

## **Mental Health Housing and Support – Project Update**

### Introduction

1. The Mental Health Housing and Support project has been one of the Mental Health Partnership's priority areas of focus since the Partnership formed in 2018.
2. In August 2020 the Council Executive agreed proposals that will see the Council and Vale of York CCG jointly commission much needed new specialist mental health housing and support provision in the city – 55 places as follows:
  - 22 places across 2 two specialist mental health supported housing schemes (11 places at each site)
  - 12 places in satellite flats (6 apiece within a 1-2 mile radius of each supported housing scheme)
  - 21 Mental Health Housing First places.
3. As lead commissioner, the Council undertook a market engagement exercise between Dec 2020 – March 2021, seeking feedback from both Housing Providers and Support Providers in developing its approach to the procurement exercise.
4. A S.75 joint commissioning agreement was signed and sealed by CYC and Vale of York CCG in July 2021 and a two-stage tender process was launched in July 2021.

### Abandoned procurement exercise

5. Unfortunately, the procurement exercise to find a Housing Provider and Support Provider partnership to develop and deliver Specialist Mental Health Housing and Support provision was unsuccessful. The deadline for final tenders had been 15<sup>th</sup> December, but we closed the procurement exercise down on 8<sup>th</sup> December.
6. We have collected feedback, both through meetings and written responses, from providers who (a) participated in the tendering process but who dropped out before the final tenders could be submitted in the second stage of the process, and (b) providers who participated in the market engagement exercise, but did not ultimately follow up their interest with a bid.

7. The Project Board has reflected on providers' feedback and is considering its options for how to take the project forward. CYC's Housing Delivery Board considered an options paper in Feb 2022 and a small sub-group is exploring whether it would be financially viable for CYC to develop the two supported housing schemes rather than an external Registered Housing Provider. It is not yet clear whether this is a feasible option worth exploring further with Elected Members.
8. We are hoping we can crystallise a new plan and timeline for taking the project forward in the coming weeks. The relationship between the Council and its NHS partners remains very strong, and the pressing need for this specialist mental health housing and support provision in York undoubtedly remains. At present, our revised estimated timeline for the two specialist mental health supported housing schemes becoming operational is late 2024.

### Other project developments

9. In the meantime, in the past year further decoration and maintenance work at 22 The Avenue has been commissioned using the project budget to help keep the property in good order for residents and staff until such time as the new specialist mental health supported housing schemes have been developed and become operational.
10. The first Mental Health Housing First Worker started in post (with Changing Lives) in Feb 2021 and had a full caseload of cases (7) by the end of the year. Changing Lives are now out to recruitment for a second Mental Health Housing First Worker. There is funding in the project ultimately for three such workers.
11. A Mental Health Housing First steering group – with representatives from CYC Commissioning, CYC Housing, TEWV and Changing Lives – meets bi-monthly and continues to build on the learning from the first 12 months of the programme, developing clearer MH Housing First referral criteria; a clearer role and training profile for the MH Housing First Worker role; a clear check-list of joint working protocols; and a plan for evaluating the MH Housing First approach, with support from Nicholas Pleace at University of York.

12. The Mental Health Housing and Support project also remains intrinsically linked with the ongoing work of the Multiple Complex Needs Network, the current review of the resettlement pathway and related services and support, and the 'Connecting Our City' programme of work including Community Mental Health Transformation.

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