looked at prioritising policy innovations that address the issues at the population level. The second workshop focused on coproduction, what this means to the group, and how change can be implemented in all areas of work.
9. Funding for the coproduction service will end on 31 March 2025. We hope to continue to fund this service for another year if we are awarded 2025–2026 RSI grant funding.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. Strategic implications – none
11. Financial implications – Funding ends on 31st March 2025
12. Resource implications – none
13. Legal implications – none
14. Risk implications – none

15. Equalities implications – none

16. Climate implications – none

17. Security implications – none

Conclusion

18. The City has been developing its understanding of coproduction and the importance of coproduced homelessness support services over the past five years. This has resulted in the commissioning of the first Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Coproduction service, delivered by Mayday Trust and Groundswell.

19. To date the project has developed an Advisory Group of people with lived experience, developed a Champions group of professionals working to deliver homelessness services. The project has also facilitated two workshops, bringing together leaders in the City and the sector to commit to commission and deliver services in a more coproduced way.

20. The ambition of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Team is to continue to develop services in this area through continued commissioning of the current service, so long as RSI grant funding is awarded in 2025.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

- [*City Voices: Learning from the response to rough sleeping in the City of London during COVID-19*](#)

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