

Consultation - February 2017

Proposed changes to Homelessness Support Services provision with a reduced budget

The following document outlines, in more detail, the proposed remodelling of Homelessness Support Services for Reading.

The Hub

The proposal is for The Hub to be a central location for services to co-ordinate immediate and emergency responses to those who are homeless or rough sleeping including in-reach services for health, drug and alcohol services to support individuals. This will be part of a No Second Night Out model (NSNO) of provision to develop a service offer for people new to the streets. NSNO is a nationally adopted approach that ensures that individuals that find themselves sleeping rough for the first time are offered a rapid response meaning that they do not need to sleep out for a second night (<http://www.nosecondnightout.org.uk/>).

Provision

- **Emergency and sit-up bed spaces** for clients to access on a nightly basis, for up to seven nights, to enable street outreach services to reconnect individuals to their borough of origin where they have no local connection to the borough. This would be a robust offer and consist of support to establish borough of origin and connect to an area where they can access accommodation and/or social, family and support networks, in a planned way.
- **Emergency assessment bed spaces**, for up to eight weeks, for those with a local connection to Reading to enable immediate access to accommodation and assessment of needs by providing a short-term bed space where, for example, people are leaving prison, are discharged from hospital or are sleeping rough for the first time.
- **Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)** will operate from the hub during short periods of high risk weather. The minimum trigger is for when temperatures drop to zero degrees or below for three or more consecutive nights. This will consist of temporary bed space provision that is open to all, including people with no recourse to public funds and those who have been excluded from other services (<http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/guidance-on-severe-weather-emergency-protocol-swap-and-extended-weather-provision>).

Level of support

- Platform for intensive reconnections work from the street outreach team where an individual has no local connection to Reading.
- For those with a local connection: Assessment; agreeing housing related support planning and New Entry Agreements and plans for move-on and formulating a Single Service Offer.

Intensive and Engaging Support (I&E)

Bed spaces will be made available within different types of Intensive and Engaging support environments giving the opportunity to engage some complex individuals in a non-hostel environment. Support will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Provision

- Bed spaces available at The Hub, as part of hostel type provision and as move-on from emergency bed spaces.
- Cluster flats with staff on site 7:00 am - 10:00 pm and a floating support worker, based at The Hub, for overnight support.

- Some dispersed I&E housing with concierge, i-support security and linked floating support worker, operating from The Hub for overnight support. Dispersed model is intended for specialist and focused housing provision, for example, to deliver gender informed support and environments for women, or for individuals that are unable to manage within a hostel environment.
- A small number of clearly defined assessment bed spaces.

Level of support

- Variable, but likely to include making claims for income and housing benefits; referrals to community services such as drug and/or alcohol treatment; primary health care concerns and focussing upon behaviour changes around anti-social behaviour, begging and/or street drinking.

Move-on timeframe

- Short-term up to six months, with scope for support providers to have the flexibility to agree with commissioners that a small percentage of service users are 'longer-term' due to more complex/challenging behaviours, ensuring flexibility where move-on would be unsustainable. This could be up to 12 months.

Working towards Independence (WTI)

Bed spaces for individuals who do not require access to 24 hour support but have recently lost or are unable to manage independent living at the time of referral.

Provision

- Dispersed housing model across a variety of 2+ bed shared properties. Some self-contained properties, but predominantly shared accommodation.
- To include a small number of clearly defined assessment bed spaces.
- Dedicated and linked move-on worker post for tenancy sustainment and continuation of support.

Level of support

- Focus on recovery, resettlement and rehabilitation; longer term health concerns; accessing opportunities to improve literacy, numeracy and IT skills; and ensuring individuals have community networks and integration for sustained move-on including volunteering, education, training and employment.

Move-on timeframe

- Short-term for between six - 12 months, with scope for support providers to have the flexibility to agree with commissioners that a small percentage of service users are 'longer-term' due to more complex/challenging behaviours, ensuring flexibility where move-on would be unsustainable. This could be up to two years.

Pre-emptive, sustaining and preventative floating support

Support hours across tenures for those who currently have accommodation, but who are at risk of homelessness, require support with sustaining their accommodation or with accessing alternative accommodation.

Provision and level of support

- Support consists of: advice, representation and advocacy; development of life skills; social activities and community involvement/integration; maximising benefits and budgeting; obtaining and sustaining education, employment, training or volunteering opportunities.
- Resettlement role, for example: finding low cost furniture, setting up utilities and registering with a GP.

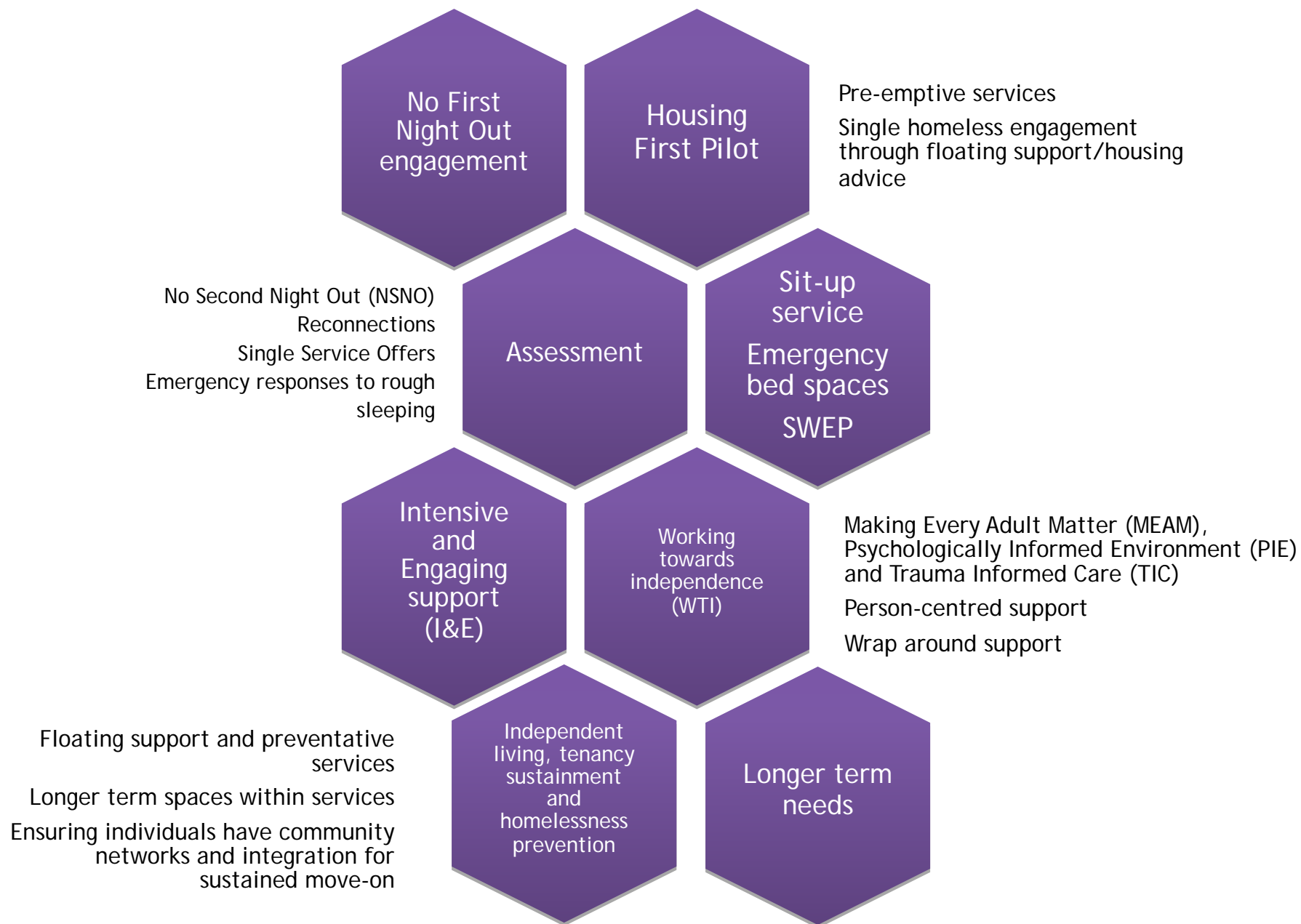
- Some emphasis on pre-emptive services for single homelessness including developing and implementing No First Night Out principles. This approach explores why individuals are sleeping rough for the first time and then creates tailored pre-emptive measures that can identify 'pre-rough sleepers' at a phase of their housing crisis which precedes rough sleeping. The project pilot has developed a typology for rough sleepers and a screening tool that enables early identification of those imminently at risk of rough sleeping, for use by all partner agencies and housing options teams. Intensive case work via one-to-one support, medication, gaining accommodation in the private rented sector and engaging clients in a variety of settings aims to avert rough sleeping (http://www.mungos.org/homelessness/publications/latest_publications_and_research/2513_no-first-night-out-help-for-single-homeless-people-interim-report).

Timeframe

- Short-term for three to six months.
- Opportunity to support a proportion of longer term clients where required and as agreed with commissioners.

The diagram below pictorially demonstrates the proposed principles and how they interconnect.

Proposed re-modelling of Homelessness Support Services



Other key principles of remodelling:

- A different option for individuals with high needs who may have histories of entrenched or repeat homelessness where traditional models of supported accommodation have previously been unsuccessful by implementing a two year Housing First pilot with funding for a personalised approach

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Housing%20First%20in%20England%20The%20Principles.pdf>

The overall philosophy of Housing First is to provide a stable, independent home and intensive personalised support and case management to homeless people with multiple and complex needs. There are no conditions around 'housing readiness' before providing someone with a home; rather, secure housing is viewed as a stable platform from which other issues can be addressed. Housing is provided 'first', rather than 'last' or as a reward.

- **Adaptive, flexible, specialist, responsive and informed environments within Homelessness Support Services**

New services to embed the following principles in day-to-day working - to be included in new contracts and Service Specifications:

- **Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) principles**

<http://meam.org.uk>

Where individuals experience a number of problems at the same time, for example, substance misuse, mental health problems and offending, but then usually have ineffective contact with the services that should be there to help and end up living chaotic lives. The principle is to find shared solutions to benefit everyone involved; develop a coordinated approach amongst local partners and embed this approach amongst services and sectors.

- **Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) and principles (including reflective practice)**

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Creating%20a%20Psychologically%20Informed%20Environment%20-%202015.pdf>

A PIE takes into account the psychological make-up, experiences and needs - the thinking, emotions, personalities and past experience - of its participants in the way that it operates. It is particularly effective for those who have experienced complex trauma - those who tend to access homelessness services are disproportionately affected by child and adulthood trauma. The approach aims to help staff understand where client behaviours are coming from and work more creatively with challenging behaviours. It also considers the psychological needs of staff: developing skills, increasing motivation, job satisfaction and resilience.

- **Trauma Informed Care (TIC) principles**

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/webinar-catchup/basic-intro-TIC>

This approach is about building therapeutic relationships with service users that increase safety, control, understanding and empathy to enable recovery to begin and decrease the risk of secondary trauma/re-traumatisation within a safe environment. This could be especially relevant to gender informed bed spaces.

- **Person centred support across services, including how services are accessed via the Access Panel**

Approaching services in a person-centred way ensures that a service user is at the centre of decisions which relate to their life - this involves listening, thinking together, coaching, sharing ideas and seeking feedback about all elements of support and services.

- **A move away from a Pathways model towards wrap-around support**

The original Pathways model was never intended to be linear and at entry stage it is not. However, when someone is not managing in a service that offers less support, currently there is a need to physically move back a 'stage' in the Pathway. New services will endeavour to

prevent this by wrapping around support in a flexible way with moving into a different service as a 'backwards step' being a last resort.

- **Use of licences for all shared accommodation services**, with use of Assured Short-hold tenancies for self-contained units only where supported accommodation will be predominantly shared services.

Bed spaces within supported accommodation

Due to a reduction in the budget for Homelessness Support Services, the Council can advise that these proposals will result in a reduction of bed spaces within supported accommodation services. However, we will seek to minimise the impact upon individuals that use these services where the following key principles can be applied:

Reduction in time individuals are staying within supported accommodation - individual services and across services

- Increased move-on, throughout and ability to house more people, more quickly.

Consistency in price paid per support hour across supported accommodation

- Hourly rate for support to be a maximum of £18.00 per hour in line with other local authority pricing in the South.
- Competitively priced services.

Consistency in support hours delivered for I&E support and WTI services

- Enabling flexibility and wrap-around support where required.
- Focus on added value during tendering process.

Introduction of more qualitative approaches to monitoring services, in addition to Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and quantitative data, to improve the effectiveness of services and encourage service evolution over the contract period

- Use of focus groups and interviews with individuals using services and staff.

Properties

Where changes in the configuration of Homelessness Support Services have been proposed there may be a change in how existing properties will be utilised. The Council is committed to working with partners to retain housing in Reading that meets the needs of those with support needs.

If any existing providers of Homelessness Support Services that have properties linked to provision have concerns about the longer term use of their properties under the proposed changes, the Council are happy to discuss these concerns further including how properties could fit within the proposed new model; how properties could be used for alternative provision in the borough and other opportunities that could enable existing landlords to work with the Council.