**Homelessness Covid 19 Working Group Meeting 18**

**Thursday 3rd September, 10.00 – 11.30am**

**Notes and Actions**

**Attendees**: Sumathi Pathmanaban (Crisis Brent), Atara Fridler (Crisis), Laurence Coaker (Brent Council - Housing), Lorraine Regan (Brent Council – ASC), Steve Davies (St Mungo’s), Coco Khan (Brent Council – Housing)

**Apologies:** Nichole Donoher-Phillips (WDP), Ryan Fuke (St Mungo’s), Becky Byrne (Brent Council – ASC), Andy Brown (Public Health)

1. **Actions from last meeting**

Update on actions from last meeting:

* Action: Atara to get more information from Paul Anders from PHE about the national pilot project to support people with active addiction into work

*Atara contacted Paul A who informed that WDP are delivering this project across London and Brent should be part of this already. Paul A will follow up with WDP but also Andy can liaise with them to find out more.*

* Action: Sumathi to circulate drug & alcohol funding info for group to give feedback by 12.00pm Monday 17th August - *completed*
* Action: Becky and Ryan start planning assessments of rough sleepers / Everyone In cohort with very high support needs into Forty Lane (from 1st October)

*Pending*

* Action: Becky to send Atara the details of Edge Training consultancy who are experts in housing law – *completed. Sumathi has contacted Edge Training and is awaiting a quote for training on the latest version of possession proceedings*
* Action: Laurence to discuss delays between submitting homelessness application to assessment appointment with Housing Needs team leaders

*There has been an issue with council’s CRM system which meant the system became overloaded but this has now been remedied*

* Action: Sumathi to circulate training questionnaire to Homelessness Forum and to include on next Forum meeting agenda (next Forum meeting is on Friday 4th September)

*Sumathi has been in touch with Jane Bancroft but they have no confirmed survey to circulate or a session for Homelessness Forum*

1. **Update on Next Steps grant application proposals**

* Both bids (for revenue and capital grants) have been submitted; thanks to Lorraine for support on the bid to the capital fund
* The bad news is that both grant programmes are over-subscribed so likely to be very competitive
* The council should find out the outcome of the bid in mid-late September
* Note that the details of bid proposals are included in the minutes of the 13th August covid homelessness working group meeting
* The **capital bid** includes a proposal to lease a property in Wembley for people with high support needs - Forty Lane (11 spaces), a further 2 x blocks for move-on accommodation and a revenue bid for Housing First
* The **revenue bid** includes: covering some retrospective costs for the Everyone In cohort since 1st July and also the following elements: continuing support and accommodation costs for eligible rough sleepers, 12 week support programme for EEA nationals with NRPF to help them access the EUSS scheme and employment, provision for a cold weather shelter (30 B&B spaces instead of the Shelter of Sanctuary from Jan – end March 2021).
* If SWEP is activated, the council would need to access additional resources for SWEP provision (likely to be spot purchased)
* Brent Council were strongly advised by MHCLG advisor not to explicitly include accommodation or support costs for migrant rough sleepers from outside the EEA with NRPF in their bid proposals. Brent Council have instead included provision for “harder to reach” individuals as a potential means to support this cohort but support / accomodation is by no means guaranteed
* Action: Steve to check with MHCLG contacts about guidelines for running a winter shelter this winter

Everyone In cohort and decant monitoring

* There are roughly 90 eligible people from the Everyone In cohort currently in B&B accommodation – some are with SHPS. The plan is to finalise the decant from B&Bs / hotels by 31st Dec; the majority will be supported into PRS and some will go into supported housing
* There are 49 EEA nationals in the Everyone In cohort. 2 Brent housing officers are working solely with this client group. Within this smaller cohort the most challenging group to obtain support for are people who have high support needs that prevent them from working and who haven’t been in UK for 5 years. This is why Laurence is working closely with Andy Brown (Drug & Alcohol team) to access help for this smaller group. EEA nationals with NRPF can also access free legal advice through North Kensington Law Centre to support EUSS application (via wider West London partnership)
* There are 11 people with NRPF who are from outside EEA. As previously discussed there are going to be significant problems with securing support and accommodation for this group. The council could try to contact charities to assist with accommodation, explore whether CCG could support or the council may take a decision on continuing funding for a limited period. This cohort is currently being assessed by and working with housing needs officers but have not yet been linked to other charities / services; this is the next step.

Discussion within the group:

* Question about working together to understand the cohort in more detail and to ensure resources across all agencies are deployed most effectively. The group agreed that a report setting out the breakdown of needs etc would be brought to these meetings going forward e.g. data extracted from the decant tracker?
* Action: Coco to bring report to next meeting showing breakdown of 90 remaining in hotels, their support needs and which agency they’re working with

1. **Current rough sleeper figures**

* 22 rough sleepers in total of whom 20 are male and 2 are female
* There are 2 returners / new flow
* 2 cases have been closed to due to no contact in last 30 days and 1 moved into PRS
* Nationality: 5 are UK nationals, 14 are EU nationals, 1 is non-EU national, 2 are unknown
* Of the 22, 3 have recourse to public funds, 4 have no recourse confirmed and 15 are unknown
* The group noted that the majority of current rough sleepers are EU nationals and considered whether many of these have no recourse to public funds or even basic ID.
* Steve reported that St Mungo’s staff are spending significant amount of time and energy sorting out passports and ID for them before they are able to establish whether they have recourse, staff spending lots of time at embassies.

1. **Winter shelter update**

* See also Ryan’s note of the winter shelter / SWEP subgroup meeting on 25th August.
* Coco asked about when more assertive winter response measures would be activated e.g. proactively contacting rough sleepers who might be at risk of severe weather?
* Steve noted that St Mungo’s is looking into how some emergency severe weather bed spaces could be provided at Pound Lane whilst following covid safety guidance. This could include potentially temporarily housing up to 8 vulnerable people in a household bubble where they would share kitchen and bathroom facilities, combined with other measures such as increased covid testing.
* Laurence confirmed that the council would probably look at block booking hotel/s for the “winter shelter” for 3 months but it will be more difficult to do block booking for SWEP provision – this will likely be procured on a spot purchase basis
* Additionally the cold weather shelter is likely to mirror the Shelter of Sanctuary eligibility requirements i.e. priority would be given to people who are verified rough sleepers but if there are voids then other rough sleepers should be able to access them
* The next winter shelter subgroup meeting is on 25th Sept. Brent Council should have the Next Steps bid outcome by then and the group can start to make plans for procuring winter accommodation etc. In any case the subgroup needs to meet very soon after the bid outcome is known.

1. **SMART Service update**

* The housing officer post in the SMART team has been filled by Priti (previously the hospital discharge worker in Housing Needs).
* For future issues around housing and hospital discharge, liaise with Yomi in Coco’s team to find connect with new hospital discharge officer

1. **AOB**

* Reminder about the next Homelessness Forum meeting on Friday 4th Sept
* The group had a discussion about problems accessing Zoom meetings and realised that council staff can request access from IT. This could also be a solution for SHPS staff accessing zoom to join Crisis team meetings and training
* Ashford Place update: unfortunately today is Lucien’s last day. It would be good to have a replacement rep from AP on the Homelessness Forum – Atara to follow up directly with AP
* Evictions subgroup – Crisis / CAB have had a conversation about the imminent ending of the ban on evictions and increasing level of evictions / insecure tenancies in Brent. Atara and Jacqueline (CAB) are proposing to set up a subgroup of the Homelessness Forum to share intelligence on evictions and updates around possession proceedings. Suggestion that the council could nominate someone to join this subgroup.
* Next meeting: Friday 18th September, 10.00 – 11.30am