

Report of the Director of Housing, Economy and Regeneration

Update Report on Homelessness / Resettlement Services 2023 including winter provision, commissioning issues and strategy update

Summary

1. This paper updates the Scrutiny Committee on the current services available for people threatened with or experiencing homelessness including the winter night provision for rough sleepers, and single homeless people in York. Performance information and legislative issues are included (Annex A).
2. It also advises on the current homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, the holistic approach being developed across directorates and relevant developments around commissioned contracts.

Background

3. The Council Plan highlights that in York the average cost of houses are at least 10 times average earnings and rents rising 10% over the last year (2021-22). There are 4.5 per 100,000 people sleeping rough for the same period compared to 3.1 regionally. By a different measurement 24 people were sleeping rough on the last Thursday in July 2023. The new administration demonstrated its commitment to reducing homelessness by including “number of people sleeping rough” as one of its new key performance indicators.

In addition, provision of good quality housing to meet the range of needs across the City’s residents is recognised as central to the Council’s 2023-27 Plan as part of Core Commitments, Affordability and Health and Wellbeing, and to the vision of “One City, for all” .

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (“NICE”) guidelines published last year highlighted that people experiencing homelessness face significant health inequalities: mortality is around ten times higher than the rest of the population and life expectancy is around 30 years less. Barriers

accessing health and social care services is attributed in part to the high numbers of preventable deaths within this population. The Council plan contains a focus on fairness and health inequalities with the ambition to reverse the widening trend of health inequalities in our city. It is recognised in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that housing access and affordability is fundamental in meeting the aims of the Strategy and tackling wider determinants of health.

The current administration has a clear commitment to end rough sleeping.

A simplified overview of the statutory homelessness process and routes in to services can be found at Annexes B and C.

Current in house and commissioned services

4. City of York Council is works in partnership across York, delivering on the 2018-2023 Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Together strategy. This partnership approach is well established, operating effectively over many years, and continues to work hard to rise to the challenges of tackling all forms of homelessness. These challenges are being further complicated by the cost-of-living crisis, covid's aftermath and a tight financial position for the Council and public services generally. Despite this, we continue to provide a high-quality Housing Options Service and a nationally recognised advanced Resettlement Service.
5. As part of the ongoing response, the team aim, and work, to ensure everyone has a place to sleep wherever this can be facilitated. This approach is supported by funding from central government. Post Covid we have been able to increase the number of emergency beds in supported accommodation services, resulting on less reliance on hotels and bed and breakfast, so that these can be used for more bespoke support pathways towards independent living and to boost bed capacity if required for our winter night provision (see Annexe D). We do work all year round with hotel and B&B providers which helps retain relationships so that we can utilise this extra accommodation should it be needed due to increased and excessive demand.

Housing Options, Supported Accommodation and Resettlement Services

6. In addition to providing services as usual, extra burdens continue to be placed on housing due to world events such as cost of living and the refugee crisis's etc. Staff retention and recruitment is a major challenge as it is in many service sectors. The impacts of working with such complex social issues in the current jobs market appears to be making the sector less attractive to perspective applicants.

The Housing Options Team

7. Thirteen Housing Options workers and three Housing Options Support Workers ensure our statutory duties to homeless people under the homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA17) and Housing Act 1996 are met. The work of housing options is very demanding, often dealing with people who are vulnerable and desperate but unable to obtain stable long-term housing themselves.

Our Housing Options Team provide advice to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, offering advice and information if there is a risk of homelessness. This could be due to a range of reasons; someone may be being asked to leave by family or friends, in a break up of a relationship, experiencing domestic violence/domestic abuse, be leaving hospital with nowhere to go, be leaving prison with nowhere to go, be in mortgage arrears or house repossession, be under a notice to quit or notice seeking possession received from their landlord and many other things that may be impacting on a person's housing

Legislation and demands are constantly emerging, for example, around refugees and asylum seekers, most notably people needing to flee the conflict in Israel / Gaza has led to quickly amended legislation. The team deal with a complex legal framework around homelessness, requiring highly knowledgeable and skilled staff. The nature of this legislation means it can often appear as illogical and bureaucratic to other services as it involves a series of stages and 'tests' which need to be met before a full duty for permanent housing is given. The work around advice, support, prevention and other genuine housing options that the team do here is particularly important in ensuring everyone gets the help that they need.

Contacts to the Housing Options service remain high with contact to the service once averaging around 80 per week (pre pandemic) to currently around 200 per week putting increasing pressure on the staff team and resources. Although we have managed to fill vacant posts in the service, new staff take approximately 6 months to induct and train so they can carry full caseloads.

In response to the HRA17 and in addition to the 13 Housing Options workers, CYC now employs 3 Housing Options Support Workers to assist customers with their Personal Housing Plans. There were 203 referrals to the Housing Options Support Workers in 22/23, 169 engaged and were given practical support of which 39 were assisted to remain in their own home or helped to find alternative accommodation. 21 support referrals were closed as the duty had ended with the housing options. 39 support referrals were closed as they had been prevented whilst working with the support

workers. 16 support referrals were closed as they had been relieved (accommodated) whilst working with the support workers. 93 support referrals were closed as they had completed all tasks required to support them. 34 customers failed to engage or withdrew their application.

James House

8. James House is our main family provision for homeless families. It provides 57 self contained homes with a variety of 1, 2 and 3 bed accommodation. A team of staff provide housing management 7 days a week on a shift basis with an on site security presence over night. People staying at James House are there on average for 19 weeks after which they will usually move on in to more permanent housing. Residents often have support and care services visit them and we encourage everyone to take part in the sessions with staff to help them get tenancy ready by having an understanding of the rights and responsibilities that being a tenant comes with.

Rough Sleeping Services grant funding

9. The service has been successful in bidding for additional resources to tackle rough sleeping successfully over the last few years, made available due to the Government's continued commitment from to end rough sleeping nationally. We are pleased that we now have 3-year allocation (from 2023) of funding from central government for York's Rough Sleeping Initiative funding. It was previously released in one year tranches. This allows for a more consistent and person-centred approach and better job security for staff. This funding announcement did come with a reduction to the yearly amounts we had previously received from the Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities (DHLUC). The team meet regularly with DHLUC staff who monitor performance and spend as well as advising on best practice and how to shape local services. Their clear focus is on a shift of focus towards prevention and recovery, rather than crisis intervention resulting in the Salvation Army losing their element of the funding but mitigated by an expansion in the Rough Sleeper Navigator approach.
10. The (RSI) funding we did receive totalling £1,349,100 funds a variety of front-line workers which also supports our 'in reach' work with rough sleepers who go into accommodation. The Early Intervention and Prevention contract (EI&P), funded through the housing service (general fund) was due to end last March 2023. It was extended until 30th September 2023 through a formally agreed waiver to ideally be considered along with retendering of related contracts via the all age commissioning team. The related contracts have not, as yet, been retendered and the EI&P contract has now ended. The Rough Sleeper Navigator Team, first introduced in 2017, now solely and formally deliver services for rough sleepers on behalf of the Council following due consideration by the current administration on this matter. The

Navigator team work alongside council colleagues, commissioned services as well as, community and voluntary initiatives in doing so.

We have since received additional RSI funding to run till 2025 of £128,995 this year, £136,859 next year, to increase the capacity in the navigator team and to recruit a housing options worker specifically to work with rough sleepers, this post will increase the capacity of the Navigator and Housing Options services and will improve our statutory homeless prevention statistics. As a result this should bring in additional funds for homelessness burdens via the homeless prevention grant, something that was not an option with the Early Intervention & Prevention contract.

The efforts delivered through Rough Sleepers Initiative and the resettlement services have led to a reduction in the number of people sleeping rough in York over the last few years from a peak of 29 in 2017 to lower single figures over the last few years but significant challenges remain in our aim to end rough sleeping.

In the event of a change in circumstances or an extreme weather event, our approach allows us to provide a significant increase in emergency capacity if required at any time of year as well as over the winter period. The extra winter provision can also be available through March and April should we have adverse weather during this period. As previously mentioned, it can also be activated in the event of a heatwave during the summer months. There is also a phased approach to closing the extra winter beds to ensure no one is returned to the streets or made homeless just because the winter is over. The service continues to work on expanding long term provision to support the end goal of ending rough sleeping.

11. **RSI funded Rough Sleepers staff in numbers:**

- 1 Rough Sleepers Coordinator
- 4 Rough Sleeper Housing Navigators
- 2 MEAM workers and personalisation monies (*MEAM Making Every Adult Matter*)
- 1 Private Rented Sector Officer and 1 Private Rented Sector Support Worker.
- 2 mental Health Workers. Fully funded year 1 with partial funding years 2 and 3. We will need to secure additional funds for years 2 and 3 from other areas or funding sources.

In addition, through the very recent increase in RSI funding:

- 1.5 additional rough sleeper navigators. One of the permanent role's focus will be to work with people around social activities such as employment, training, education, physical and mental well being etc.

- 1 Rough Sleeper Housing Options Worker.
- Total 12.5 staff.

This team provide all aspects of rough sleeper work:

- street triage into accommodation
- regular early morning street walks
- networking with partners and linking up with rough sleepers throughout the day
- daily drop in at Peasholme Hostel 9:30 – 12:30
- three drop in sessions per week at Carecent, Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- coordinating emergency beds or B&B placements,
- providing outreach, both reactive and planned
- carrying caseloads of complex people to support them to more independent living through their journey
- maintaining and forging new links with voluntary and faith sector partners
- responding to Streetlink rough sleeper reports
- utilising personalisation funds for bespoke support resources, reconnections, travel warrants and accessing private rented accommodation
- in reach support for people in accommodation in danger of losing their home (prevention and recovery)
- liaison with Housing Options around homelessness presentations
- attending community events and groups to talk about homelessness
- accessing private rented accommodation
- linking people in to activities

In addition to CYC provision, several services have contracts to work with rough sleepers including Changing Lives (accommodation services, Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) drug and alcohol services) In addition Restore provide additional tier 2 accommodation (shared supported housing).

The Rough Sleepers Housing Navigators team was established as part of a national drive to reduce rough sleepers. The Team works with rough sleepers through a pro-active outreach model, utilising various “out of the norm” thinking approaches, using a strengths based, trauma informed way of working encouraging people to work towards their ‘good life’.

York continues to operate No Second Night Out for rough sleepers. Rough Sleeping Housing Navigators are the hub for this. Rough sleepers and

members of the public can either contact them directly or via the national rough sleeper helpline Street Link (online only).

We are currently in the process of update our website and publicity material to reflect current arrangements and provide information on Streetlink. We'll bring some along to scrutiny if available.

We continue to successfully accommodate York's rough sleepers and work very hard to reduce rough sleeping from what was a peak official count figure of 29 in 2017 to 9 in 2022 . The 2022 figure was an increase on 2021 when the figure was 4 rough sleepers. Our 2023 street count is currently being co-ordinated. The rough sleeping situation is very dynamic and maintaining this low level is a challenge on a day to day basis, however the situation with rough sleeping is very different to that of 2017. We now have nobody on the streets that might be described as an entrenched rough sleeper whilst there are a number of rough sleepers from other locality areas.

A number of people who can be found sleeping rough have access to accommodation but for complex reasons are deciding to sleep in the city centre and not return to their accommodation. There are also a small number of rough sleepers who at this time do not wish to access services or accommodation and are rough sleeping in the city centre. The Navigators continue to engage with the people who sleep rough to gain an understanding of them and aim to support them off the streets and into or back to safe and secure accommodation. Reasons for rough sleeping are very often complex. The rough sleeper team engage with everyone to address the barriers to them accepting accommodation and support from services.

Ourselves and partners are currently working on promoting a scheme where rough sleepers may be able to get a grant of up to £500 from York Street Aid to help move on with their life, away from the street. They can apply through Carecent or City of York Council. Post cards with details are currently being produced.

The national rough sleeping reporting mechanism StreetLink has recently stopped allowing alerts of rough sleeping by phone. This is now done via an online form. So that people in York can call the team we've opened a new phone line so that people can directly report to the team, 07586 570432. Again, this will be publicised.

Rapid Rehousing

12. The rapid rehousing pathway approach is another way of offering bespoke and front end housing offers of accommodation. Due to the current housing

crisis and affordability issues in York services are coming more and more in contact with people who are homeless with low support needs. They are often in this position for a variety of reasons but are homeless primarily due to lack of affordable realistic housing options in the city and in years gone by would never have required assistance with their housing. We are working to increase our ability to rapidly rehouse some of these cases through the private rented sector and in some cases through the housing register in to social housing. We intend to offer more rapid rehousing packages (RRPs) going forward and this work requires innovative thinking and flexibility from involved services and full engagement from the customer concerned including an element of risk taking.

The York Allocations Policy going live in April 2022 has afforded CYC the opportunity to have the flexibility to be able to consider these housing packages. The obvious area of concern in doing more RRP is the knock on effect it may have if using social housing in that it takes away available accommodation for those within the homeless system who have more support/care needs. This means that RRP needs to be carefully managed.

Much of this work goes on in partnership with statutory partners where there may be specific factors not necessarily recognised via legislation or reflected in housing priority awarded via the allocations policy, but there is a pressing need for that person to be housed appropriately.

No second Night out and emergency beds all year round provision

13. Across York accommodation services continue to provide emergency beds as part of No Second Night Out (NSNO) Initiative and the Winter Weather provision. NSNO is operated throughout the year, with additional facilities being provided during winter weather.

There is 1 emergency room at Robinson Court, 1 emergency room at Peasholme and 1 emergency room at Howe Hill for Young People available throughout the year.

All resettlement hostels use short term vacant beds / emergency placements for No Second Night Out (NSNO).

Flat 2 (rear of Howe Hill) provision providing 4 beds in a shared flat and is managed by the team at Howe Hill.

Crombie House (intended for redevelopment) has been re-opened due to capacity pressures and can provide 10 beds for Single homeless people or childless couples and is being managed by the team at Howe Hill.

Emergency beds: there 8-9 at Peasholme, 8-9 at Howe Hill for Young People and 2 at Union Terrace.

The Criteria for NSNO and emergency beds is relaxed during the winter weather provision November – February to accommodate those sleeping rough. Winter Weather beds are going to be increased in capacity at Union Terrace by 4 emergency beds this year and use of B&B if deemed appropriate.

These emergency accommodation services (NSNO / emergency beds) are a fundamental part of the overall package to rough sleepers.

14. The Rough Sleeper Housing Navigators have made real progress in engaging rough sleepers, their unique strength in approach that makes a difference is to persistently engage with someone on the streets, at that person's pace, for example around formal engagement or attending appointments and when they are ready, react and use that readiness in the moment as motivation to make changes can dissipate quickly. This approach offers a bespoke, rapid response to someone when they express a desire to do something different. This can be done where that person is sleeping/staying on the streets and doesn't require attendance at an office or an appointment.
15. Below is a summary of permanent accommodation offers to people in resettlement who have previously been, or are at threat with, rough sleeping. The current high demand for affordable housing means that we are struggling to move people on from our Supported Accommodation (resettlement and homeless) as well as affecting our Housing First (for those most complex people who struggle with shared accommodation) offer.

	TOTAL housed in Resettlement category
2019-20	69
2020/21	76
2021/22	87
2022/23	93
2023/24	Current 37 to 01/10/2023.

The Private Rented Sector Support Workers

16. These roles work very closely with the Navigators as part of the rough sleepers offer. Much of their work is developmental, with a focus on building positive relationships with landlords and lettings agents to provide accommodation for people accessing our services. In 2022/2023 these established relationships helped continue to build a good reputation around this service. It has helped to get more landlords on board and these roles

continue to offer people they support access to accommodation in the private rented sector. Landlords also greatly value the support they get from these roles.

In 2022/23 The Private Rented Sector Support Workers utilising Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) monies assisted **34** people / households that were rough sleepers or single homeless in emergency resettlement accommodation into private rented accommodation.

- **27** customers with rent in advance.
- **7** customers with guaranteed rent for up to 6 months.
- **0** “holding fees” to landlords on behalf of the customer.
- **1** “Golden Hello” to a landlord.
- **0** paper bonds (Bond Guarantee Scheme).
- **4** cash Bonds

Of these 34 tenancies, the accommodation was sourced through 25 Private Landlords and 9 Lettings agencies. 27 tenancies were successful (for at least the initial 6-month term); while regrettable there were 7 ‘unsuccessful’ tenancies. Of these 5 abandoned, one was evicted following court action and 1 was supported into more appropriate accommodation following health issues.

MEAM (Making every adult matter)

17. MEAM (Changing Lives) work with customers who have ineffective contact with services, live chaotic lives and present with multiple complex issues, such as mental ill health, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, offending and family breakdown. The team includes a Housing First senior practitioner, MEAM support workers and 3 mental Health Housing first workers.

During 2022/23 MEAM including RSI funded staff received 48 referrals of which 10 were accepted on the MEAM caseload. The current caseload is 32

The positive outcomes for 22/23 include.

- 12 Housing first introductory tenancies.
- 10 individuals became a secure Housing First tenant following successful completion of their introductory tenancy.
- 3 rough sleepers awarded gold band following short stays in resettlement/shared housing.

- 6 rough sleepers have been supported to move in and maintain hostel accommodation as part of a multi-agency plan with flexibility where possible.
- 14 individuals with a history of rough sleeping are being supported through prison sentences to improve outcomes on release.
- A Pathway developed with the adult mental health social work team has seen 6 individuals allocated to social workers.

The MEAM Mental Health Housing first (MHHF) team received 27 referrals of which 16 were accepted on the MEAM caseload. The current caseload is 18

The positive outcomes for 22/23 include:

- 9 Housing first introductory tenancies.
- 4 individuals became a secure Housing first tenant following successful completion of their introductory tenancy.
- 2 awarded gold band following short stays in resettlement/shared housing.
- 10 rough sleepers have been supported to move in and maintain hostel accommodation as part of a multi-agency plan with flexibility where possible.
- 4 individuals with a history of rough sleeping are being supported through prison sentences to improve outcomes on release.
- Pathway developed with the adult mental health social work team has seen 4 individuals allocated to social workers.

Of the 29 individuals on the case load in Q4 of 2022/23, 26 were in Substance Misuse Services, 21 in Probation Services and 16 open to Mental Health Services. Despite that, the Service has managed to support 62% of their caseload to maintain tenancies and supported a further third to maintain contact whilst in custody to plan for more positive future on discharge. The Service has been consistently over capacity in 2022/23.

The MEAM/MHHF Service was launched in 2020 and will be integrated into the Specialist Mental Health Accommodation and Support pathway when it is commissioned in 2025. It is at current capacity and in progress to expand to the planned capacity of 21 individuals

Temporary Accommodation (Hostels)

18. Our temporary accommodation and Resettlement Services (hostels), include Peasholme, Howe Hill for Young People and James House and also including Union Terrace supported accommodation for single homeless males and Robinson Court Supported Accommodation for single homeless females. These services and the support workers staffing them continue to be very busy offering housing advice and support. The hostels

accommodate between them about 170 people every night. These services accommodate and support families and individuals who are often very vulnerable and have multiple complex needs. People and families that need a lot of support present real resource challenges to our services across and beyond the council. If these needs are left unmet it is unlikely that settled accommodation will be maintained, resulting in tenancy failure and repeat homelessness. Overall our temporary accommodation is supporting and accommodating approximately 400 households every day across the accommodation services.

Single Access Point (SAP)

19. SAP is an appointed person who processes all referrals in York for Supported Accommodation and Floating Support. This system makes referring for support a very quick and simple process. Referrals submitted via SAP are for specialist support for: homeless people, young people, families and people with mental health support needs.

All applicants must have a local connection to York to be considered for support. Those with mental health support needs must be engaging with mental health services. Supported accommodation is offered where a person is homeless and requires accommodation with support in place. Supported accommodation should eventually lead to living independently, this is also called Resettlement

A Bed Ahead

20. A Bed Ahead is a hospital discharge scheme which operates from Changing Lives Union Terrace Hostel and works in partnership with York District Hospital. It is a service for single homeless people ready for discharge from hospital who have nowhere to live. The service received 145 referrals from the hospital for 132 individuals and provided a total of 387 emergency bed nights. 74 of these referrals were from the Emergency Department, 62 from the inpatient wards at York hospital and 9 from other NHS sources such as Mental Health inpatient wards and rehabilitation units. Outcomes for all these referrals were:

48 – York resettlement system (also includes James House)
16 – Accommodation with family or friends
15 – Preventions of homelessness
5 – Private sector accommodation
14 – Social care or long-term hospitalisation
11 – Assisted to return to area of local connection
18 – Brief intervention; advice & onward referral
8 – Refused to engage or self-discharged without advice

9 – Abandoned, excluded or too high risk

1 - Other

Bed & Breakfast

21. Use of B&Bs for homeless people is still a necessity, however we work to minimise this for families and individuals unless it is deemed to be a positive option that offers a bespoke approach needed to achieve a better outcome overall for the person in question.
22. Creating and maintaining a sufficient supply of 'move on' options for people with complex needs continues to be a significant challenge with residents sometimes ending up in our supported accommodation services for too long.

Resettlement education work

23. Resettlement training for customers at CYC Peasholme Centre offers a wide range of subjects, with group work and one to one sessions being utilised to meet the specific needs and learning styles of the people involved.

The general money management, tenancy management workshops continue, but new sessions include in house wellbeing treatments to improve an individual's mental health and coping mechanisms including monthly massage and aromatherapy sessions. These are extremely popular with all the treatment sessions full. In house art classes are offered on a weekly basis facilitated by an experienced volunteer.

A total of 203 workshops have taken place, with 76 people attending sessions (72 referrals) from Peasholme Centre, Changing Lives and rough sleepers referred by MEAM or Rough Sleeper Housing Navigators.

The future focus will be around improving the personal development workshops i.e., keeping yourself safe, becoming more assertive, getting control of your situation, being positive, staying positive, further wellbeing treatments (e.g. acupuncture). The resettlement trainer will complete the NCFE Level 3 Award in Education and Training at York College September Intake to enable this to take place.

The aim of resettlement is to assist rough sleepers and single homeless into accommodation when they are able to sustain a tenancy and these activities help people move towards that.

Youth Homeless Workers

24. The Youth Homeless Workers provide housing advice for young people in accordance with Homeless Reduction Act 2017. During 2022/23 we worked

very closely with colleagues in children's social care to ensure that our Young Person's Homelessness Protocol was up to date and that we were undertaking joint assessments (child in need) and making young people aware of the statutory obligations we had towards them as corporate parents exemplified in our Care Experienced Young People Housing Protocol. Providing housing options advice and support to young people aged 16-18 years of age, Many of the young people using this service have highly complex needs; offending, substance abuse, self-harm, mental health problems, behavioural problems and require intensive work from the youth homeless workers and accommodation providers, joint assessments are undertaken with children's social care for 16-18 yr olds to ensure all statutory requirements are fully explored and assessed and that the young person is fully informed.

Resettlement and education work Young People

25. The YEW project is the educational project for young people and is based at Howe Hill for Young People. The project delivers a resettlement programme and includes a rolling programme to develop budgeting, tenancy and cooking skills; employability; health-based sessions covering smoking, alcohol, healthy eating and lifestyles, drug use and the law, offending behaviour and knife crime; self-esteem, confidence building, aspirations and target setting; discussion-based sessions and current affairs.

From the beginning of April 2022 until the end of December 2022 all YEW sessions were delivered on a 1:1 or 1:2 basis. This meant each YEW worker delivered between 10 and 20 resettlement sessions per week covering the core programme and sessions tailored to individual needs.

In January 2023 group sessions restarted and were delivered alongside 1:1 programme for the young people for whom group work is not appropriate. The YEW Project has facilitated 153 group / 1:1 sessions since January 2023 and has worked with 64 young people since April 2022.

Up to 10 young parents can live at Howe Hill for Young People. The parents are offered a separate weekly session which they can bring their children to. They can participate in a variety of different activities which are age appropriate for the children. These sessions allow the parents to spend time together and discuss issues relevant and specific to being parents. They complete their resettlement programme on a 1:1/1:2 basis outside of these sessions. Four parents and 3 children also attended a swimming trip facilitated by the YEW Project. Sessions including a photography project, gardening project, art, and fitness have been delivered in addition to the regular programme.

The YEW project has worked with 3 young people living in Crombie House to get them tenancy ready so they can take on their own tenancies.

The Young People's Sexual Health Team have been offering a monthly drop-in and the Job Centre provide a drop-in service twice a month. This has improved links, partnership working and support for the Young People at Howe Hill. The Energy Doctor delivered a session on utility bills, saving money and preventing damp in a property.

10 young people were supported to attend 3 Job Fairs at The Railway Institute and Acomb Parish Church Hall organised by the Job Centre. 7 young people were taken on very successful and enjoyable trips to Hallowsceam and another 6 young people were taken 10 pin bowling.

Whilst the staff at Howe Hill provide good services which are well liked by young people, the ambition is to open up more appropriate options. See Annexe E for an outline of the potential development of services for young people currently being worked on across directorates.

It is also recognised that capital investment is needed in the Howe Hill building to improve it or another more appropriate site found or developed going forward. Officers will consider available options around this going forward as part of the development of services.

Young People's Community Wellbeing and Support Service

26. The Young People's Community Wellbeing and Support Service is an important part of the offer to Young People at risk of homelessness. It offers a unique model of delivery using host families. The first part of the Service provides up to 12-months of support to young people estranged from their family, including care leavers, through a community model of Supported Lodgings (structured support in a host's home to develop the skills and independence to move into independent accommodation). The second element is a Nightstop service (emergency supported accommodation through a host) for up to 14-nights to assess needs in a safe environment and re-engage with the family or find suitable alternative provision.

This financial year, SASH provided Supported Lodgings to 16 Young People. Eight of these young people have moved on, 60%, to a positive outcome of either family reconciliation or into settled accommodation. SASH have also enabled 16 young people (100%) to participate in work, education, or training. In 2022/23, the Nightstop Service arranged 88 emergency bed nights for six young people who as a result were able to access more long-term alternatives to homelessness. Since the start of the contract SASH has helped 30 Young People maintain their City of York Council ("CYC") tenancies with no evictions or loss of tenancies. They have

delivered this through their offer of floating support to overcome any issues in the first year of tenancy.

The current Contract provides a high outcome and high added-value service. SASH's relationship with grant funders enables them to deliver their SASH Active programme which delivers a range of activities and voluntary opportunities to tackle the more complex causes of homelessness within the Young People's lives. It also enables additional individual support to their Young People such as private counselling, travel costs to apprenticeships and laptops to support further education.

Overlap with health, social and care services

27. There is tremendously high expectation from other services (*many of which are facing high demand and financial pressures*) to house people including discharge from hospital and prison, sometimes without any planning or little notice. Many people presenting as homeless have needs that are so complex that they require more support / care than housing can provide in general needs accommodation. There is a lack of specialist and supported options in York with many adults and children in expensive and inappropriate out of area placements. We continue to work with a range of services to share resources and knowledge to ensure as many homeless presentations are as planned as they can possibly be. We also work as flexibly as possible to offer bespoke multi-agency packages of housing support/care so it is possible for general needs housing to meet some of these pressing needs. This does create a very challenging environment for staff working across Housing Services with expectations often far exceeding our ability to provide what people want or need yet in many cases housing end up being left as provider of support and sometimes care until a more suitable option is found.

Mental Health Housing and Support Pathway.

28. There is a widely accepted shortage of the right type of accommodation and support to meet the needs of people in York with mental ill-health. The deficit of specialist housing and support options for people with *multiple and complex needs*, particularly around mental health and substance misuse, was identified as a priority in an in-depth piece of co-production on the entire housing pathway. The resultant programme of work focuses on enabling people with complex mental health needs, including those with associated substance misuse issues and behavioural difficulties, to access the right type of housing, with the right level of support, at the right time to meet their needs. This paper provides an update and change in delivery methodology for this programme of work.

On 22nd August 2020 the Executive approved plans to deliver 53 specialist mental health housing and support places through the development of:

21 Housing First places which are in place as described elsewhere in this report.

Two new specialist mental health supported housing schemes (32 places) on two Council owned sites; Woolnough House and Crombie House. The purpose-built housing was to be delivered by an external housing development organisation that would be identified through procurement.

Agreement was made for CYC and TEWV to share ongoing service costs. The majority of future CYC funding was to be sourced from the closure of 22 The Avenue and expected savings from costly out-of-area placements. TEWV and the then CCG contributed £926k towards the initiation of the project of which the current balance is £742k.

The project has delivered against some of its original ambitions but engagement with the housing development market has resulted in changes to the previous delivery plan.

The Mental Health Housing First service has developed to timeline will very soon be supporting 21 people.

The 2021 procurement exercise which sought to secure both housing and support elements of the specialist mental health supported housing schemes failed due to lack of interest from the housing developing market.

Proposals are currently being developed to provide alternative routes for providing the specialist mental health housing schemes with a view to the first accommodation coming on line in January and the service being developed from that point on.

Resources from our developing Mental Health accommodation pathway have come on line so that we can support more people who previously avoided engaging with services or were too chaotic to accommodate in shared supported housing. We are creating multi agency packages of support and care by increasing the number of housing first offers with wrap-around support to help move this cohort on to more settled accommodation. It is important to note that housing first is only appropriate for a small cohort of complex individuals and is very resource intensive especially if a person goes into a crisis.

Housing First

29. Housing First (HF) began in York in 2015 and since then has become a well-established customer led housing process which is beneficial for a small

cohort of people who might be described as being high cost, high risk individuals, being some of the most vulnerable people with complex needs. People accepting the HF offer can do so in a variety of ways including straight from the street. Over the last 8 years 56 housing firsts have been completed. All offers of HF have a multi-agency support package attached based around the principles of HF which is an internationally recognised model of reducing repeat and entrenched rough sleeping. The accommodation utilised for this so far has predominantly been City of York housing although we have facilitated one HF arrangement with an housing partner. We intend to encourage housing partners to do more in the future. Support from Scrutiny to achieve this would be welcomed

Housing firsts accommodated.

19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24 so far
4	5	2.	15	6 so far

There are currently another 10 HFs agreed and pending the right accommodation.

- The total number of housing firsts done since 2015 is 56
- Of which 37 are still active
- 9 have been closed (some moved onto other accommodation themselves, did not need intensive support any longer but are still in accommodation, and 2 have sadly died)
- 10 were unsuccessful.

This equates to just over an 80 percent success rate which compares favourably with the most successful housing first programmes globally.

Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP)

30. City of York Council obtained additional resources to expand our resettlement offer through capital and revenue grant funding (Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme – RSAP) and purchased six 1 bed flats for rough sleepers (these are specific for this purpose for the next 30 years and will then become part of the general stock). These are former council homes which have been offered up on Right to Buy first refusal and checked off with the Housing Management team. We are focused on properties without front doors opening on to internal communal areas, and we successfully completed the purchase of these properties by April 2022. We also recruited to the RSAP support worker post and all 6 of these properties have been let. These properties are medium term lets for to 3 years and have been a key part of the bespoke packages being offered to complex rough sleepers and are in addition to HF.

Ex-offenders

31. York was part of a successful joint bid for funding for a 12 month pilot to help ex-offenders access private rented accommodation along with Scarborough, Harrogate, Ryedale and Selby. We successfully recruited to this post and partnered up with Selby to provide support across the two LAs to get offenders into private rented accommodation. 7 ex offenders have moved into private rented accommodation via this scheme 6 of whom were York residents, this role has really improved relations with probation and the CFO probation activity hub, improving knowledge and understanding of options available across housing.

The Specialist Older Peoples Housing Advice service

32. This role was created specifically to work with older people with complex housing and care needs and has played a central role in the promotion and allocation of CYC's Independent Living Communities. The specialist advisor works closely with colleagues in health, housing, and social care to find housing focussed solutions, the aim is to ensure that older people can access advice and information, make informed decisions and to live their lives, how and where they wish.

Access to good quality, safe housing is vital at any stage of life, but as we get older it becomes even more important. As people age they are more likely to have a range of health and mobility challenges and being housed in the wrong place can increase the risk of falls, ill health, and hospital admission. The role has more recently changed again as the demand to try and prevent hospital admissions and reduce unnecessary stays in hospital has become much more pressing as these problems impact on the capacity of health services. This role has become much more integral in mitigating these issues, and the specialist advisor attends hospital discharge meetings and proactively works with the discharge units across the city.

The role has provided:

Level two advice contact 115. Level two telephone advice and signposting to other services e.g., Local Area Coordinator, Adult Social Services, Housing Associations

Level three advice 118. Most of these cases have been discharged to assess customers / hospital discharges. Level three is contact home visits and regular meetings with Social Workers/ family / care teams / safeguarding.

The Specialist Advisor also attends outreach community cafes with Dementia forward and is currently working on assisting with organisation of

the cafés within our Extra Care schemes, which then brings customers to us and makes them aware of the services.

The Refugee Resettlement Team (RRT)

33. The RRT team have been providing support for refugees rehoused in York through the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. To date, York have resettled 37 families accommodating 148 individuals from UKRS, ACRS and ARAP. We have also received 390 individuals via the Homes for Ukraine Scheme (HFU) in York who have been housed by 196 Host households. To date, 252 Ukrainians have moved on from HFU; 145 of these have moved into private rented accommodation in York and 17 have found private rented accommodation outside of York. 82 Ukrainians have left York to return to the Ukraine or another country.

There are still 68 Host households accommodating 138 individuals that require support to move on to live independently. To further assist in reducing the housing pressures, York have employed a YorHome Refugee Development Worker to carry out a marketing campaign to attract potential Landlords with incentives to encourage provision of their private rented accommodation to the refugees in York.

To ensure a holistic service to meet the needs of individuals and families in York and to maximise income to ensure sustainable tenancies, the team work alongside the CYC internal services such as Education/ESOL, York Learning, Housing Benefit, Council Tax and Work With York (interpreters). They also work in partnership with Migration Yorkshire, Refugee Council, Migrant Help, Department of Works and Pensions and the NHS. The RRT signpost families for further support by voluntary and church provisions such as York City Church, Refugee Action York, City of Sanctuary as well as much goodwill from the residents of York.

The planning, preparation, support and guidance delivered by the Refugee Resettlement Team helps to reduce the need for refugees to access the homelessness route via housing options, and to date only 2 families via UKRS and 4 families via HFU have accessed the Homelessness route in the last 8 years. The team have supported and guided two Community Sponsorship programmes who have sponsored two families to resettle in York.

In addition to these schemes there is also a large cohort of asylum seekers new to the city and awaiting decisions on their immigration status. A positive

decision means that these new citizens have recourse to public funds and can apply for housing and present as homeless. This places additional demand on Housing Services and public services in general. The RTT team work closely with our colleagues in Customers and Community Services as well as external partners to ensure that our new citizens are supported, welcomed and receive the services that they need.

Local Authority Housing Fund bid

34. The council has been successful in its application for the Local Authority Housing Fund, with approximately £1.2m awarded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to purchase 10 rented homes into the Housing Revenue Account.

This would provide 7 homes for Afghan resettlement households and a further 3 homes to contribute towards meeting wider Temporary Accommodation needs pressures in the City, all rented at Local Housing Allowance level Affordable Rent

This is anticipated to facilitate resettlement of the 46 resettled Afghan individuals, alongside other housing options utilised, and has the support of the Assistant Director for Customers, Communities and Inclusion

The funding terms are more beneficial than alternatives for this tenure, with an estimated 47% of costs covered through the schemes, which includes an additional £20k per property for works and transaction costs

Despite this, the proposal presents a significant financial impact due to a combination of other HRA commitments utilising available surplus, and substantial increases in interest rates affecting borrowing over the past 12 months. It will require £1.47m in match funding which will need to be borrowed

As the properties need to be purchased during 2023/24 as a funding requirement, a decision would need to be taken in time to deliver against that end point and it will be considered by the Executive and Full Council in November 2023.

Yorhome Lettings Agency

35. YorHome is a Private Ethical Letting Agency run under the umbrella of CYC. YorHome mission is to provide socially responsible lettings to tenants who otherwise would be disadvantaged or potentially discriminated against when looking to let privately. YorHome currently manage 90 properties including 14 properties let to Syrian Refugee families through the UKRS (previously

VPRS), 7 properties let to Afghan refugee families through the ARAP & ACRS and 7 Ukrainian families through the homes for Ukraine scheme. In addition, YorHome manages properties for Thirteen Housing Group - 18 are affordable/intermediate rent and 20 are social housing (management agreement).

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
YorHome properties	42	40	43	41	40	40	40	52
Thirteen Group properties managed by YorHome	0	45	38	38	38	38	38	38

YorHome strives to continuously find new landlords and properties. This is challenging because of the high market rents in York and the stigma surrounding homeless customers without guaranteed ongoing support. We work hard with our current landlords to maintain a strong relationship with their tenants and are proud that 50% of our tenants have been in their property for 5 years or more. YorHome are currently working with the marketing and comms team to generate awareness of incentives to encourage uptake from landlords to provide private rented accommodation to refugees. With an overall aim to provide realistic, timely alternatives for both refugees and homeless customers other than to access social housing.

LGBTQ+

36. Approximately 4 % of customers accessing the service state they are from the LGBTQ+ community. We continue to roll out training across the Housing Options and Support Team and have included this training into the mandatory training for new staff and refresher training. Our individualised support packages are customer led and enable the teams to support people around LGBTQ+ issues to ensure they are not marginalised. The service is about to embark on a round of refresher training for all staff.

Contracts coming to an end

Adult Community Wellbeing and Support Service

37. This contract is delivered by Changing Lives and covers Union Terrace, Robinson Court, Shared Housing provision, MEAM and MHHF.

In 2022/23, the Service supported 218 people of which 137 had a planned positive move on out of the Service. Their performance in 2022/3 has been variable and dependent on each area of service.

As the individuals in the homelessness pathway become more complex, with higher incidences of drug and alcohol and more significant mental health needs, the specialist services (“MEAM/MHMF”) are the most able to meet need and are therefore oversubscribed whereas the Floating/Shared Housing Services have experienced a lack of referrals. This is potentially because their offer is increasingly unable to meet the level of mental health complexity required by these individuals.

In addition, the complexity of need and resulting challenging behaviours are being found to be progressively more difficult to manage within a hostel setting resulting in lower levels of planned positive move-ons.

The Union Terrace Centre (owned by the Council and currently leased to The Cyrenians Ltd until 31st January 2024.):

- Capacity for 34 men (and couples)
- Supported 32 men to move on to planned positive outcomes in 22/23
- 22/23 Average capacity at 97%

Robinson Court (owned by the Council and currently leased to The Cyrenians Ltd until 31st January 2024):

- Capacity for 14 women and 4 young people
- Numbers on 31/3/23
- Supported 6 women to move on to planned positive outcomes in 22/23
- 22/23 Average capacity at 94%

The Shared Housing and Floating Support Service closed several houses during the 6-years of the Contract due to lack of referrals and community complaints about the multiple and complex needs of the people in those properties. This Service was designed to provide tenancy support as opposed to support to people with multiple and complex needs:

- Capacity for caseload of 163 individuals
- Current caseload of 74 (31/3/23)
- Current capacity at 45% (31/3/23)
- 22/23 supported 84 individuals to have a positive move-on

Community Wellbeing and Support Contract for Adults with Changing Lives expires on 31st July 2024 and has a value of £1,098,375 per annum.

Young People's Community Wellbeing and Support Service

38. This contract provides the SASH and Nightstop Service but should be viewed as part of the overall pathway for Young People and children who become homeless or need to move on from their current setting.

This financial year, SASH provided Supported Lodgings to 16 Young People. Eight of these young people have moved on, 60% to a positive outcome of either family reconciliation or into settled accommodation. SASH have also enabled 16 young people (100%) to participate in work, education, or training. In 2022/23, the Nightstop Service arranged 88 emergency bed nights for six young people who as a result were able to access more long-term alternatives to homelessness. Since the start of the contract SASH has helped 30 Young People maintain their City of York Council ("CYC") tenancies with no evictions or loss of tenancies. They have delivered this through their offer of floating support to overcome any issues in the first year of tenancy.

The current Contract provides a high outcome and high added-value service. SASH's relationship with grant funders enables them to deliver their SASH Active programme which delivers a range of activities and voluntary opportunities to tackle the more complex causes of homelessness within the Young People's lives. It also enables additional individual support to their Young People such as private counselling, travel costs to apprenticeships and laptops to support further education

The Contract commenced on 1st February 2017 and will expire on 31st March 2024 (the Term having previously been extended beyond 31st January 2022 for 2 years). The current annual cost is £89,825 and a 6-month extension would be at a cost of £44,913. CMT have been asked permission to extend the contract until the 31st of September.

The benefit of extending the current contract is that it allows us to make best use of council resources to deliver any strategic aims generated by the review of the wider Youth Homelessness Pathway. In current financial climate we must meet greater needs within a more restrictive financial envelope. Part of this requires us to use existing contracts to evolve in response to new commitments. We know the model SASH offers is an important part of our city's offer but it is important that it is seamlessly joined up with the wider pathway currently under review. Six months would enable us to learn from the review and make any necessary changes to the model before entering a new contractual relationship.

The risk of not extending the Contract would be that the Service would be designed and commissioned before the new approach to has been agreed. This would limit the contract as a mechanism for new deliverables.

Risks associated with contract extensions are often related to poor delivery. However, SASH are delivering well against the current Contract and are probably amendable to a contract extension.

The Contract was initially commissioned in 2017 at £109,790 (exc. VAT) per annum, but due to savings targets over the course of the contract was reduced by £19,965 per annum or 18% to £89,825 (exc. VAT) per annum from c. 2019. The incumbent provider, SASH, contributes significantly through its fundraising activities to the delivery of 'added value' activities such as private counselling, travel costs to apprenticeships and laptops to support further education which directly contribute to their outcome delivery

Co-production and cross directorate commitment

39. In 2022/3 an in-depth piece of co-production was undertaken to review the resettlement pathway and related services and support. Key stakeholders across York attended and contributed to 4 key recommendations which will inform the delivery and design of the future Service. A summary of the findings can be found at Annexe F. These finding will help inform future service delivery and the refresh of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (see paragraph 40).

In addition, partly spurred on by legislative changes around accommodation for looked after children and a local review of the options available to homeless young people, work has been ongoing across directorates and the all age commissioning team to develop an enhanced pathway for young people.

Martin Kelly Director of Children Services, Jamaila Hussain, Director of Adult Social Care, Neil Ferris, Director of Place and Peter Roderick, Director of Public Health as well as the Leader of the Council, Claire Douglas and the Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities, Michael Pavlovic, have agreed to directly develop an holistic approach to homelessness and rough sleeping. This will build on what works well currently in York to develop services that:

- takes a strength based, trauma informed approach
- provide a range of options for people to get them to appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible with the right levels of support.
- recognises that hostels and shared accommodation can often institutionalise.

- places an emphasis on an ever developing housing first approach
- seek to prevent homelessness through intelligence, advice, support and whole system collaboration, tackling the causes.
- develops current partnerships to recognise, support and directly contribute to homelessness prevention and pathways.

It is the agreed approach that services are wide ranging, complex and delivering considerable success. There is clarity on the outcomes we are striving to achieve, and we have a good view on key building blocks. The task over the next six months is to draw this all together into a coherent one Council approach with a clear set of system performance parameters that we can measure as we move towards the ambition. This will enable us to better prevent homelessness, break homelessness cycles, and ensure a bespoke service that enables people to move at suitable pace for them to be able to sustain permanent housing arrangements that meet their needs.

Service Delivery Models

The benefits of commissioning services from the market are that it often enables greater efficiency, responsiveness, and innovation. The benefit of procurement is that it enables us to stimulate and shape the local market ensuring that it works to delivery of outcomes set and monitored by the Council. In relation to in-house provision, management and control of the Contract remain with the funders and thus delivery is often more responsive and driven by performance.

There is an untested assumption of the benefits of in-house delivery in relation to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness as per the Local Government Act 1999. Factors such as the current shared delivery of the Homelessness Pathways with the Resettlement Services indicate there would be some level of increased effectiveness through reducing systemic duplication and a closer working across the pathway. In addition, in-house services deliver better outcomes in relation to the key indicator of positive and planned move-on. The disadvantage of this approach would be the financial impact of the higher Council staffing costs. The absence of a financially informed options analysis, particularly given the complexity in relation to TUPE, is a barrier to recommending this as an approach at this stage.

Commissioning from the market often enables greater efficiency, responsiveness, and innovation. The benefit of procurement is that it enables us to stimulate and shape the local market ensuring that it works to delivery of outcomes set and monitored by the Council and will evidence

that the Council receives Value for Money by advertising this tender and evaluating suitable bidders on Quality/Price weightings and criteria.

In relation to in-house provision, management and control of the Contract remains with the funders and thus delivery is often more responsive and driven by performance.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

40. The current homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2018 – 2023 is due to be refreshed in 2024. A copy of the current strategy is available as Annexe G.

The government recently launched the refreshed strategy on Rough Sleeping 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good'. The refreshed Homelessness strategy will need to reference this. A copy is attached at Annexe H. Building on the commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027 the emphasis will be on prevention and tailored support with three core components:

- a) Improving housing affordability and accessibility by maximising affordable housing supply and delivering reform for a fairer private rented sector.
- b) By helping local authorities and partners to better prevent rough sleeping fully embedding the Homelessness Reduction Act approach, a new assessment framework for rough sleepers backed up by Rough Sleeping initiative funding.
- c) Providing targeted action for people we know are most at risk of rough sleeping using whole system information

The contract extensions will allow time to develop a whole system approach and the findings of the previous review of the resettlement pathways will inform the development and future service delivery in York. The strategy will reflect the long term commitments, principles and ambitions around homelessness pathways as detailed in paragraph 39

Recommendation:

Scrutiny is asked to note this information and asked to make comment and recommendations on the issues raised.

Contact Details

Authors:

Denis Southall
Head of Housing
Management Services

Chief officer responsible for this report

Neil Ferris – Corporate Director of Place Housing
Economy and Regeneration

Tim Carroll
Service Manager Housing
Options and Support Team

Report Approved **Date** 03/11/2023

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexe

Annexe A – Performance, legislation, information and statistics

Annexe B – Housing Options flowchart

Annexe C – Resettlement flowchart

Annexe D – Winter night provision 2023

Annexe E – Homeless Services for Young People – draft pathway development proposals

Annexe F – Resettlement pathway review recommendations

Annexe G – Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Together – strategy

Annexe H – Ending Rough Sleeping for Good – Government strategy