

Title: Update on Crisis evaluation in Torbay

Date: 23rd April 2018

To: Housing Rental Company Committee

Contact Officer: Debbie Freeman, telephone: (01803) 208706, E mail:
Debbie.freeman@torbay.gov.uk

1. Key points and Summary

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the national homelessness charity, Crisis have been commissioned to evaluate the system around homelessness in Torbay to assess the feasibility of providing Housing First to improve outcomes. The work was funded by the Nationwide Foundation, and commissioned by Shekinah, in partnership with the Council and Westward Housing.
- 1.2 The work began in January 2018 with preliminary findings presented on April 16th 2018.
- 1.3 A short interim paper from Crisis showing preliminary findings, recommendations and costings is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on this work for Members to note.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The commissioning of the evaluation that Crisis have undertaken was prompted by concerns around rising levels of homelessness, rough sleeping and street based Anti-Social behaviour in Torbay. This situation is not exclusive to Torbay, but echoes the national trend.
- 2.2 Crisis were asked to evaluate the 'system' of services that are currently on offer in Torbay to ascertain whether changing our approach to include Housing First could improve outcomes. They were also asked to provide costings for any proposals.
- 2.3 The attached report details their initial findings. They have spoken to a considerable amount of interested parties, and people with lived experience of homelessness, and have looked at data from across Housing Options and commissioned services.

3. Emerging findings:

- There is high demand in Torbay which current services do not have the capacity to meet
- There is a 'drop off' of support when people leave the hostel/other supported

accommodation

- Although there is lots of good practice, the homelessness system is disjointed
- Introducing Housing First as a 'bolt on' service will not work – prevention needs to be addressed and the system tied together
- There is capacity for the private rented sector to contribute more and initial discussions have indicated a willingness if there were a management/lease offer

4. Emerging recommendations

- System change should be transitional
- Housing First is only for the individuals who have the highest needs – around 40 people in Torbay. Many of these are repeat users of the hostel. (Housing First is non conditional offer of accommodation with high intensity support for as long as the person needs it)
- Most people do not need Housing First and should be offered assistance to find private rented housing – those who need some additional support should be offered floating support.
- A local lettings agency to manage housing drawn from the private rented and possibly social rented sector
- Some emergency accommodation will be required but possibly only 10 units when we have transitioned to the new system – this could be provided at Leonard Stocks with the rest of the building utilised to provide medical services, and educational/employment services

5. Draft costings

- 5.1 Due to the need for a transition, there would be a period of double funding. Officers, alongside Shekinah, are exploring funding opportunities.
- 5.2 The figures below give some indication of implementation costs. Full costings will be provided by Crisis by Mid May 2018.
- 5.3 These figures are provisional and subject to change following further consultation but are intended to provide some initial indication of the commitment involved in implementing the proposals.

6. Implementation

Resource Needed	Timescale	Estimated Cost
Full time implementation Co-ordination Role	2 years (after which could be mainstreamed into commissioning team)	£110k (£45k pa post plus on costs)
Full time project Lead for implementing Local Lettings Agency	2 years (unless picked up under TDA work)	£80k (£35k pa post plus on costs)
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Total		£190k

Delivery (double funding alongside current spend on supported accommodation and associated homelessness services)

Resource Needed	Timescale	Estimated Cost
Estimated cost for provision of Local Lettings Agency and Support service for 30 clients - based on established cost per client per year of £12,607)	Gradually over 2 years	£378,210 - at 2 years point – would build up to this point so (10 clients in first year £126,070) plus (30 clients (original 10 +20 in second year)
Total (implementation)		£568,210

7. Crisis final recommendations and costings

7.1 Crisis will finalise their report and recommendations following the presentation of initial findings on April 16th. Their full recommendations and costings will be provided by Mid May 2018.

8. Recommendation to the Housing Rental Company Committee:

To note the progress of the draft report and for members to input any initial views.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Update on initial finding from Crisis evaluation

Housing First Feasibility Study – Torbay

Crisis were keen to investigate and evidence how Housing First and housing led models of support for homeless people can be taken to a greater scale in the UK, and in doing so whether the positive step change in outcomes for homeless people achieved in the international context can be replicated at home. Following a wide-ranging study in the Liverpool City Region (LCR)¹ which identified significant opportunities to tackle homelessness and make financial savings we were keen to see how the approach could have benefits in other parts of the UK.

An approach from Nationwide Foundation and Shekinah to undertake a similar piece of work in Torbay was therefore of great interest to us.

Ultimately, any attempt to provide Housing First at scale will require full co-operation from local government and a range of local agencies. Knowledge and experience of Housing First itself is not a prerequisite, but an appetite for innovation and leadership in homelessness solutions is vital. Throughout this study, it has been evident from the positive reception we have experienced that there is this appetite for a new way of working from both statutory and voluntary sectors.

Background and context

Housing First has achieved marked success in a number of cities and states across North America and Europe²³. In the UK a number of small scale Housing First programmes are up and running, but not at a scale that would allow for the approach to be tested as an alternative to existing models of provision, or as a model that might encourage the necessary wider system change needed to end homelessness for good.

This is not to say that there is a lack of interest in the wider potential of Housing First, indeed many organisations are taking a keen interest⁴, and much of the European academic expertise resides in the UK. It is therefore a very positive step that the study in the Liverpool City Region has directly led to the government committing £28million to support the adoption of Housing First, in Liverpool, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands.⁵ There are therefore clear opportunities for any work in Torbay to help inform the national approach as to how Housing First may work outside large urban areas but also for Torbay to benefit from the increased government interest in Housing First by getting ahead in their plans.

1 <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/housing-models-and-access/housing-first-feasibility-study-for-liverpool-city-region-2017/>

2 <http://hf.aeips.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Tsemberis.pdf>

3 https://www.york.ac.uk/media/chp/documents/2015/YMra_3en_2015.pdf

4 <http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/national-projects/housing-first-england>

5 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/215-million-boost-for-council-homelessness-services>

Objectives of the Torbay Study

- Produce a theoretical model for the Torbay Region which sets out a Housing First approach can become the default housing option for single homeless people rough-sleeping or at risk of rough-sleeping in the bay
- To assess the feasibility of that model by
 - Evaluating cost of the model locally and benchmark with national costs;
 - Understanding the required policy and process change at local and national level to best maximise the success of the model in ending street homelessness in Torbay; and
 - Understanding the wider social and political contexts which will support and challenge the success of the model.

The study and recommendations will be made available in a published report

Project oversight, timescale and governance

We have held over 20 x 1-2-1 meetings with the following services / organisations

- Local Authority
 - Councillors
 - Housing Options Service
 - Torbay Development Agency
 - Homelessness Commissioning Teams
 - Mental Health Services
- PATH Torbay
- Shekinah
- Drug and Alcohol Commissioners
- Local Department of Work and Pensions Teams
- Westward Housing
- Sanctuary Housing
- Private Rented Sector Agents

We have held a number of specific focus groups focusing on criminal justice, access to homeless services, support for homeless people and housing supply

We also convened a team of peer researchers, made of people with lived experience of homelessness who undertook over 50 interviews with people currently within the homelessness system in Torbay.

Emergent Findings

- There is high demand and unmet need in relation to homelessness services, the data suggests that the current supported accommodation system is supporting some people out of homelessness and into more settled housing; but that the capacity of this system to do more of that isn't there.
- The study found a high degree of consensus that the current homelessness system can work well for those that can access it, but despite the best efforts of many individuals working in homelessness services not enough people are able to access the system.

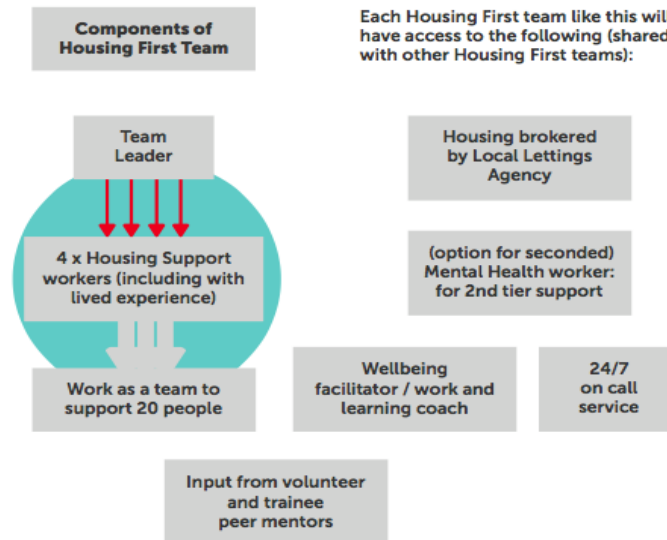
- There are some great examples of multi-agency work, where health services and social care are being provided as part of the support at Leonard Stocks to residents and non-residents on-site. These services need additional capacity to meet the high levels of demand for them and consideration needs to be given as to how they can be delivered flexibly to people in dispersed accommodation.
- Professionals and people with lived experience highlighted a number of ways in which current accommodation options can be unsuitable for people with complex needs. However, this was due mainly to limitations of the accommodation available rather than the quality of services.
- Emergency provision which has been created to add to capacity has suffered from the lack of move on options and therefore this additional capacity has itself become silted up and the intentions to provide immediate, short stay solutions have not been realised.
- People with lived experience of homelessness told us they thought that support to help people exit homelessness should include: i) emotional support; ii) peer support; iii) independence; iv) not being judged; v) opportunities for rehabilitation and longer term planning; vi) structure and purpose; vii) a focus on social integration; viii) a swift and flexible response to people with addictions who are at the right stage in the cycle of motivation
- There is a significant drop off in support when people leave supported accommodation and then move into independent accommodation. This reduction in support leads to people not being able to move on from current services but also people failing when they move into supported accommodation.
- The homelessness system overall is generally disjointed, without a clear overall sense of pathway from prevention, to intervention, to recovery and then move on for everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. Individual interventions at each stage can be seen to be successful but there are few examples of people moving through each stage seamlessly.
- The private rented sector has considerable potential to provide housing supply for Housing First. (most move on from the homelessness system is into the PRS as opposed to social housing) A management and/or lease offer to private landlords and agents has been welcomed and has the twin benefit of addressing empty homes. Initial discussions have identified that capital investment in exchange for longer term nomination rights could allow such a project to fund itself. Although the study will cost out the property management function fully.

Draft Proposals

The study proposes a potential model which will be put forward for further discussion and consultation with local commissioners and providers.

The key headline proposals are as follows.

- The proposed service model suggests that a support team of 6 people (4 support workers, 1 Team Leader and second tier support from 1 Mental Health Support Worker) can support up to 20 individuals requiring the intensive support of a Housing First approach.



- Employing people with lived experience of homelessness within the support team is essential to help encourage a culture which some of those interviewed by the peer researchers felt was not present.
- The introduction of a Mental Health worker attached to each support team would need to be agreed with Mental Health Services but precedent has been established with mental health expertise already located within the Council Housing services.
- Access to all other statutory support services (physical health, drug and alcohol services and welfare benefits) is made through mainstream, universal services with the help of the Housing First support team to navigate and / or advocate through the system.
- Supply of housing is proposed to be drawn from a pool of properties managed by a 'Local Lettings Agency' who would take on management of properties from the private sector and potentially the social sector although this requires some further exploration (although initial discussions with both Westward and Sanctuary housing has been positive about contributing stock)
- To manage demand for services moving forwards, it is essential that the model be built on enhanced investment in homelessness prevention activities. The Homelessness Reduction Act provides a platform for this and Housing First should be considered as an option but only after other opportunities to prevent or relieve homelessness have been explored.

- Building on current good practice examples then the development of clear and consistent pathways between the criminal justice system, NHS provision and drug and alcohol services should be prioritised. Given the geographic remit of statutory services involved in this then consideration should be given to agreeing this Devon wide. The Homelessness Reduction Act and the upcoming Duty to Refer (being implemented in October) provides a legal platform for this.
- As part of this prevention offer sustained or renewed investment in floating support services, which fit with the basic principles of Housing First in terms of ethos and approach; will be required and this proposal will cost those out as well.
- The Housing First approach should therefore not only be considered to provide a new housing options for someone but also as an approach which can 'rescue' existing failing tenancies.
- Emergency provision will still need to be part of the offer. However efficient the system becomes there will remain a need for a relatively small scale (5-10 units) of 24-hour accessible accommodation. It is vitally important that this emergency provision operates without local connection restrictions. Whilst access to a Housing First service should be restricted to those with a connection to Torbay (or with no safe connection elsewhere) it is important that reconnection and signposting work takes place with someone indoors rather than attempting that on the street as is the approach now.
- It would be more economical to provide this emergency provision in one setting and the Leonard Stocks building lends itself to that use. It is also relevant to consider the restrictions and ownership of the building in appreciating the extent to which it could be repurposed.
- It is also envisaged that the adoption of Housing First to scale will be a gradual process and it will be vital that any change of provision be managed so as to avoid existing services ending unpredictably or providers' business models becoming unviable. It would service no benefit for services to be ended before new provision could be but place. As such there would need to be some 'double-funding' of services. Exact figures on cost are being determined and will be available within the final document.
- To support the aim that any Housing First project will eventually need to find financial savings in the system to be enough to pay for itself. Given that the key challenge in Torbay is one of capacity rather than inefficiency it will be necessary to make cost benefit arguments to other statutory commissioners. We can help with this by providing examples from elsewhere across Great Britain but consideration needs to be made as to how these cases are made locally and how joint commissioning can be achieved.
- If the approach is implemented, then there will be a need to provide ongoing recovery and build on existing meaningful occupation services for people supported under. Housing First. Dispersed accommodation does offer significant benefits but could lead to social isolation. There are already a range of successful non-commissioned services such as those provided at Endeavour House, Growing Lives and TRIP providing meaningful occupation services which should be supported to provide ongoing support to Housing First clients.
- These services, along with commissioned recovery services, such as drug and alcohol, employment and counselling services could make use of the space freed up within Leonard Stocks to provide a range of recovery focused services. The potential for the Leonard Stocks building to provide a mix of intensively

supported emergency accommodation at a small scale plus recovery services (which are delivered during set times and inviting people into attend appointments) should decrease the amount of associated anti-social behaviour which the hostel can attract in its current form.

- It has proved more challenging to secure consistent data on levels and type of need than it did for the Liverpool City Region study. Whilst the TESH work has helped provide detail the lack of a consistent data recording system across street outreach, the hostel, Housing Options services and then Home Choice has made building a complete picture very difficult. Shekinah's plans for the ECINS system should create the necessary shared IT system but it will need consideration as to how it can link to other systems⁶.

Draft Costings

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Implementation

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• 6 <http://www.empowering-communities.org/software/e-cins/>

Emergency Accommodation Provision

This cost is subject to further clarification on funding streams and the potential for it to be provided within Leonard Stocks (which would provide savings).

Emergency Accommodation provision	Over 2 years	£393,470 for 5 units in constant use with support (although how much of this would be covered by Housing Benefit will need to be determined).
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These costs need to be considered alongside the potential savings which we believe would come from this approach. However further analysis of current levels of need and spend is needed to reach the potential amount which could be saved and then diverted into this approach.

Next Steps

We will be holding a final consultation event on Monday 16th April and conducting some final 1-2-1 meetings in that week.

Final costed proposals will be produced for the start of May.

We will continue to be very keen to attend any local forums or meetings to discuss the study in more detail and receive ongoing feedback.

Chris Hancock, Head of Housing, Crisis

chris.hancock@crisis.org.uk