

Housing Committee – 5 July 2016**Transcript of Item 4 – Supported Housing in London**

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): We now come on to our main item for this Committee, which is this Committee's consideration of supported housing in London.

Can I welcome our guests today? We have here Jamie Ratcliff, who is the Assistant Director of Programme, Policy and Services at the Greater London Authority (GLA); Lee Buss, who is Director of Operations at Evolve Housing + Support; Chris Hampson, who is the Chief Executive of Look Ahead Care and Support; and Jon Lillistone, who is the Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. Did I get that all right?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): Just to add that I cover Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster as well as part of the --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): As part of the tri-borough?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): -- shared services, yes.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Yes, thank you very much. Can I start the first question, if I may, perhaps, first of all to Jon Lillistone? Mr Lillistone, how well are the needs of vulnerable Londoners provided for by our supported housing stock?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): There is an important point to make. Supported housing plays a key role for all authorities in that provision for vulnerable Londoners, whether they be people who have experienced homelessness or who have come into contact with local authorities through a range of other support needs - for example, mental health, learning disabilities, substance use - and so they play a key role in that overall system. From my perspective working in a shared service around adult social care, they are absolutely critical to that wider health and care system and it is not just about homelessness. It is very much about a continuum of services that can meet a range of often very complex needs in the most supportive and independence-promoting way possible.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Perhaps I can ask the same question of Jamie Ratcliff with regard to our supported housing stock. How well are we coping with the demand for supported housing?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I would echo many of the points from Jon in terms of how valuable it is and the benefits across providing support to vulnerable people and the support that it provides to people in the criminal justice system, health system and social care system.

There is some evidence to say that on some benchmarks we are not providing enough supported housing. For example, in terms of domestic violence refuges, we are below the benchmark that is suggested in terms of population. There are also suggestions because of London's status as a significant city in the United Kingdom (UK) that we should actually be providing above that benchmark.

In terms of looking at overall need, it is quite difficult to work out the amount that we need and what we should be aiming for, but I certainly have fairly significant concerns going forward that some of the welfare reform elements are going to make it more difficult to provide new and improved homes and supported housing systems and are also a threat to existing services, which are less likely to continue in their current state. We have clearly seen a general trend of decommissioning of supported housing services as the Supporting People ring-fence has been removed. Getting revenue funding secured is more difficult. If now actually collecting the rent is even more difficult because of welfare reform – and particularly the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cap – then that is a threat to services going forward. I would not like to confidently say what the exact level is but I am not sure that we are at the level we should be. It is likely that under the current circumstances the trend would be negative rather than positive.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): We will move on in a later question to specifically the effect of the reforms on housing. You alluded to not being quite sure how many. Do we know how many supported housing units we have in London, Mr Lillistone?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): Certainly across the three boroughs I work in, we know our supply very well. I would echo Jamie's point. Part of what has been fairly sustained pressure on local government funding has led to a reduction in the provision of supported housing and so there is undoubtedly pressure on maintaining the right level of supply to meet need.

In terms of our understanding across my three boroughs, we know what we have but we are seeing pressures: the schemes being full. Some challenges around the ability to support people to move on into general stock can add pressure. If you do not have vacancies, new demand is very difficult to satisfy in terms of finding the right solutions for people. I would add that that adds to the pressure within the broader health and social care system that I mentioned. Often, there are people who may enter the system through the healthcare route, through primary care or through social care who would ultimately be best supported in a supported housing environment. If there is a lack of supply or indeed lack of vacancies, it leads to pressure elsewhere in the system. There are a number of quite significant issues in the mix, I would say.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): You said you are aware [of the number of supported housing] in the three boroughs that you are here to represent?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): Yes.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Jamie, what is the picture across London? Do we know the number of supported housing units that there are across London?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): No, we do not know with confidence and I do not think that the Government knows with confidence how many [units] there are nationally, either. We will come back to it during the welfare reform questions, but the key focus of the Ipsos MORI report that is currently being commissioned for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is trying to work out exactly how many supported housing units there are across the country. There is a problem with that data.

What we do know is the number of supported housing units owned by registered providers of social housing. In the 2010-2015 statistical return, there were 28,004 units owned by registered providers. On top of that, there will be local authority-owned provision and probably some private provision as well and it is just taking our estimates for that. Our estimates suggest that local authorities own less supported housing as a proportion

of their stock than housing associations and what they do own will be weighted towards older people rather than other specialist services.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): If I can just comment, surely, particularly from local authorities, it would be relatively easy for you to get the information. Surely the local authorities themselves will have that information and so it would be possible to pull that together.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): You would think it would just be talking to 29 stock-owning local authorities.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. Would there be value in doing that, just so that we could get a picture of what the situation is in terms of provision?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): Yes, I am sure that there would be value. I guess the second question is how much there should be, which is a much harder question. In isolation knowing how much there is would be interesting but it does not answer the bigger question.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): It might assist in terms of measuring a trend. We have an impression that there is less, but unless we can put a number on it from a benchmark, it is a bit ...

Sian Berry AM: Something Jon said very quickly a minute ago was that there has been a reduction in provision due to local government cuts and reductions in budgets. Do you know how much that is and what the mechanisms are for that? Is it being sold off?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): It has happened in a variety of different ways. There have been some schemes that have been actively decommissioned by local authorities. Equally, some schemes have been decommissioned and it has been the providers that have initiated that because of funding challenges. It is in different ways. How buildings get reused, again, can be in a variety of different ways. Sometimes they are decommissioned for good, strategic reasons because they offer an opportunity to redevelop the site and to create provision that is more consistent and aligned with future needs, but not always. Colleagues may want to chip in, but there has undoubtedly been some loss of stock to the sector.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): Can I just come in? Look Ahead operates across three-quarters of the London boroughs and we have quite a lot of stock in those boroughs. There have been a lot of changes over the last few years, particularly since 2008/09, and it is a different picture in different boroughs.

What has been happening is that with the pressure on the budgets, a lot of the funding that formerly went into [The] supporting people [Programme] for low-level supported housing has been withdrawn. As it has been withdrawn, providers have been reacting to that and suddenly we have had schemes decommissioned and empty buildings. What do you do with those empty buildings? You might try Look Ahead's approach, for example, which is to start to talk to social care commissioners to see if we could do anything else with those buildings to meet what the new demands are. What they are doing is decommissioning and cutting non-statutory services such as homelessness services, young people not through the care system, low-level learning disabilities and low-level mental health, and they are having to focus their future funding on the higher statutory needs. What is happening is that those buildings are either being sold or being refurbished and

redeveloped to be used for the higher-end client groups or, if it is a mainstream housing association that also does support and care, what it may do is to sell it and put into their mainstream development pipeline.

On the buildings, I do not know the numbers. Perhaps the GLA can look at that?. However, anecdotally and looking across London, a lot of supported housing has been lost in the last four or five years or is being reused temporarily for other things. That is the general trend.

Sian Berry AM: That is the basic mechanism and the reasons for that are sometimes, you seem to say, benefit reductions and increased difficulty in getting benefits?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): Basically, everything that is supported housing is funded through a contract that has been funded. This is not actually about welfare reform and rents, which we will probably talk about soon. This is about [the] Supporting People [Programme], which was a fund that every local borough had to fund low-level, preventative supported housing services. It is what has funded homelessness. That has been chopped year on year. I do not know if the GLA tracks that, but it has been cut. As it has been cut, sometimes it has been cut to a point where they [local boroughs] cannot run the support services and then providers have had to decide what they do with those buildings.

We are at a point now where it is going to be very interesting. There are still quite a lot of buildings out there for supported housing, but many of them are owned by big associations like London and Quadrant, the Peabody Trust and Metropolitan. Rightly so, they are going to look at those and they are going to say, "What is the future? Is support going to be delivered in these? If not, we are going to have to sell these buildings that probably have been used for supported housing for the last 20 or 30 years and we will put them into our mainstream development programmes". That is what could happen, but we have not quite hit that and things are not quite that serious.

If you tracked homelessness and if you looked at some of the boroughs, there are only a small number of boroughs now that provide the numbers of homeless bed-spaces in hostels that they did six years ago. There has been quite a significant reduction in those numbers. For young people, it has been savaged as well. Foyers and things like that for the 18-to-25s have gone, mostly.

Sian Berry AM: Thank you.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Thank you. I was going to ask if perhaps we can complete that list because Jamie [Ratcliff] alluded to the fact that we are probably short on support for victims of domestic violence and you were talking about support for 18-to-25-year-olds. Are there any other gaps in provision that we should be highlighting?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Certainly, in our experience services for the more complex rough-sleepers are very problematic, not necessarily due to a reduction in units, which there has undoubtedly been over the years, but due to the existing models that we have as a sector in relation to providing support. Sometimes trying to find the right provision for people who have a complex series of needs can be very difficult. Traditionally, it has always been very difficult trying to get statutory uptake for people with dual diagnoses. That certainly has not become any easier in the sector as statutory services face continued cuts. One of the gaps that I see quite frequently is for the more complex rough-sleepers, considering that rough-sleeping is going up. The most recent Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) data indicated that there has been a 7% increase on last year and not a small proportion but 23% of rough-sleepers are people who were there last year and so that is chronic homelessness. That is where I see a gap currently.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority):

The other gap that I would throw in is around homelessness but around non-UK nationals who are not able to claim Housing Benefit. For them, hostels are not providing a route off the streets because they are unable to pay the rent. That is quite a challenging client group and that is where most of the growth in rough-sleeping has come in recent years.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Mr Hampson, could you summarise for me “co-production” and how that is put into effect?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): What we call “co-production” at Look Ahead are Experts by Experience, actually, for a better name. Basically, it is how you use the people - we call them “customers”; you could call them “service users” or “tenants” in some cases - you work with when you provide support and care services. It is how you engage them in the organisation to design and improve services.

We call it the Experts by Experience Programme because it is a shift. In the old days under housing associations doing supported housing they called it “tenant participation” or “consultation”, but you took people’s input and views and then you try to shape the service around that input. This is much deeper than that. You involve customers with mental health or who have been through rough-sleeping programmes in how you design that service and how you run it. For example, at Look Ahead we have them running training programmes around understanding mental health for our 800 staff. They would come in and replace the consultants we have had because, if you have experience of mental health and have come out the other side, you are in a very powerful position to talk to frontline support workers about your experience of mental health and you how deal with that. It is also involving them in auditing schemes and quality audits, involving them in recruiting staff and involving them in peer-mentoring programme across the organisation. It is seeing not passive recipients of services, which is the old traditional way of social care, but rather what they have to give back to you as experts through their own experience.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): I do not want to take too much time with that but it sounds like absolutely fascinating stuff. I wondered, possibly, if you could forward something to us about that and --

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): We can give you a lot of stuff on that, yes.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): -- if there are any other co-production schemes because, initially, it is a difficult thing to understand. Once you understand it, it is fine, but --

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): That is why it is Experts by Experience. “Co-production” is an academic term for what it is.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Thank you very much.

Steve O’Connell AM: Continuing with the conversation that Lee [Buss] and Chris [Hampson] were talking about, it was about the efficient use of the stock. Lee [Buss], you particularly pointed out that many of the clients require quite a bespoke service. Really, I want to talk about how that is emerging and the challenges about the need for a bespoke service. Then I will be asking Jon [Lillistone] to contribute and talk about the referral service coming from the boroughs to your services and how that works, which is all about the matching. You have increasing pressures around the availability of your bespoke services, around the numbers

and around the finance and then you have issues with the importance of getting the right matching, embedding your clients within communities and making sure the matching is right. Jon can come in after that, but if you guys could expand a little bit more on the challenges of the services being bespoke and the actual use of the services?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): First of all, I would say that the situation as described in the briefing document by East Thames is not something that I personally recognise for Evolve Housing + Support. Over the last seven years we have redeveloped most of our services and generally it is a maximum. The configuration is two people sharing a flat. They have their own bathrooms and they just share a kitchen in a number of dispersed self-contained units. In relation to matching and allocating units, generally, our stock has the flexibility to manage that.

We have a larger issue in relation to the model that we have and its suitability for some of the more complex customers. We have a very linear model that is based on the assumption that someone is ready to make a positive change in their life at the same time that they are in housing need. Those two things very rarely coincide. We also have a very time-restricted framework in relation to our contracts and the way we can work with people for up to two years. For some people, they are in housing need at a point at which they are simply not in a place in their lives to have the insight to accept the need for change. This is the group that I see most often for whom there is a gap in provision.

There are various potential models – I am not sure if people are familiar with the Housing First model – that offers potential solutions, but this is as well as, not instead of. What we need is a sector that has the broadest offer for us to be able to engage positively and achieve positive outcomes for the broadest range of people.

Steve O’Connell AM: There will be clients who will need wraparound services with the complex needs that they will have, but you say that much of your client base would be broader. There are people who have a housing need but who also perhaps recognise a need for change in their lives. There is that and that thing meets and so they are in a good place and away, but --

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): That is the vast majority of customers. It is a small minority of people. In Croydon, for example, there are people on the streets who have been in every single hostel in the borough. We have the highest-needs hostel in Croydon and, if people are unable to succeed there, there are no options for them.

Steve O’Connell AM: To “succeed”, in other words, is to be as settled as they can be and to recognise their own issues and to work their way through them?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): To actively engage, yes, in the support that we offer. For me, that is the gap that I see.

Steve O’Connell AM: Chris, what about your sector?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): Yes. We have our four client groups. It is interesting. There is more integration now with social care and supported housing services.

One of the examples I would give is mental health. We are gradually redesigning and refurbishing our buildings and working much more closely with the clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) as well as adult social care within boroughs as part of their pathway for people with mental health problems. For example, we are working very closely with the CCGs because we recognise – and they recognise, clearly – that they have high placement

costs for people who are in hospital and need to step out or they have people who are going into hospital because of a mental health crisis when they do not need to. What we are doing is redeveloping our buildings to use them as crisis services in partnership with the mental health trusts. We have a great one in east London in Tower Hamlets, for example, and we have an integrated service with the home treatment team, which is part of the mental health trust. Basically, they are places where people can go rather than going into hospital for just four or five weeks and they work with support workers and clinicians to stop them going in and out. There are big savings there and you did not see those sorts of integrated services from supported housing providers like Look Ahead working with CCGs and adult social care in the past. There is a lot more to be done to make those happen in London, but they are starting to happen.

Learning disabilities is the other really interesting thing. You will be aware of the Winterbourne View agenda. A lot of people with learning disabilities with families in London are located out on the south coast, usually in hospital places at private hospitals, paying a fortune, paying a lot of money. We are now working with the CCGs and adult social care in the different boroughs in London to bring people back in to live in communities. We will buy a house and will give them a wraparound service, 24-hour care, waking nights and two or three people - even three or four people - working with one or two people. Even that is half the price of what they are paying for people to live in institutions down on the south coast. There is not enough of that going on. If you want to come back to housing and where housing is needed, that is a huge one.

The third area we work in is with care-leavers. That is really interesting. Looked-after children are coming out of the care system. We are trying to offer an alternative to the private sector. Boroughs are paying £2,000 or £3,000 for a private placement for someone coming through the care system. As a housing association that does support and care - and others like us - we can do this for about a third of that price and we can do it in-house in London. We are changing the use of some of our buildings. They are small units, six to ten units, with care-leavers, 24-hours, well-staffed and linked into the community. They are the sorts of integration that we are starting to get slowly. That is between supported housing providers, social care and CCGs.

Steve O'Connell AM: For many of your clients in both of your organisations, there will be crossovers.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): Absolutely, yes.

Steve O'Connell AM: That is patently obvious and I get that completely. I will bring in Jon for a little bit about the matching and the communities. You need to help these good people, but you are going to place them into an existing community --

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): Yes.

Steve O'Connell AM: -- which is good. It would be interesting, Jon, what your train of thought is when you have to do matching, placement and all of that sort of stuff.

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): Yes. It is quite important what Chris just said in terms of referral processes. When you have those more complex clients who are well and truly in the mental health system or being supported by health and social care if they have learning disabilities, the referral process, arguably, is clearer. They are in the system and there are some good examples of more innovative practice and more bespoke schemes being delivered, delivering better outcomes for the individuals and also costing less. Chris made the point - and I will reiterate the point - that that is dependent on capital investment and the ability to redesign existing buildings or, indeed, build new bespoke schemes. Probably not enough of that is going on compared to what is needed.

It gets a little bit more complex for the client group for whom perhaps there is not an explicit statutory need but undoubtedly there is a range of complex issues. The scenario was described of individuals in Croydon - and you see these individuals in many London boroughs - who might have been in and out of hostels repeatedly, who clearly have a set of very challenging and complex needs and perhaps for whom the hospital environment is not the ideal place. The absence of a statutory connection can sometimes be a barrier to securing the investment from both a revenue and a capital point of view to design more bespoke schemes. There is a challenge there.

There is beginning to be a better understanding within the health and social care system that individuals with those sorts of support needs actually exert considerable pressure on secondary care, accident and emergency departments (A&E), primary care and other services. However, we are yet to fully win the argument to move money around the system from a revenue point of view to invest it where it needs to be. We have already heard that there has been considerable downward pressure on legacy Supporting People funding in conjunction with downward pressure on adult social care funding. Often those groups get forgotten. I am not saying that that is right, but that sometimes happen because the other components of capital investment and buildings cannot be aligned to find the right solutions.

Steve O'Connell AM: These can be people with quite bespoke needs. That is the point that you are making, is it not? This is around the referral matching and trying to get them into the right sector. Could that be improved? Do you sense that there is a way of improving the whole referral system?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): Yes. This, I hope, will in time come through greater integration where you look at the people case and also the economic case. If someone attends A&E, there is a cost to that. If they have to spend a night in hospital, it is £500. Could that money be better deployed in a more integrated way in terms of a bespoke support package aligned to the right kind of accommodation solution that might be an individual flat with support wrapped around it, as opposed to a hostel? We will have seen many of those clients over the years - I have - and the hospital environment just does not quite work for them.

Steve O'Connell AM: In my borough and there would be many other boroughs where individuals will be placed, for want of a better word, but they would all just leave and so they would move around the different accommodation areas, which was your point. There is a problem there. There is no fit.

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): There are potential solutions but they do require capital investment. With the current situation and the changes to the LHA, which we are going to come on to talk about, there are potential solutions but we are not in a position to take those solutions forward because of the uncertainty of the future funding streams.

Steve O'Connell AM: I get that.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I just wanted to make a slightly different point on the efficiency of stock use, which is that because of the revenue uncertainty and being unclear whether you are going to be able to provide a service in the long term, you have to design very flexible buildings. They are not necessarily designed to meet the needs of a specific client group because you need to make sure that you can convert communal space easily into flats and make sure that it can be general-needs accommodation. Therefore, you are driven down to suboptimal design to make sure that you are as flexible as possible rather than buildings that could meet a need. Even when you are clear that there is going to be a need there in the long term, you just cannot be certain that that service will continue to be commissioned and so you need exit routes.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): That is a big point as a provider that I would come back to. We always look at what the exit strategy is with our buildings. All the contracts for supported care are for no more than three years at the most or you might get three years on a rolling one-plus-one or whatever, but you keep buildings around for a long time. Therefore, providers are very unlikely to have a bespoke building with massive communal space and lots of therapeutic rooms and all of that sort of thing because it could be decommissioned in three or four years.

Having said that, it is very interesting that it is not actually holding us back. If we are doing a ten-unit scheme for mental health, we take out one of those flats, use that flat for the staff and provide therapeutic rooms in there. We have an eye so that, if that was decommissioned, we could use it for an alternative use in the future. However, if you look at some of the big hostels that we have used for homelessness in London in the last 10 or 15 years and the capital funding that was used for them, some of them are arguably dinosaurs now because there is not a lot of alternative use for those big buildings.

Steve O'Connell AM: This is mainstream general use design?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): Yes, absolutely, but they had massive amounts of communal space and there are other ways that you could do it.

Steve O'Connell AM: Yes.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Where do local authorities feature in this and [what is] their capacity to cope with the demands upon them?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): It is a real challenge. Across the three boroughs, we have been looking at assessing the potential impact of some of the welfare reform and rent changes and it is worrying. For many of these more bespoke schemes that have just been described, there are real questions about their financial viability moving forward if the policy is applied consistently to them. What happens? They could be lost. If they are convertible or can be reused as general lease, that may well happen. That is a loss of capacity in the sector at a time when there is already pressure on homelessness and use of temporary accommodation and so on. There is a real concern from the local authority perspective as to what this might mean.

It will also mean that there is likely to be a lack of appetite to develop new schemes. It is not just about the financial viability of the existing schemes. If the financial model does not work for an existing scheme, it is not going to work for a new scheme.

There is a real concern. Across the three boroughs, our estimate is that potentially the welfare reform on rent and the application of that to supported housing could affect as many as 70% of existing schemes that are commissioned to varying degrees. For some, the financial impact is to such an extent that there is no question that they would be financially unviable. It is a big concern.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): If the capacities in local authorities are tough in the three boroughs, which is the tri-borough, which is there to minimise the cost of bureaucracy and make things more efficient, is it fair to say that other boroughs may be finding it even more of a problem than in those three boroughs?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): Yes. The three boroughs vary in some of their demands. Westminster in particular, of course, experiences quite acute

pressures around homelessness and numbers of people on the street. It is slightly less so in Hammersmith & Fulham, but there are some very real issues around people with more complex needs and the sorts of scenario as described to you in Croydon. It varies, but the sum total is significant pressure and very great concern about the future viability of some scheme.

Sian Berry AM: My questions are, basically, all to Jamie Ratcliff. They are about the Mayor's Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund, which I understand is in its second phase at the moment. Can you give us a very brief overview of that fund and what it does?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority):

Sure. Essentially, it is targeted at delivering affordable schemes initially for older people and adults with disabilities. That was the first phase of the Fund. The second phase of the Fund is looking at whether support could be given to private open-market solutions for the same client groups and seeing if we could support them.

It is capital funding that is provided by the Department of Health and London has a share of that funding. Going forward, the Department of Health also recently announced that it had secured £75 million a year in additional funding to go through until 2021, which is three additional years of funding, and we are interested in getting as much of that for London as possible.

In terms of where we are overall, through the affordable schemes we have 965 homes currently allocated for delivery. On the market side of things, we have had no firm allocations yet. There are a couple of organisations that have been interested, but we have agreement from the Department of Health to switch funding that will not necessarily support market housing into supporting affordable housing for those client groups. That is a brief overview.

Sian Berry AM: Yes. Sorry, just to clarify, there has been no take-up yet of the shared ownership option?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): We have not made any allocations yet to private providers. There are discussions ongoing with at least one.

Sian Berry AM: OK. Can you say why you think there has been less interest in the reconfigured Fund for phase two?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority):

Generally, there is an issue in terms of getting access to land for development. That is, arguably, true across the whole of the housing delivery piece, not just in terms of specialised housing. The funding available due to state aid rules for private housing is fairly inflexible in that it has to be loans at commercial rates and that is not as attractive as grant funding, which is available without having to pay any interest on it and which is what is available for affordable housing. There is a clearer set of providers that are interested in delivering supported housing at affordable levels and used to engaging with the GLA and government bodies like us, whereas for private providers that is a new step. There is an established market provision of older people's housing providers, but they generally do that without Government support.

Sian Berry AM: That makes sense. Going back to phase one, I noticed that there was a range of different target providers that are listed in our briefing here, which are the housing associations, local authorities, the private sector and community groups. Do you have an idea of the split between those different types of providers at all?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I am afraid that I do not have that in my briefing but I can come back to you.

Sian Berry AM: Fair enough. Were there any community groups, just if you can remember off the top of your head?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I do not think so. It was mainly housing associations. There were definitely some local authorities. I am not aware that there are any from the private sector or the community, but let me confirm that.

Sian Berry AM: That would be great. I wanted to ask if you were thinking of making any changes to the fund in the current phase to increase the take-up. You mentioned switching to more affordable [housing]. Is that all that you are doing or are you doing more to market it to the private people?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): We are reviewing how this works and we are interested in a range of different opportunities to do things differently. Some of the welfare reform elements make this less attractive at the moment and so resolving that very clearly is a first priority so that people know on what basis they are bidding and can understand how sustainable a scheme is going to be going forward. Across the board, we are looking at how we can provide greater support to our partners, how we can be more flexible and how we can make sure we deliver more homes. This will be no exception to that.

Sian Berry AM: Thank you. Do you think that there are ways that you might use the Fund and the shortfall of use and take-up to plug some of the gaps that you identified earlier like domestic violence refuges and that sort of thing? Is it the sort of fund that you can do that with?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): As to capital funding, the Care and Support Fund could not, but Homelessness Change and Platform For Life could support that and certainly through our general programmes we could fund domestic violence refuges. Probably a bigger barrier for them is the revenue support going forward and making sure that it is a sustainable service, but we would be open to new applications for funding for domestic violence refuges.

Sian Berry AM: With it being Department of Health funding, are you quite restricted in what you can put it into?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): Yes. The "CASSH" - if I can call it that - fund is very specifically around older people and people with disabilities. Homelessness Change and Platform for Life are more about supporting people in homelessness and young people with low support needs. With the rest of our funding, where we are funding a proportion of supported housing, we are much more flexible and there are fewer rules around it. We have a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Health for those two programmes that sets out very clear what we will use the funding on.

Sian Berry AM: Thank you. I just have a couple of questions of my own on older people. Does Tom want to come in on those issues first?

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. It might make sense for me to come in now before --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Would you mind just --

Sian Berry AM: Yes, no problem.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): On our site visit, one of the providers, I think, had no idea that this fund existed. What work has been done to promote this both to boroughs and to housing associations and other providers?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): It is something that has been on our script of general engagement with boroughs. We will have quarterly meetings with the housing leads at boroughs and also with all of the investment partners that we have. We would have quarterly meetings and be promoting this and different opportunities for them that we would be doing through that. We have also talked about it at our partner briefings, which we generally hold every quarter, and have promoted it there. However, if some people have not heard of it, obviously, we have not done a good enough job and we need to look at --

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Is there anything more than you think you could do? Given that there is an underspend, if providers are not aware of it, then that is a real issue.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): Yes. There must be more that we can do if people are not aware and we need to take that away and think of what else we can do to promote it. Hopefully, your report will help to give some attention to that and show that we are keen to fund it going forward.

It may be more bespoke engagement with people who are provided supported housing and trying to make them aware of the range of opportunities. Across the board with housing programmes, there is a bewildering range of different programmes. I used to have a brilliant think-map of millions of bubbles showing all of the different Government funding streams. It is dependent on us to be clear, "We have money to help you fund it. You do not need to necessarily know which programme you need. You need to come and tell us what the problem is and how we can help you and we can then figure out which programme it goes into down the line". It is a simple message.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Just finally, was it £23 million that was left? Was it an underspend of £23 million? Anyway, is the remaining money all going to go back into similar programmes for providing supported provision or is it going to be allocated elsewhere?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): All of the money provided by the Department of Health is governed by a memorandum and so it has to be used on that.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): It has to be, OK. Thank you.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I will just say that there was £23 million left from phase one but there was also £6 million left from phase two and so in total it is £29.6 million.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Far worse than the housing associations not knowing that the Fund existed, I did not know that the Fund existed.

Sian Berry AM: I am very interested in the fund too. I have some questions about older people and the downsizing side of this. I wondered if the GLA at any point has tried to assess the demand for downsizing amongst older people.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): As part of - I cannot remember which review - one of the relatively recent reviews of the London Plan, a consultancy was employed to look at the needs of older people not just in terms of the affordable housing sector and renting but also in terms of intermediate forms of low-cost homeownership and market housing. They looked precisely at people who were under-occupying, needed to move and were desiring a move, and then came up with table A5.1 in the London Plan, which sets out by borough what we think the need is for older people's housing by tenure.

Sian Berry AM: That might be the mismatch but is it the demand from people actually wanting to get involved in downsizing rather than the --

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): Yes, there is an overall figure of people who are under-occupying, but lots of those are going to be perfectly happy to be continuing and so they then - exactly how I do not know - attempted to work out how many of them are actively interested if the right property was available and assuming the price they could pay and then dividing them into the three pots. I guess you could say that the better the offer is, the more likely people might be to move and so, therefore, the impact of the quality of the offer compared to the demand must be interlinked in some way. They did something that must have been quite robust to come up with the numbers that got through the examination-in-public for the London Plan.

Sian Berry AM: Thank you. One way of dealing with downsizing and people wanting to move into smaller homes and supported housing as they get older is with co-housing, which I am quite a fan of. It sounds to me like the grant scheme that you are talking about might be very suitable for groups of people wanting to create co-housing schemes. I wanted to ask whether that was something that had been discussed, whether any applications had come in and whether you have tried to talk to people about that.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I am not aware of any applications having come in or any organisations that have sought to talk to us about it. I know that there is an interesting scheme that Housing for Women developed in Barnet, which I have been given quite a lot of information on. It seems like a very interesting model.

Generally, the Mayor's manifesto talks about co-housing as one of the things that he is interested in us doing more on and so we are definitely interested in doing that. It is about the most appropriate support and what we can do to create a framework in which people can bring forward proposals. Certainly people have not been beating down our door with ready-made things that are ready to go because we would have funded them already. There may be something in between that we need to do to help people get there.

Sian Berry AM: In general, do you think this Fund could be used for that?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): Yes. For the Department of Health stuff, it would depend on the exact client group and some of that might make it inflexible, but certainly our general affordable housing funding could be used to support co-housing.

Sian Berry AM: That was my question, really. You might have a group of people and some might have some needs. People want to live in friendship groups, generally, or groups in which they have acquaintances. You

might have people who have support needs but some who do not yet have support needs but are getting older. This scheme would not be flexible enough to accommodate them?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): If they are all over 55, it could, yes, and 55 is not that old. There are rules. If it was a genuinely broad and mixed community, it probably would not fit that, but I would hope that there is another way of funding things like that.

Sian Berry AM: Brilliant. As my final question, you said that the main challenge is land. Is there anything that the GLA can do about that?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): More generally, there is a lot of attention paid to public land and it is important that public land is made to work harder. The Mayor has put a lot of focus on that and Transport for London (TfL) is now rapidly bringing forward proposals for what it can do in terms of delivery on its land with a good mix of affordable housing on it as well. We are getting close to an agreement with the Government that will be very clear about the Mayor's role in relation to public land across the whole of central London, which can give us greater strategic oversight of that and also make sure that land is developed out and not just passed into the hands of people who might sit on it for a while.

Another thing that we are very interested in promoting is where we can support acquisition. That might be through more flexible funding or providing funding at an earlier stage to enable people with money to buy land on the open market and also through support with our compulsory purchase powers. We have done that on a couple of large schemes with a housing association and a private developer. That could be something that helps where a provider has a certain sized site that almost works but they just need an extra bit of it and the landowner is not willing to deal with them. If we are prepared to support it with a compulsory purchase order (CPO), it could make the site work. They are general housing things but they should be applicable to supported housing as well or where supported housing is part of the mix on a larger site.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): It is an interesting one. Yes, we are aware of the pot, but we do not engage with, for a number of reasons, the capital funding. I have been in supported housing for quite a while and it is very interesting when you compare how it used to work under the Housing Corporation. If there was going to be a new supported housing development, the provider and the local authority would go together and would have to demonstrate to the Housing Corporation that they had support for it. They would all work in together and then it would happen and would be developed. I do not know but I think a far bigger tranche of the total development capital funding that was available through the Housing Corporation was a far bigger percentage than it is now.

What has happened over the last few years are disconnects because of the contracting for all of the reasons we are told. There is a very small amount of funding going into supported housing to the point where the provider you talked about, Tom [Copley AM], does not know about it. It is such a small pot that they do not engage with it and they do not go to find out about it. It is just not useful anymore.

There are a number of reasons around that. The grant levels are so small and supported housing is so expensive that it is just not worth getting engaged. It does not have the flexibility that we were talking about. There is no point in getting land, developing something and taking two or three years to build something out, only for the commissioner to say just as you are about to build it out that they do not want it anymore because there are cuts. If you are going to have capital funding, if you are going to use it through this pot and if it is going to be useful for the sorts of client groups that we talked about before - mental health, learning

disabilities, care-leavers, older people, whoever – it needs to be flexible and you need to be able to purchase acquisitions off the shelf. Then you would start to see the demand for it.

I do not know how much boroughs are engaging with this agenda. They used to engage quite a lot with the Housing Corporation. I am not sure that they engage with the GLA in the same way.

Just on the issue on planning, one of the things that we realised is that there is a lot of old sheltered housing being decommissioned across London and elsewhere as new models for older people are being developed, better models, actually, than the old sheltered housing. Many of the housing associations that had sheltered housing do not know what to do with it. Support providers like Look Ahead would like to get their hands on it because we could do it for mental health and learning disabilities and put some investment into it. Whether we could use that pot for investing in that to refurbish as well is interesting.

One of the problems that you have, not just with sheltered housing but with anything, is the change of use. To get something through for a mental health scheme or for learning disabilities can be impossible with local communities. They do not want it. They are happy with general needs. Sometimes learning disabilities are much more acceptable than mental health and are certainly more acceptable than homelessness. Young people and care-leavers are not very acceptable. There are some real blockages there around using this redundant over here for a new use through the planning system.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Just to support some of Chris's statements, when we first started our development programme almost eight years ago we were getting on average around 75% grant. For our last development, which was finished a year ago, we had 25%. That shortfall needs to be made up through investing our own reserves and attracting financing from banks.

It does happen. Twice we have developed two 80-bed units for which there was a contract to provide support to 80 customers. Near completion of the building, there was not any more. There was only the funding left to provide support to 50 of the 80, which leaves us in a position of needing to think quite flexibly and on our feet as to how we utilise the other 30. That does happen and it has happened to us twice over the last few years.

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): To underline the planning issue, as a commissioner for probably almost 20 years now, I can remember quite a number of schemes that we just could not get through [the] planning [process]. They would have been perfectly viable schemes and they would have met needs, but it came down to securing the change of use. Even with the best joint working with providers, sadly, we do sometimes face a reaction from the local communities that oppose these developments.

Just on the older people's housing, one thing that the GLA may want to do more actively with local authorities is to engage in the process of joint strategic needs assessments. I know that in one of the three boroughs, Hammersmith & Fulham, there has been a very detailed piece of work around older people's needs. That has led to the design of a scheme that should come alive in about three or four years' time in White City where there will be a mixture of tenures within an extra-care scheme. There will be some for sale alongside affordable rent. The reason for that was based on our assessment of the needs and the fact that there are older people who do wish to downsize. Some may be former leaseholders who have bought through [the] Right to Buy [scheme] and want to remain in their communities. We felt that it was important to have that offer as part of what is a pretty major development in White City. It can be done but it relies on a really good, detailed understanding of local needs and that will vary. Some places are much more granular in their assessment of need than others.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): We have wandered off the point a little, talking about downsizing and all of that, which is a big issue on its own. Can I just wrap up that one question about the Mayor's Specialised Housing Fund? Mr Ratcliff, you said that it was under review with the arrangements for phase two. When can we expect that review to be completed?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I did not say that it was under formal review. I said that, with everything, we are looking at what we can do better and so there is an ongoing process across all of the things that we are doing.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): It is like a Trotskyist permanent revolution. Is that what you are saying?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): That is certainly not what I said.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): All right.

Leonie Cooper AM: Assembly Member Boff, is that your preferred reality?

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): I do not know. I just --

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Join the Labour Party.

Leonie Cooper AM: Yes, I was going to say, looking at them, it is obviously a --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): I defer to people more experienced in that than I am. You are not reviewing it? You are content with the operation of this --

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): We are keen for everything to get better, but we are not pausing things to go through an introspective review. We are actively looking at what we can do better across all of our programmes and we will be interested in seeing the recommendations from your report and seeing what we can take forward from that, as well as feedback from a wider range of stakeholders. We are open for business. If people want to come to us with funding applications now, we are very willing to consider those.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Would you welcome applications that were not quite 100% under the current rules and proposals?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): If they did not fit within our rules with the Department of Health, then we would probably need to fund them through other programmes. For example, through our mainstream programmes at the moment we have just under 1,000 units of supported housing that we are funding and that is actually more than is in the Care and Support Fund.

I would just like to stress that what we call the programmes is one of the things that makes this confusing and is something that we should try to internalise as much as possible. The message to providers is, if you need funding for affordable housing schemes, come and talk to us and we will see where we can fit it in. Do not worry too much about whether it is called "CASSH" or "HCP" or "MHC" or something else because that is confusing.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Thank you very much.

David Kurten AM: In my question, I just want to move on, really, from looking at capital funding to looking at the more everyday funding of supported housing. Mainly, I would like to ask Lee [Buss] and Chris this question as providers of supported housing. Can you take us through the process by which supported housing residents have their care and their rent paid for?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): It sometimes works differently for different client groups. You can talk about a young people one and I will talk about a mental health one.

If we were doing high-end supported housing for a mental health scheme, we would set it up and we would collect the people. The client with mental health needs would live in one of the units. It would be a self-contained unit with staffing onsite. This is one where we have supported housing and 24-hour staffing onsite. It is part of the pathway that I described before. The funding is agreed through adult social care and the CCG, perhaps. The clients would be referred through a panel controlled by adult social care as part of their pathway. They would come to us. They would come in and we would sign them up. They would sign up to a tenancy and we would collect the rent. They would be set a rent and a service charge. We would use that money to run the housing, to pay for all of the housing management and the maintenance costs that go around that. We would also have an additional separate contract with the adult social care department to run the support and care part of that.

For example, with a mental health scheme with ten people, we would have an around-the-clock workforce, a contract worth £400,000 paying for a staff team of eight or ten people and a manager who work around the clock to deliver. They would work with social work teams and would work with other clinicians to run that. It would be completely separate to the housing side, where we are collecting the rent and the service charge to cover the housing costs for that mental health scheme.

David Kurten AM: The care would be paid for by the CCG?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): The support and care would be a separate contract for three years and we would probably have had to compete for that. We may have had to bid for that through a tender against other mental health providers to win that depending on the particular local arrangements. That would come up every three or four years for tender and we would run that housing. They are our tenants while they are in our building - in this example, it is our building - and we would be collecting the rent and the service charge to cover that. Essentially, that is how it operates.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): It is very similar. Rental income makes up about 73% of our overall income. The vast majority of that is for Housing Benefit-eligible tenants but a small proportion is not eligible for Housing Benefit. The customer's own gas, electricity and water, for example, in their own rooms are not eligible for Housing Benefit and so the customer pays that directly. The rents are higher than in general needs because of the associated costs of running supported housing in relation to security systems and fire detection systems. The maintenance costs are much higher. We tend to have a much higher throughput of customers and it is not uncommon for the damage caused to be significant. There are those kinds of issues.

About 24% of our income is made up of Supporting People funding. That funds the direct support work. Again, there is a list of tasks that are Supporting People eligible and are focused purely on support.

Then about 3% of our income comes from various different trusts and grant-giving bodies and those fund additional support services to customers around health and wellbeing, work, learning, education and those types of activities.

David Kurten AM: Is there any way that that could be improved? This is how it is at the moment, but what would be your ideal situation to get more money for you to be able to support people when they are in your supported housing?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): If I am perfectly honest, we do not need more money. I do not want just --

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Could you just pause a moment? You do not want more money? That is fine. It is a rare thing.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Really, the focus at the minute is maintaining what we currently have. Most of my colleagues in the sector look at me a bit strangely when I say that, actually, austerity measures have had positive impacts because organisations have reached a point where they cannot just say, "How can we do the same for less money?" We have reached a point where we have had to say, "What can we do differently with the money that we have to have good outcomes?" Actually, as a sector, we have become far more innovative and creative and we are stronger and better at what we do now than at any time that I can remember in the past. It is not always about more money. It is about changing mind-sets, changing the way that we do things and changing how we view things.

Having said that, we have reached a stage now where, if we were to lose any of the income that we currently have, we would not be able to function. Efficiencies have been made to the maximum, to the point where, personally, I cannot easily identify any additional efficiencies that would not have a detrimental impact on operational delivery.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): The issue on the support and care side is individual to each provider. When you bid to run a mental health service or a young people's service, the commissioners who commission the service will say, "Here is your envelope of £400,000 and you need to do it within that".

We do an assessment. We know how much we pay our staff because, on the support and care side, most - 80% - of our costs are staff costs. We look and we model that service and, if we do not think it is safe, we will not do it. If it is unsafe, staff could get hurt, the public could get hurt, the customers could get hurt or someone could get hurt. We either do it or we do not. What we do not do is cross-subsidise it. We do not go in there and run it as a loss-making service for three years because we are non-profit but we are not-for-loss as well. We would go bust if we did and it would be dangerous to do it.

We start to make these reasonably commercial decisions about whether we do those services. When they cut, cut, cut and cut, we pulled out of two boroughs and will not operate in two London boroughs now. The prices are too low, it is too dangerous, there is not enough funding and we will not operate like that. Every provider is different, but they are the sorts of individual decisions that they are making about whether they run a support and care service for whatever client group it is.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): The revenue funding situation is so unpredictable that cross-subsidising makes really bad business sense because of the fact that you do not know which contracts are going to survive. If you have one contract that is providing a healthy surplus and is cross-

subsidising other contracts and if that contract goes, everything goes and so we cannot afford to cross-subsidise anymore. Everything has to stack up by itself.

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): A big risk is if there is a change around how the rental and service charge model works in supported housing. If that income fundamentally changes - and Lee and Chris have already described proportionally how much that makes up of supported housing - where is that money going to come from? There is not excess money in the revenue funding side of the model. I have already said that there has been downward pressure on the Supporting People budgets, social care budgets and so on.

I would probably tend to agree with Lee that maybe there is enough money in the system but that, as I described earlier, certainly when you look at a more integrated approach, the money is in the wrong part of the system. There is a real challenge about getting the money into the right part of the system. I have illustrated that around the more complex groups of individuals. There is a real challenge there in terms of a much greater degree of integration London-wide and also nationally. We get some individual examples of where budgets have been pooled to good effect and Chris in particular and his organisation have schemes in London that work in that way, but that requires a real will on the part of commissioners locally to say, "This is what we are going to do despite system constraints". That would be my broader point. Actually, getting the money to the right part of the system where it can be deployed most effectively to deliver the outcomes that we are all interested in is probably the key to sustainability in the future.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I was just going to say about whether there is enough money or not that I absolutely defer to Lee and Jon in terms of, if there is enough to run the existing services, then that is great. Looking ahead, if you accept that there is not enough service provision and there needs to be more, then there needs to be more money to provide that. It may be at the current level. Maybe some of that can be done by moving money around and by recognising the impacts on other parts of government, but we are not very good at that. If there is a clear evidence base that we need more, then we need some more money for that.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): In summary, there is enough money for what you are currently doing, yes, but you want to do more and you need to do more. Is that right?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Yes, I was about to qualify my earlier statement. We would love more money to do more things. We do not want more money to do just the same stuff. Yes, we need to do more.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): The one big point that I would make is that there has been a big shift over the last six years and you can understand why providers like Look Ahead have to continue to operate and how they react to the [changes in funding]. What is happening is that a lot of the non-statutory, low-level preventative services around young people outside the care system, 18-to-25s and homelessness have definitely been decimated. That has been decimated. Look Ahead has been around for 40 years. We work with those [groups of people]. That is where our roots are.

What we are doing is we are shifting the business to move upstream and work with people with a much higher level of needs and into the statutory services because that is where the funding is and that is what the local authorities, social care and housing are funding. Yes, we are doing that as a matter of course. We have to survive. That is how the buildings are gradually being reused. That is what we are doing. However, for those low-level preventative services - and those people end up in the statutory services further down the road if you do not provide services for them anyway - it is a short-term gain. You are losing buildings. You are losing

bed-spaces and those services are not there in the way that they were seven or eight years ago. That is without a doubt. If you look at the number of hostel bed-spaces lost in London, if you look at the foyer model, East Thames's just went. They were decommissioned, as were lots of the other providers. We have had some decommissioned. They are gone. That is definitely a trend in London, but I have not seen that mapped anywhere, actually.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority):

The point you make with that is that those are client groups and people who will get assistance anyway because there is a statutory duty on local authorities. What is happening is that the services are being used to support other cuts across local authority budgets to ensure that it is affordable for local authorities to run their statutory services, but it is not helping more people. It is less.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): There is certainly a short-term focus and there is more focus on the higher-end needs. A lot of the services that worked with people with low to medium support needs are gone. That does not mean that those people no longer have support needs. It means that they do not hit services until their needs have reached the point that they are really high and, at that point, it is much harder to effect a positive change for that person.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): That is when you get pressure on the police services, A&Es and all of that sort of stuff if you do not have those preventative services there. I have not seen that quantified.

Leonie Cooper AM: Thank you. Effectively, we are seeing - or have already seen, possibly - under Fair Access to Care Services that local authorities' interest in the low and medium level has gone and everybody is now focusing on people with higher care needs. Really, the idea of having a preventative strategy to stop people moving into the higher care category, you are saying, has gone. Therefore, in one sense, you could say that we may not be paying lower levels of cost at the earlier stages by helping people not get into crisis, but we are actually being forced to pay a lot more to help people once they have come into crisis. Is that really it?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): I can see a GLA role at that borough level, yes.

Leonie Cooper AM: That was just to unpick what you were talking about. There is the idea of a rent cut across the whole of the sector. I cannot see any smiles on your faces about that and I know that it has been delayed for supported housing. What kind of impact do you think that will have? Is that going to be great news for you or are we going somewhere else with that?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): We would no longer be viable as an organisation in our current configuration. That is the bottom line. We would no longer be able to provide purely supported housing. We are lucky as an organisation inasmuch as we own the vast majority of the stock that we deliver services from and so that means that we have assets that we can use differently to generate income and to make sure that we can then continue to work with only the most vulnerable. We are looking at going from 545 units of supported accommodation down to maybe 100 at the most and that is by using our assets to generate the income that we need to fund that individual person if we are able to realise only LHA levels.

There are other organisations that do not own the buildings. We manage a few properties on behalf of other larger housing associations. Those management agreements that we have been the owning agent and the managing agent have become more and more challenging for the provider of the support - the managing

agent - to make viable as the balance of what money goes where swings in favour of the owning agent. If LHA were to be applied to supported housing, I cannot see how any managed service could viably continue.

Yes, for us, it would not be the end completely and we would continue to serve the people within the communities we work with, but we would have to refocus our efforts and our attention to the small minority at the highest level and those in the most need.

Leonie Cooper AM: The whole thing about no preventative services would become even worse, really, from what you are saying. There has not been any particular passing-on of the extra 2%? A number of local authorities included it in their council tax from April of this year. Has that had any impact at all in terms of generosity towards you for payments for the support that you are providing? Has anything been going up as opposed to LHA and rent coming down? Has that been there?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): No, we have not felt that yet.

Leonie Cooper AM: There has been no gold rush that you have noticed?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): No. It is very interesting because we cannot categorise 33 London boroughs as all doing the same thing because I can think of two or three London boroughs that have a strong commitment to preventative services. They have not decommissioned all their homelessness services. They have not decommissioned all their young people's services. They have a balance of these. Some boroughs have just cut through it. As Lee said, the LHA cuts will make developing new supported housing unviable. As for the young people in terms of the cuts, we would have to decommission all of our young people's services and use those buildings for something else.

Leonie Cooper AM: You are talking about mass decommissioning and you are pretty much saying the same as well, apart from people who are in the highest care categories?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): Yes, that is right.

Leonie Cooper AM: From your perspective in local authorities?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): Yes, I can only echo that. Across the three boroughs, just looking at my notes, in Kensington & Chelsea the estimated impact or shortfall as a result of the changes would be £1.5 million, in Hammersmith & Fulham £1.7 million and in Westminster a very similar figure of £1.7 million.

Leonie Cooper AM: You probably have masses of money just lying around that you could shift over to cover that?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): Of course, yes! Just in terms of the social care precept, which I think is what you were referring to, it varies enormously from borough to borough in terms of council tax collection rates and how that interacts with people who are on council tax benefits. That is not a silver lining, really. It has been varied across the three boroughs that I work in. Two have chosen not to and one has applied it. It is probably a similar picture across London.

In terms of prevention, my view and sense across the three boroughs that I work in is that there is a strong commitment to prevention. The way that that argument is being taken forward is with our National Health

Service (NHS) colleagues and with our CCGs. There are some good examples where we have fought hard through the Better Care Fund, a joint integrated fund, to make the case for health money to invest in things that previously we would have funded through social care budgets, that were preventative and that, with the 30% to 40% cut that we have seen in social care budgets over the last four or five years, we cannot fund any more. However, the evidence is there that it is worth funding and so it is about where the money is in the system. The NHS budget is, largely, protected. In the longer term, it makes sense to maintain some of these preventative services.

For example, we have CCGs putting the majority of the funding into employment-related services or even mental health support needs. We know that has a beneficial effect on people's wellbeing. The social care contribution is relatively small. That is something that is constantly debated. Trusts are in deficit and CCG funding is under pressure so there are some real challenges in the system. That is what I am trying to say. For the most part, where I work currently there is a commitment to prevention but it is not easy to get to joint agreement like that.

Leonie Cooper AM: Of course, in one sense it is hard to measure what we have prevented. I have been quite interested to see that some authorities and some CCGs have been doing things like paying for boilers because they think that helps reduce pressure on A&Es during the winter period. Of course, you do not know how many people then did not turn up in the A&E because they were healthy and they were not suffering from living in a cold house. I see it very much as a similar sort of thing. It is hard to measure the people that did not use the service.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): On welfare reform, it is important to draw quite a clear distinction between the 1% rent cuts and the LHA cap. There was a lot of noise made about the 1% rent cuts and they definitely impact on supported housing more because, as you heard from Lee [Buss], 80% of the costs are staffing, which are much harder to reduce and make efficiencies on. There is an issue there.

In regard to the LHA caps, I am confident that the Government just did not think through the impact on supported housing and this is an unintended consequence of that. You can see that clearly from the difference in the numbers of the saving when it was first announced in the Autumn Statement compared to the Budget. The level of saving went up by £475 million, which is almost double the projection. Hearing from colleagues here and also from a range of people across the sector and from Government Ministers, it is clear that if you impose the LHA cap as it currently was on supported housing, the impact is just catastrophic. There is very little supported housing that would be viable and able to continue if you imposed that cap.

We have done a little bit of work looking at our schemes that we are funding. If you look at the Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund for people who are under 35, we think that in the schemes we are funding people would face a median shortfall of £80 a week, which is a hell of a lot of money to find. If you are eligible for a one-bedroom it is a bit less: about £45 a week. Then looking at the Homelessness Change programme, which is more [greatly] impacted, a median income of £65 a week. Basically none of those schemes would be viable. It is not just about new services, it is that as schemes come up for decommissioning - people cannot run them at a loss - you would just lose vast amounts of supported housing. I am pretty confident that the Government will not do that.

Leonie Cooper AM: Sorry, can I just check? You just said you are really confident --

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): Pretty confident.

Leonie Cooper AM: -- that the Government is going to resile from that position? Is that the mood music that everyone else is hearing as well? Yes? Good.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): There is a lot of uncertainty at the moment. The problem is there are development plans on hold. More significant for me is that as schemes are coming up for recommissioning, people will not be able to commit to them. If you are being asked to commit to a three-year contract and there is a potentially catastrophic event looming in two years, I do not see how you can do that, as a business.

The Government clearly want to do something different in terms of funding supported housing. There are some valid reasons for doing that but there is no sensible basis for applying the LHA cap. We are saying very clearly that you would not apply it to supported housing but there is an ongoing review. That would resolve a lot of the uncertainty. Then it would be even better if they commit to work with the sector to come up with proposals that did work.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): There is a lot of work on that in the various groups that have fed into the DWP and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on this. I do not think in any way the status quo will be maintained. There will be a cap of some sort. There will be a recognition through Universal Credit --

Leonie Cooper AM: It might go back to the Hostel Deficit Grant (HDG). Who knows?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): That is an old one. They will recognise that supported housing has additional costs and they might have various benchmarks, but there will still be a cap. It might be a cap plus 20% for a high-end young people's scheme or a cap plus whatever, paid through Universal Credit.

Leonie Cooper AM: There might be a cap linked to a client. Obviously in London there are other additional costs usually associated, like London weighting for staff and so on.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): This is guesswork at the moment.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): The outcome of it is going to be known by later this month.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): There are two main camps at the moment. One is as described by Chris and there is another one being discussed by Homeless Link in relation to the creation of a separate revenue funding stream to fund the housing costs. We can make either of those two work. Both of them come with positives. Both of them come with risks. As always, the devil will be in the detail. As a sector, specifically in relation to housing associations, which do not get a really good ride from any Government, we are used to making things work. Either of those two outcomes we can make work. LHA cuts applying we cannot make work.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Very clear.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Following on from that, how is the uncertainty at the moment is affecting the pipeline of your development plans.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Everything is on hold.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Everything is on hold?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Uncertainty is bad for business and ultimately we are businesses, social businesses but businesses nonetheless. Currently, all of our plans to develop new units are on hold pending the outcome of this review.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Likewise?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): Yes. We would not do any new development at the moment.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Once you have the answer and assuming it is one of the situations that you have described, do you expect to be able to get back on track relatively quickly?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Depending on the outcome, yes. If it is a workable outcome, yes.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): The same?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Yes. If there is an LHA and there is recognition over and above of the supported housing costs and we can model it and if we think it could work, yes, we would develop.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Jamie, could I ask you what impact the rent cut and the LHA peg will have on the take-up of the Mayor's Care and Specialised Support Fund?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I can confidently say it will not be positive. So far we have managed to work with most providers to say, "Do not abandon your schemes. We understand that you might want to work to a slower timetable but we are keen to still support you".

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Can the Fund help to bridge the gap here, do you think?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): It is hard because these are ongoing revenue costs that are going to exist for the life of the scheme, compared to --

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): The capital costs.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): Yes. On the Homelessness Change programme, we have had three partners pull out completely. On the other programmes we are largely getting people to stay in the game, if not actively take it forward at pace.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Finally, Jon, what do you think the effect will be on the local public services if the shortfall in supply grows further?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): It will cause considerable pressure. This is part of the impact assessment we have been doing across three boroughs. If there is a loss of schemes, that will lead to additional costs in terms of temporary accommodation. There are varying estimates. For example, in [the London Borough of] Kensington & Chelsea, if there was a loss in the region of 400 bed spaces - that is the 70% of schemes that would be impacted - there could be as much as £600,000 added to the cost of the temporary accommodation budget, leaving aside the fact you have lost that provision in the sector.

If the cap is applied there are also some wider housing policy issues that concern local authorities, particularly those working in high-cost, central parts of London, those being the sale of high value assets. There is potential for a perfect storm. You have voids coming up and you are forced to sell those. The reality across the three boroughs I work in is that, as it currently is drafted, the vast majority of those voids would get caught up by the sale of high value assets. That is dwindling stock for people to move through the supported housing system, let alone for anyone entering in via the homelessness route. It is a real concern. There are a number of things potentially coming together. I hope, as colleagues have indicated, that the mood music suggests there may be a different approach to applying a cap, but we wait to see.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): The effect of the cap, if we did not get the right flexibility, would be huge. I mentioned earlier there are some big associations in London who provide the bulk of the supported housing stock. These are buildings they bought in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, street properties and so on, and they are still using them. Generally, other specialists deliver the support in those buildings but they are running them. This would spell the death knell for them and they would probably, as part of their asset management strategies, start moving out of that part of the business, probably selling those buildings and putting them through development pipelines. Then you would see the loss of the really big numbers of supported housing units that are currently provided in London.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): It is interesting there was an article in *Inside Housing* recently about the fact that lots of large associations are stepping away from having charitable status to avoid the need for any approval for disposal of properties, because obviously - with the HCA's approval for disapproval for disposal being removed - those that are charities still have to get Charity Commission approval to dispose. There are housing associations that are deliberately unregistering as charities to make the process of disposal simpler.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I was just going to make a slightly different point. The impact on London is pretty bad but picking up on Andrew's [Boff AM] point around higher staffing costs in London, it is reflected in higher LHA caps. The modelling that we have seen suggests the impact of this is even worse in the rest of the country where LHA caps are much lower.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): That is interesting.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): It is pretty catastrophic in London but it is even worse outside.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): I would argue that the LHA formula itself is a flawed formula. A cap based on a flawed formula is ridiculous. Our experience of trying to find decent quality affordable accommodation for customers in the private sector based on LHA level rates is that there are not many properties in any of the boroughs that we work in that rent on the private market at or around the LHA level.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Leonie Cooper AM: One of the impacts of the introduction of the LHA peg and changes to the rates would be that clients would not be able to move on, as well as potential problems for the actual people running the premises.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): The LHA levels as they are, are challenging in relation to moving customers on now. That is something that we have been managing for some time. The application to supported accommodation --

Leonie Cooper AM: Would then --

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): "Catastrophic" is the word that was used.

Leonie Cooper AM: Do you think there are specific groups of residents who would be more affected than others or is it just catastrophic across the board?

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): The under-35s would be affected greatly, of course.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): Yes. That is the big one. The shared room rate and the restrictions around the Housing Benefit are catastrophic. We have several hundred young people in schemes and we would have to evict [them].

Leonie Cooper AM: What about the impact on people who might currently be in some other facility, perhaps in a hospital because they have gone through some kind of crisis or in some kind of higher-care care establishment and who might be coming into a Look Ahead or an Evolve scheme? Presumably they would not be able to come in.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): No, many of our schemes would still work because we are not exceeding LHA levels in much of our existing property portfolio in what we are doing, even where we have refurbished these buildings or put them to a new use. We do not model for anything above LHA caps. That is fine. It just would mean we would work more and more with very high-end client groups. We can make that work. With young people, we would not be able to make it work. What we would not do is we would not provide new units into the sector. We would be working with our existing property portfolio.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Like I mentioned earlier on, the modelling that we have done would indicate that we would need to reduce the numbers of supported units from 545 to about 100.

Leonie Cooper AM: That has an obvious massive impact.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Yes.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): The alternative is that if there is a shrinkage in the sector, where clients are linked in with the statutory social care or health system, they are likely to end up in a care home placement at almost certainly much greater cost. Certainly, when you look at

different sectors, extra care is a good supported housing model. It can cost £700 a week less than your typical residential care placement. For more complex needs, there are some very effective supported housing schemes supporting very complex clients at £600 or £700 a week, where you may be spending £2,000 a week in specialist, often out-of-London placements because that is where the majority of the supply is. Not a good scenario, really.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority):

Homeless Link provided with three interesting statistics which show how much more difficult move-on from hostels is in London, compared to the rest of the country. The first one is that if you look at the proportion of residents who are ready to move on, 50% more of London residents are ready compared to the rest of the country. If you look at how long people have been waiting, twice as many London residents have been waiting over six months compared to the rest of the country. Then in terms of why that is, London providers are four times more likely to say that the main barrier is the LHA rates in terms of moving on into the private sector. There is a clear problem around move-on that is much more acute in London than the rest of the country. We are using that as evidence to say that London should get a significant share of the £100 million pot for move-on from hostels and domestic violence refuges. We are in active discussions with Government on that. It is really important we get a good share.

Leonie Cooper AM: Thank you.

Nicky Gavron AM: This is a bit of a round-up really because you have indicated quite a lot of what you think. What would you - and it is for all of you - want as the best outcome from the Government's Supported Housing Fund review? What would you most want?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): This does not happen often but I am on the fence with both of the two main camps. Obviously the easiest outcome for us to be able to manage is the retention of the exemption of supported housing with some form of cap not linked to the LHA cap set, the model that Chris [Hampson] described. I am not sure how that is going to be received by Government. The fact that our rents are higher than general needs can act, sometimes, as a barrier to getting our customers into employment. A real focus of our work is getting people into employment. Again, it has its plus points but it also has its downsides.

The additional revenue stream outcome has lots of potential pitfalls in relation to the detail. Will it be centrally administered or locally administered? Will it be ring-fenced? Is it going to end up becoming pressured from local government cuts? All of these potential things could go wrong with that. However, separating out pure rents and additional housing costs means that it would be less of a barrier for our customers to get into employment. I can see both working and both have their risks. Both also bring with them some element of positivity.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): We cannot have LHA caps applied. We must have recognition that it is over and beyond. Not a limitless pot, but there must be recognition of the additional costs of supported housing. It would be disastrous not to. That must be one outcome. The rents minus one must be abandoned. That is a valuable source of income that recognises the additional cost of supported housing. We are currently still on a consumer price index (CPI) formula plus 1%.

The third one I will just throw in: capital grants. Capital funding for supported housing. It would be fantastic to see real flexibility brought into the use of that around meeting the needs we talked about earlier. That would make a big difference to generating more innovative supported housing models in London across the different client groups.

Jon Lillistone (Head of Commercial, Innovation and Insight, Triborough Adult Social Care): I have little to add to that, really. Flexibility of capital funding I would support. On that point, it is clear there is a consensus around the application of LHA. That is misguided for supported housing. I would be very cautious about any solution that saw a separate pot created with the potential of it being devolved in the same way that we have with the discretionary housing payment. For me, there is probably greater risk there in the longer term, in terms of likely forward pressure on local authority budgets. Possibly more the model that Chris was describing.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I would set three objectives, rather than exactly how you would get there. The first one has to be that the existing value provision must be able to be preserved and kept, and that it is not at risk of closure from funding shortages. Secondly, there has to be scope for new provision where new services are required, and growth to respond to different needs of residents. There needs to be a mechanism that can incorporate that growth.

Then thirdly - probably more of a hope than an expectation - some kind of greater cross-Government recognition of the savings that supported housing can generate across the whole of Government accounts, not seeing it just as a cost to the DWP in pounds. All the things you have heard today are in a wealth of other academic literature. Something that looked at those integrating saving costs could bring a whole range of other benefits. Maybe that is a positive thing that could come out of this.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): If you discover how to do that, let us know.

Nicky Gavron AM: How optimistic are you? Being very realistic, what do you fear? Does no one want to voice it?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): There is a pragmatic focus on trying to get something that will happen. The catastrophe will be avoided and we will not see mass closures of existing schemes. How much scope there is for new provision is probably still in play at the moment.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): The problem is there are huge discrepancies amongst providers in terms of how much the LHA cap is being exceeded, in terms of how much they are charging. That is one of the problems, getting agreement. For the National Housing Federation, for example, to try to get a consensus among providers about what that should be is very difficult. That has been one of the problems.

Nicky Gavron AM: As a last point, do you think that the review, its mechanisms and so on are going to be in place in time for April 2017, knowing what flows from it? Do you think you will have the right mechanisms then?

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): If we hear about the LHA outcome at the end of this month, it would help a lot. I am not sure when we are going to hear about the rents. That should be imminent as well. That is a Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) decision, is it not?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): It has not escaped anyone's notice there is quite a lot of political uncertainty at the moment.

Leonie Cooper AM: Really? What has happened?

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): As to how quickly some of these things get resolved, particularly when they need lots of cross-Government decisions, it probably does not suggest that things will get done that quickly.

Nicky Gavron AM: You are not optimistic, then?

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): No. Experience says that these kinds of things generally take a lot longer than is stated, and that has been during periods of time when there has been relative stability in the political environment. I am not confident that we will have a working model by 1 April 2017.

Chris Hampson (Chief Executive, Look Ahead Care and Support): On the rents we should get another year's exemption and on LHA probably another year as well, but whether that will happen, if that is the case --

Leonie Cooper AM: As an interim, it might work.

Nicky Gavron AM: That might.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Thank you. Mr Buss, you did mention the LHA formula being wrong to start off with. I do not want you to lay out in detail how you would do it, but do you have ideas about how we could replace it? It has been there since 2008.

Lee Buss (Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support): Gosh. Ideas for a solution, not so much. It just strikes me that having a figure set on the lowest 30% that does not take into consideration how many units are within that lower 30% is somewhat flawed.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Very good.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): It depends on your objective. If the objective is to save money, which I think it has been in terms of reducing it from the median down the 33rd percentile and then freezing it, largely, it has probably been quite an effective way of doing it. If it is about ensuring that poor people can live in a range of places across the country, doing that is much less effective.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): Are there any other questions of our guests? I would like to thank you very much for an extremely stimulating session. The Committee very much appreciates the candour. You want more certainty; you do not want more money. That is rather good. That will probably be in the report.

Jamie Ratcliff (Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority): I do qualify that statement.

Andrew Boff AM (Chair): I will call that session to an end. Thank you very much.