

## London Assembly Housing Committee – Tuesday 10 November 2020

### Transcript of Item 7 – COVID 19, Rough Sleeping and Homelessness in London

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Now we come to our main item of business, item 7: COVID-19, rough sleeping and homelessness in London.

I welcome our guests: David Eastwood, who is the lead on rough sleeping in the Greater London Authority (GLA); Steve Douglas, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of St Mungo's; Gill Taylor, Strategic Lead for Single Homelessness and Vulnerable Adults from Haringey Council; Tony McKenzie, Member Involvement Co-ordinator from Crisis; and finally Martin Burrows, Director of Research and Campaigns at Groundswell.

Right let me start with the first opening question, and I will aim it at David, Steve and Gill. The quarter 1 Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) data showed that there were 4,227 rough sleepers in London from April to June 2020. That is a 30% increase on the same period last year. While this has now decreased, could you tell us your insight into why rough sleeping in London rose so dramatically during the first lockdown?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Good morning, thank you. There were many reasons. Obviously, as you mentioned, there was already the ongoing trend of numbers increasing during that time. Because of the success of the *Everyone In* proposal and the work that we were doing, as well as the pandemic as a whole, what we also saw was many people who had been insecurely housed at that stage - sleeping on friend's sofas and that sort of thing - understandably were not able to continue with those kinds of arrangements, and so we saw more people potentially coming to the streets during that first lockdown.

Obviously the success of the work we were doing in terms of getting people into self-contained accommodation meant that we saw an increase in numbers of people coming to the streets, but I think it is worth reflecting that, as you mentioned, there was already that ongoing trend of increases in people coming to the streets due to the impact of austerity and other measures that have already been seen. There is also the increase in non-United Kingdom (UK) nationals that has been happening over the past few years.

That was, in part, the reason why we saw that ongoing trend, but I think in the main it was those people who previously had been insecurely housed in a variety of settings and, understandably, they were unable to stay or felt unable to stay on their friend's sofas or in any kind of communal setting and therefore we saw more people potentially coming to the streets. That would be my view, but I am sure others have more insight in this area.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Thank you, David. Yes, there was obviously a lot less sleeping on sofas. Can I come to Steve Douglas? What is the perspective from a housing association?

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** Yes, both a housing association and a homelessness charity. We were one of those organisations that were heavily involved in the *Everyone In* initiative.

In a sense, the quarter 1 figures provide a snapshot but are not that helpful. It is more helpful, I think, to look at the latest CHAIN data, which showed a decrease in rough sleeping and showed that there was a real success from *Everyone In*. The vast majority of those who were rough sleeping during the summer months were

brought in to safe and secure accommodation, and I think there are lessons that we can learn from that experience more so than we can learn from what we saw in the CHAIN data at the end of the year and what we saw with the CHAIN data at the end of the first quarter. Those two figures showed an increase in rough sleeping, for all of the reasons that David [Eastwood] has described, but if you then look at the latest set of CHAIN data you see that *Everyone In* has been an incredible success. We urge the lessons from *Everyone In* to follow through into future programmes that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the GLA and local authorities will deliver for the future.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Thank you, Steve. Gill, local authority perspective?

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** Thank you. I broadly echo what David [Eastwood] and Steve [Douglas CBE] have said, but one of the other things to really bring out in this is the particular impact on already marginalised groups. Local authorities saw a significant increase in the number of young people who were finding themselves on the streets, and, equally, the number of transgender people and the number of people fleeing domestic violence.

As well as the broad issues that have been talked about around the effects of austerity and things, for example, around the furlough scheme and overcrowding, it is also important that we recognise some of the impacts of things like lockdown in already very tense and difficult housing situations. A lot of local authorities saw an increase in the numbers of people who were already experiencing quite a lot of exclusion within their areas, even if they were not, at that point, rough sleeping. For us, what that has really highlighted is not only the particular ways in which rough sleeping affects different groups of people but also some of the gaps in local provision for particular groups of people who are often quite small in number but have quite particular needs. That is one of our reflections on the increase as well.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** That is useful. Can I move on now to a series of questions from the Deputy Chair of the Housing Committee, Andrew Boff, on the implementation and experience of *Everyone In*?

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you, Chair. Steve Douglas, you have already talked about the *Everyone In* programme being a huge success and that is good to hear. I wonder if I can hear from the other people giving us evidence today as to your views with regard to the *Everyone In* initiative.

**Tony McKenzie (Member Involvement Co-ordinator, Crisis):** Morning, everyone. Really just to add on - this feels like a layer cake - to what Gill [Taylor], David [Eastwood] and Steve [Douglas CBE] are saying, we need a sense of permanency instead of temporary. What has happened is that when we do temporary things, we just keep going around in a cycle: things are OK for 12 months but then we are back to square one. If we are going to build in success, we need to move forward. The accommodation that should be on offer should be for permanent accommodation, not temporary, not three years, not six months, but permanency.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you for that. I am assuming the other guests also confirm the general success of the *Everyone In* initiative but, Tony, from your experience in Crisis, is there anything you feel the *Everyone In* scheme could have done better at the time? You have mentioned permanency and giving people long-term accommodation. Is there anything else that there could have been improved on it?

**Tony McKenzie (Member Involvement Co-ordinator, Crisis):** At Crisis I was the Member Involvement Co-ordinator, so I am always going to champion the voice of people with lived experience. In my opinion, that is the one thing we probably need to sharpen up on because - and I am sure this question is going to come up - some people did drift back to the streets and I think had we asked people what was needed, what was the

best fit, we would have had less of a drift. We really need to include the voices of people with lived experience.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** How would you design such a scheme? Is it top-down consulting, or should there be changes at the sharp end of the scheme or some flexibility to change the scheme at the sharp end?

**Tony McKenzie (Member Involvement Co-ordinator, Crisis):** Going forward, it is about co-production. It is about working 'with', rather than 'to' or 'for'. It is about bringing everybody who is identified as a key stakeholder around the table and giving their voice equal access. There are lots of people doing research from University College London (UCL), King's College [London] and Groundswell, which has done some phenomenal work around this area. We have access to people. Let us find out from them what worked well and why, what did not work so well and why, and together, let us design something that is going to be fit for everybody.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you very much. If we can move over to Groundswell, did you do research into the people's experience of the Everyone In hotels?

**Martin Burrows (Director of Research and Campaigns, Groundswell):** I will pick that one up.

Throughout the pandemic, we were conducting research with people with experience of homelessness around their experiences through a range of different methods, through people delivering online diaries, through one-to-one interviews, and that was nationally as well as in London. I would like to just pick up on a point that Tony [McKenzie] made there around the involvement of people with lived experience throughout the process. It is absolutely key for ongoing planning to have that voice, but I do not think it is as simple as to say we need to have a top-level consultancy. We need to have a range of different tactics and measures to be able to capture that voice, including research, as Tony said, but including representation at meetings like this and ongoing consultation.

In terms of our learning throughout the pandemic, it is important to recognise that there is not a homogenous view of how *Everyone In* worked for people. Nationally, the delivery was inconsistent. There was a lot of disparity in what was on offer. What tended to lead to that was existing infrastructure being in place and there being the networks, connections and cross-sector bodies which were able to coordinate that response. In London, where generally we saw there was a more coordinated response and the quality of support was better than certainly some other areas of the UK, what we did see is areas that had that infrastructure, Westminster, for example, were able to provide a really comprehensive, holistic, clinically led response.

In terms of the responses that we have had from people experiencing homelessness for *Everyone In*, for the people that it worked for, it has been fantastic, it has been life-changing, but for those that have fallen through the net, they have had some potentially negative experiences out of it. For those it has worked for, it has provided access to support, access to food, benefits claims have been restarted and people have been able to address their health needs. It has really created that foundation for recovery and stability that allows people to access support. But for those who were unable to access the *Everyone In* accommodation to begin with, who were evicted - which was a really big issue that we identified throughout the process - or also who faced ongoing isolation and challenges around their mental health, it has not worked so well. This is what we need to think about moving forward. How can the real benefits of *Everyone In* be delivered equitably to people across the spectrum?

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you very much for that. Obviously, this was a very good question because everybody wants to chip in. Can I ask David Eastwood to come in on that, please?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Yes, sure. I would echo what Tony [McKenzie] and Martin [Burrows] said in terms of user experience and trying to factor it in. I think one of the things that we found difficult and one thing that is definitely worth noting is that hotels are not suitable for everyone.

When we originally had the idea in terms of *Everyone In*, the grand plan, I like to describe it as like a game of Tetris, almost. What we needed to try to do, if we had more time, was to move some people out of the supported housing provision, out of hostels, free up the hostels and then move other people who had those support needs into the hostels, rather than it just being purely seen as people going into hotels with support. It was very difficult for us to do that as quickly as we needed to do, in terms of the pace that we were working at. Steve [Douglas CBE], I am sure, will not blow his own trumpet, but we managed to get 14 hotels going from the GLA with St Mungo's playing a key role and other partners playing key roles in terms of doing that. At such a quick pace, it was really difficult to get all the moving parts around that we needed.

Hotels can be suitable for a lot of people with lower support needs, and we tried to put in the additional support that we needed around mental health, drugs and alcohol support, we did excellent work with health partners, but they are not suitable for everyone. That is one of the major learnings I think we knew already at the start, but it was difficult for us to be able to do that across 33 London boroughs, being able to work out what is there. There is, I feel, a lack of hostel provision in London that is needed. Some people do need that 24-hour support, they do need that level of help that you cannot give in a hotel to *Everyone In*. I think there are those moveable bits that we need to work out what more we could have done.

It was phenomenal in terms of what was achieved working with so many partners. I have never had so many calls on the weekend. Working weekends is my thing. Everyone was working pretty much 24 hours a day, trying to get this up and running and trying to make sure that everyone could get into that self-isolated accommodation.

As Martin and Tony said, there were people who it was not suitable for, and we had abandonments, we had to evict people out of the hotels because their support needs were too high to be able to cope in that kind of environment. That is where it is like Tetris. Moving people around is what, if we had the time, we would have wanted to get to but, unfortunately, we did not quite have the time because we were so busy trying to get the hotels up and running and get as many people in as possible. That is definitely something of the learning and factoring in what would have worked potentially better for some people in terms of their support needs.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Do you feel that you are more prepared now for identifying what the needs are of the person before they come into the system, rather than trying them out in a hotel first and then realising?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** I think we needed to take chances on people. That is what you need to do and that is what we did do, and that is the reason why there were potentially more evictions and abandonments, because chances were taken on people to go, "Look, this is the only provision we do have. We cannot get you into a hostel provision". We have staging post provision, which I am sure Steve [Douglas CBE] will probably talk about, in terms of GLA provision for people with slightly higher support needs, but we only have a limited amount of that. Boroughs only have a limited amount of hostel provision and supported housing that they could get people in and that was already pretty full before this all started, if not full.

It is difficult when you do not have the right kind of provision to get people in, but I still think we should always take a chance on people. I would much rather we take that judgment and go, "Yes, we think maybe you could do it. Great, let us put you in. Let us try to work with you, let these teams and other teams work with you and try to provide the support in the hotel", rather than not taking chances on people and going, "The only people we can take into hotels are people with very low support". We always need to take chances on people and see. But there were some people who, from an Outreach perspective, were just going to be too high support. Outreach work with people every day. They know who can cope and who could not cope in this environment. We took some chances on those people, but we knew other people would not be able to cope within the hotel environment.

We obviously had all the relationships as well with new hoteliers coming in. The hotel trade did a phenomenal piece of work with them, but we also had those relationships to manage. What we did not want to do is end up in a position whereby we take people in and then we lose the hotel and we lose that provision for essentially 150, 200 people. It is a difficult balance.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you. Steve Douglas, you wanted to come in.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** Yes, thank you for that. Following on from David, I think the phrase that I would use would be the "take the chance". David described a little bit of the process for *Everyone In*, and St Mungo's were one of those that managed a significant number of hotels, as David rightly said. In London we managed 14 hotels, we are still managing six and we supported almost 1,700 people. I agree entirely with Tony, the lived experience has directly informed both the way that we deliver services but also the lessons that we have taken from the experience.

The way to describe *Everyone In* is if you can recall the days of the budget airlines when you did not have an allocated ticket, EasyJet and there are others as well. *Everyone In* was an emergency response. David's description was of the GLA, MHCLG, local authorities and head providers all in the room adopting a gold principle in saying, "We need to respond as a matter of course, just get everybody in". What you had was people being almost hoovered up and put into those hotels, into safe and secure accommodation.

Martin [Burrows] is right, it was not right for everybody. There are some people who had been rough sleeping, living on the streets for ten, 15, 20 years, who actually found being in that environment claustrophobic, found it incredibly difficult for them to be socialising, found it really difficult, wanted to get back to where they felt safe and secure. But for the vast majority, it was having a place that was safe and secure, having the support that was needed, being able to do the assessment and then provide solutions and - Dave is absolutely right - using staging posts to provide the assessments and then working through Tony's [McKenzie] point around long-term accommodation.

The big thing that it is really important we do not lose from *Everyone In*, which certainly we found as a significant provider, was local authorities and housing options being in the same room, general practitioners (GPs) being in the same room and us as providers being in the same room with that client and being able to identify their individual needs.

Just to finish, Martin, you are right: for some, moving into settled accommodation with the support that was needed was absolutely right. We have supported 1,600 people now. It is almost 1,000 people who have moved into accommodation of one sort or another. But for others, because of complex needs, because of their history, because of where they are in their journey around rebuilding their lives, support is needed and is needed now. There was that learning of the triage function with local authorities at the very early stage. Then the support that is needed with the accommodation that sits alongside it, whether that be hostel, whether that

be self-contained or whether that be secure, is the biggest lesson that we have taken from *Everyone In*, and it is so important that we do not lose.

The Tetris point is absolutely well made. We now have arguably a bit more time, but having said that, we have winter coming now. Let us learn the lessons of Tetris and make sure that we, at all levels, are working together on what the long-term solutions might be.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you. Gill Taylor, you wanted to come in?

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** Thank you. Echoing broadly a lot of the points that have been made already, one of the things I wanted to highlight is that really *Everybody In* has not ended. That is one of the issues that we are facing, particularly the workforce that are working in the hotels in Haringey. We have directly delivered the support into all of the hotels we have been working in with around 800 people. It was a crisis response, and as my colleagues have said, the idea was that we were getting everybody in, people needed to be safe and supported during the pandemic and particularly during the first lockdown, but here we are eight months later, still with 3,000 people in hotels.

Not only does that speak to the point being made by people around long-term accommodation, the significant lack of supported housing in London and elsewhere in the country as well, but also it speaks to the fact that this is the long-term impact of having people in very short-term, very insecure accommodation. When we are talking about the Tetris and moving people around, that has a significant impact on working for people who have been moved between three or four or five different hotels over the course of the past eight months. That has a very real, human impact on that person's life, as well as on the people supporting them.

I do think there is something as well about how we talk about what the long-term recovery on *Everybody In* is, not just the long-term thinking and outcomes that we want to keep hold of, but: how do we help everybody who was in the hotels and everybody who has been working in them to move away from this very crisis-focused, very pressured environment that we are currently working in, into something more sustainable that has a broader focus on people not only securing accommodation but also having their needs met in the long term? At the moment, what I am hoping we get to, is a place that feels like the pathway. At the moment, it still feels quite crisis-driven.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you. Tony McKenzie, have you got something to add to this?

**Tony McKenzie (Member Involvement Co-ordinator, Crisis):** Sorry. Yes, really quick. Just echoing what Gill has just said, we need a multidisciplinary approach. Steve [Douglas CBE] also mentioned it. One of the things that I really do not want us to lose sight of is that although this was a crisis response, although the success has been really amazing, it was because there was political will. Political will is what drove this forward.

In terms of the points that Gill just made about how we support people - Steve touched on this - I have spoken to people who said going into a hotel reminded them of being institutionalised, whether that was in hospital or whether that was in prison. No choice over when they ate, what they ate.

We talk about social distancing, which is very different from social isolation. People felt banged up and locked up, and all of this has a big impact on the psyche. We really need to be looking towards a Housing First type model with the accommodation and support as a package. We are talking about psychologically informed environments to make sure that when we accommodate people, it does not fall away there. That is when the support needs to kick in.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you, yes, I am rapidly approaching the end of my time for this section. Martin Burrows, if you come in quickly, if possible.

**Martin Burrows (Director of Research and Campaigns, Groundswell):** I will speak very quickly because I think Tony has just hit the nail on the head with much of what I was going to say. Yes, it was a crisis response. Very early on, we heard challenges about meeting basic needs, around getting food, income, support, but that was eventually solved and I hope that if we have to ramp up *Everyone In* again, then the learning is already in place to make sure that support is there for people immediately.

Throughout the monitoring work that we did, it was mental health that was the greatest challenge, and it was a double-edged sword. It was an issue for wider society, but for people experiencing homelessness who were likely to have worse mental health than the general population, already may have limited social ties, lockdown - as well being placed into places that remove social ties, that may have had slightly authoritarian regimes in place and controls in place to make sure that people were kept safe, coupled with limited access to mental health support and support groups which are cancelled so that wraparound support outside of the hotels often was not there - had a severe impact on mental health. That is the learning that I would like to take forward.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you very much. Very quickly now, David Eastwood, from other cities we have seen very high contraction rates of COVID-19 from hotel-type accommodation. Do you have figures for the contraction rate of COVID-19 in the *Everyone In* arrangement?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** We very quickly got a COVID care facility going, working with colleagues in health about trying to ensure that anyone who was displaying any symptoms was able to isolate either in the hotel or, once we got COVID care up and running, move to City Airport, which Thames Reach ran for us, alongside Médecins Sans Frontières and the Find and Treat Team from UCL. We could ensure that anyone who was displaying any symptoms was taken out of the hotel or out of hospital provision.

We had 48 people who went through the COVID care facility in London and the most we had in at any one time was 18. I have to say the Find and Treat Team, who normally do tuberculosis (TB), were switched very quickly to be able to do this work, to be able to provide testing and to be able to provide advice to not just the GLA hotels but local authority hotels as well. They worked to get to people quickly and ensure that anyone who was displaying any symptoms was tested to see were they COVID positive, were they not COVID positive.

Being able to do that and having access to that meant that the infection levels within the rough sleeping population, the homeless population in London, were significantly lower. We were able to isolate people quickly and able to do that work. That is one of the other key learnings around this. We were lucky in London that we had our team already doing that work, already mapped in with key partners. They work with local authorities anyway, they work with outreach teams anyway, they have the relationships there already. They were able to do that and able to test people quickly.

We have good work from various health partners around anyone coming into the hotels, screening anyone before they came in to make sure that if anyone was displaying symptoms they would not go into the hotels. We worked really closely with our public health colleagues in the GLA, as did local authorities with their colleagues in terms of public health. All those measures, being able to do that and getting rid of anyone sleeping in communal settings meant that our infection rates were so much lower than they were in any other country. I think that was a key part, Andrew, in terms of the work that we did.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you very much. I am going to have to come to the end of my section of questions. If anybody else wants to pitch in, try to get in on another question from my colleagues. Otherwise I am going to be less popular than I am already.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** You cannot say that, Andrew. Can I just come in in this section? Yes, it is right to say we have done probably much better than other places like San Francisco. There is a perspective we should not lose sight of, the hotels themselves. We had an excellent submission from the InterContinental Group, which was party to a lot of these arrangements, and my reading of it when Sarah-Jane Gay [Senior Policy Advisor, GLA] sent it to us, who is the lead officer on this item, last night was that it was not just solely commercially based. I think the hoteliers have to be given credit there. That is a perspective we should not lose sight of in the success in this programme in the previous lockdown, and hopefully in this present lockdown as well. Do read that, Assembly Members, and if that could be publicly made available, I will be very keen to put that in the public domain.

Can we now move to the next section of questioning and move on from everyone in hotels, which is going to be led by Nicky Gavron. Nicky?

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Hello. Thank you, Chair. Good morning, panel. To start the questions, this is a set of questions about moving out of hotels and moving on, and I just want to say from the outset that you have already said quite a lot on these topics, so let us see how we go.

The first question I think should be for David and Gill. We know already that - I think I have the figure in my head - 2,662 or 2,664 people have successfully moved on from hotel accommodation and successfully moved on into longer-term accommodation. I just wondered if you could tell us a bit more about that, David. How long-term is this accommodation, how secure is it, how sustainable is it?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Of course. Thanks, Nicky. From the GLA perspective, we have had, I think, 651 people who have successfully moved on from the GLA hotels, of which 304 have moved into long-term accommodation. In the main, that is private rented sector accommodation with floating support. We have had, I think, 28 people move into supported housing. We have had 31 people move into clearing house units, where they get two years' support which is provided by the housing associations.

We are lucky in London that we have CHAIN. It is key for us, in terms of our monitoring where people are moving to and all of that information, that we are able to grasp that information quickly. We have 304 people that have moved to long-term accommodation, we have 36 people that have moved into shelters or hubs, mainly local authority provision, and we have had 285 that have moved into what we describe as more temporary accommodation, so that is hostels, staging posts, temporary accommodation through a local authority or moving in with family and friends. That is temporary but it is not necessarily that temporary, if you see what I mean.

I think we have had some really good successes in terms of our people moving through. We have developed good relationships with private sector landlords and, like I say, anyone who is moving from a GLA hotel would be moving with support. That can take a little bit longer than just purely putting people into a private rented sector or into accommodation. We need to make sure that that support level is right. That has definitely been a little bit slower than we would necessarily like.



Also, I think it is worth acknowledging that with the first lockdown it was very difficult in terms of moving anyone potentially out to start off with. Obviously, there were difficulties in terms of viewing flats, there were difficulties in terms of people being able to move around. What we are wanting to ensure is that everyone has choice. We are not looking at moving people into the private rented sector and moving them into a flat without the person seeing that flat, without them being comfortable in seeing that flat. That all takes time to be able to do. I think we have had some real, notable successes in terms of moving people into more long-term accommodation, but that has to be with personal choice which means it can sometimes take a little bit longer, especially if you can only see the flat on an iPad. It is not the same as being able to actually see it and physically go and look at it. That would be a summary from my side.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Thank you. Gill, what has been your experience of being able to find long-term accommodation and how secure this is?

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** It is probably worth saying that I think the move-on options available to the people that have been placed in hotels are very, very varied. We have a significant number of people both in our hotels and in the GLA's hotels, for example, who have no recourse to public funds. The options that we are looking at for that group are very different and very limited in comparison to other people, and often, as a result, much more likely to be temporary and insecure than for other people who have access to social housing or benefits, or are likely to be able to access employment. That is something that has become starker and starker over the past few months as we are moving through all the people who are easier, if you like, to support to move on and we are left supporting people where the options are very limited.

One of the things that we have been really keen to do is to secure that sustainable move-on accommodation, so we have done everything we can to maximise the use of our own social housing stock. Our own sheltered housing in particular has been a useful resource to us.

Another thing that we have been keen to do is, as David [Eastwood] mentioned, making sure that people moving into the private rented sector accommodation have floating support. One of the things we know is that often private-rented arrangements break down quickly because people are unable to manage that initial transition period, particularly if they have been rough sleeping for a long time. For us, it has highlighted the ongoing need for expanding the Housing First provision. Particularly for people who have been rough sleeping for a long time, supported housing and hostel pathways simply do not work, and giving people that security from the outset instead of as a carrot at the end of a two-year supported housing stay, I think has been really important for us. In Haringey we have a number of Housing First units, but it has really highlighted the need for more of that.

One of the things that has been really insightful for us is that in working with all of the people that have come forward that we have provided accommodation to, seeing the full spectrum of different needs that people have and the different housing options that people need available to them has really come to the fore. For us, a key thing is just the absolute need to build more social housing. It is at the crux of everything that we are doing.

It is fundamental that people have secure tenancies, that they are able to be sensitively supported to manage that tenancy and that they are doing so in a place that they can live, theoretically, for the rest of their life. For a lot of people, we have supported, they have had long, long histories of traumatic and turbulent life, and a social housing tenancy would absolutely be at the root of ending homelessness for people. For us, that is made clear that is something that we need to be ambitious about in Haringey, and I know that other partners in other boroughs have felt similarly.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** There is quite a substantial number of homes, nearly 1,000, I believe, coming through in the spring for homeless people, are there not? There is an allocation that the Mayor has. Will Haringey be getting any of those?

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** We have been awarded funding through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) to develop a number of new homes for people that are rough sleeping, but two-year assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) are the minimum for that programme, so they are not permanent homes although they are a very, very important provision. Yes, we are getting some of those, and in Haringey we have committed to building new social housing of which one-bed and studio accommodation is a key factor of that. That is something which we hope to bring forward over the next couple of years.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Thank you very much for that. Chair, does anyone else want to come in?

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Yes, Steven Douglas wants to.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** Yes, Nicky, I just wanted to add to Gill's point. One of the things that I think we as a sector sometimes miss is that during the course of this year, and perhaps unprecedented, there has been quite a lot of funding that is coming through to address issues of rough sleeping. You refer to the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, and that will bring accommodation online over the coming months and years. It is a four-year programme and I think there is a real positive around the fact that it is also revenue linked.

Gill's point around accommodation and the support when it is needed is absolutely essential. In the main programme, the Affordable Homes Programme, 10% of that is for supported housing. There is an opportunity for us as a sector to use those resources in a different and better way. That conversation is between us and local authorities, between the GLA, local authorities and with Government around how that allocation of resources is spent.

There is still a reality though that local authority budgets have been severely cut over the last ten years, so the amount of money that is able to be spent on support services for homelessness has diminished significantly. We did some research which confirmed that over the last ten years, about £ 1 billion has been lost to local authority budgets and we do urge the Spending Review to look at that, because without that type of funding within local authority budgets, it becomes more and more difficult for those essential services that sit alongside the accommodation to be provided.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** That is interesting. Do boroughs put part of their supporting service provision -- there is an allocation, is there not, for every borough? Does a substantial proportion of that go to rough sleeping?

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** In 2002, there was a Supporting People programme. I think it was called then. That was ring-fenced funding for supported housing, rough sleeping work, any housing that had support alongside it. That ring-fenced funding was ceased in 2009, and for any of us who have been around that long, that had a significant impact. What has happened since then is that the funding available for supported housing and rough sleeping has come from the councils' general fund budgets, which are subject to being cut and savings being made, and importantly, for the funding being redirected to other areas of work which are seen to have an impact.

As Steve [Douglas CBE] mentioned, the very real impact of that is simply not enough funding into supported housing, which is expensive. The challenge for all of us in local authorities has been balancing prevention with

relief, as we now understand it, because of the Homelessness Reduction Act [2017], and thinking about the long-term impact that supported housing has. I would echo Steve's point that without a ring-fenced allocation of revenue funding for supported housing, it is increasingly difficult for boroughs to provide for people who simply aren't able to, at this point, live in independent accommodation.

The rough sleeping funding that local authorities get is separate and ring-fenced, and as a result you can see a significant impact around rough sleeping where that funding has had, because it is directed specifically for this goal of ending rough sleeping and initiatives that surround that. Bringing supported housing into that same space and ring-fencing the funding would be a really, really impactful decision.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Yes, I am glad to hear that. I remember writing an article when the ring-fencing was dropped because it has made a big difference or made quite a substantial difference. These are all very helpful answers. Chair, is there any member that wants to come in on this question or should I move on?

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Can I let Martin and Léonie come in? Thank you.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** No, I am fine, I do not want to come in, I want to move on to my questions. Thank you, Chair.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** OK, Martin. Nicky, can you just be minded that Steve is running out of time? We need Léonie's questions.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Martin, you want to come in?

**Martin Burrows (Director of Research and Campaigns, Groundswell):** I will make a very, very brief point. Through our research work, we did not engage particularly with many people who have been moved on from the hotel accommodation, but we did have a lot of contact with people who had just been moved into new tenancies. The point I want to stress is the hardships faced by people who were under lockdown in these new tenancies, particularly when they have been moved to new areas where support networks have been broken. They were really stuck. It is important we remember that moving someone in is not the end of the journey and that there is a wraparound support once we get there, even during COVID-19.

I also think it is important to remember that we are talking about *Everyone In*, but in many ways, there is everyone else who was homeless at the time. Those hardships transcended across the hostel accommodation and other forms of temporary accommodation where there were staff shortages, where controls were put into place that restricted people's movements, and where, again, the support was not in the same way that it would have been previous to COVID. It is important that if people are being moved into temporary accommodation, although still in existing temporary accommodation, that in the next phase of the response we need to acknowledge how support is consistently delivered for people.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Thank you. Now, this next question is about the numbers of people and why people are moving out, not on to successful accommodation as we have been hearing. Tony, first, and then Steve. We know that a lot of people have either abandoned living in the hotels or been evicted. First to start with the abandonment, you have already touched, Tony, on some of the reasons why people would not stay living in hotels, but do we know more about where they have gone and the kind of support they need? Is there any more you would like to add to what you have already been saying?

**Tony McKenzie (Member Involvement Co-ordinator, Crisis):** Not a whole deal more. I would just say from a housing point of view, "void" and "abandonment" are very loaded words. One of the ways to think

about why people have not been able to stay in hostels or their rooms is asking ourselves what they would need in order to help them to stay there or, as has been already said, what other types of provision we need to be providing. It is not that people are not grateful, it is not that people do not need the help and support; what was being offered just was not a good fit.

I remember I started noticing people back on the streets. They literally just went back to areas that they used to go to before, and very slowly. It would start off with one, then two. The things around the social isolation, around the institutionalisation, all of these things have big, big impacts. When we are looking at service provision - and I get that it is an emergency response - one size really, really does not fit all. If we could move away from terms like "voids" or "abandonment" and look at how we can accommodate people and help them to stay in this accommodation so we can have that wraparound care, it would probably be more useful.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** I think, Tony, that is very fair what you have said about the terms. Are these terms that are generally used and that we should see changed? I have obviously picked them up from my briefing. "Abandonment" is not a term we should use; we should talk about people leaving. I totally understand what you are saying about the need for being in familiar surroundings or in areas where you are known or you know people, the social context of where you are. Steve, do you want to add anything to this?

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** Yes. Just to echo Tony's point, we did some research a couple of years ago on why people return to the streets. It was not about abandonment or voids, it was about why it is that some people who have been sleeping rough find it then difficult to be in accommodation that for others would be seen as the panacea. It is understanding people's circumstances. For some, and it is not all, but for some it does feel as though it is institutionalised, it does feel as though it is constraining. Sustaining a tenancy requires a level of responsibility which for some is not easy.

We can imagine the strains that you may have gone through during lockdown, the first phase, of not being able to go out and have a walk, not being able to get fresh air, being locked up. If you have been used to being on the streets and you actually find that a safe place, then being in a hotel, even though it is your own room, may feel almost as claustrophobic as being on the streets. It is understanding that. The approach that we take, and I know that all of the homelessness charities who are working on the streets on a daily basis and local authority outreach teams take, is that we look at the person and we try to identify the needs of the person.

The only thing that I would say slightly differently from the comments on Housing First is that sometimes Housing First is the right option, but sometimes Housing First can compound the set of issues. If you are requiring somebody effectively to take responsibility when they have not had that, that can be as scary and potentially as debilitating as being put into hostel accommodation with a whole load of people that you do not know, do not trust and worry you. It is understanding and recognising that individual needs are what matter. Each person has individual needs and we should take those into account.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** That is a very good point.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Thank you, Nicky. Steve is going to go, so let us have Léonie come in hopefully to ask her questions. Léonie?

**Léonie Cooper AM:** My questions are, in fact, for you, Steve, and we know that you have to nip off at 11.00am. My first question is about the domestic abuse situation. I know we saw a big increase in calls to hotlines but not a lot of people in the initial phases immediately seeking to leave. There have been reports of a surge in people seeking to escape towards the end of the summer. Is that the case, could you give us a bit

more detail about that and do you believe that there is enough specialist provision in London for women escaping domestic abuse or, indeed, other groups escaping domestic abuse? Obviously, we need services across the board, do we not? Thank you.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** We do. I did not know that was going to be your question, but I actually went to virtually visit one of our schemes in Hackney a couple of weeks ago to find out exactly that. We have spent, during this conversation, quite a bit of time on people who are sleeping rough who have complex needs, but actually there is a whole cohort of people who facing domestic abuse, facing eviction because they are homeless, facing the traumas and the stresses of being in lockdown, and that has been heightened.

Our view is certainly that we have seen an increase. Particularly - and it is a really sad thing to say - when there was not sport on the TV, we saw increases. Winter worries us as well. Summer at least provided an outlet, an opportunity to get out, but as we move into winter and we have another set of restrictions, we do have a concern.

In terms of the support services, there are support services out there and there are some very good ones. There are opportunities and it is important that we get that message out, but I think the essential thing is - and this is both an offer and a challenge to the GLA, London councils and London local authorities - that there are some brilliant practices in certain local authorities, and it would be fantastic if that great practice was shared across borough and then shared Londonwide. The GLA does some fantastic work around this on a pan-London basis, but at times it is just about individual local authorities working together on what is the particular circumstance in their needs. The scheme that I went to in Hackney is a fantastic scheme. It is 50-odd people, women that we are providing advice and support for. Its outreach opportunities are significant. We could be doing more of that across London.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** I am going to press on with asking Steve a couple more things, but I am conscious some of the other panellists might want to come in as well. In your opinion, Steve, what has to be delivered this winter to protect people who have been rough sleeping, people who have been escaping domestic abuse, both from the dangers of winter and from the dangers of the pandemic? What can organisations do to make their winter night shelters, for example, as COVID-safe as is possible? Of course, if you are going to socially distance people or keep them apart in large places, that is going to reduce numbers. I would be interested if you can quickly say something, I know you are really short of time now.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** No, that is fine. I have just checked, and I can stay for another 15 or so minutes if that works for you.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Fantastic.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** I know that David will probably want to come in on this as well. Firstly, there has been some fantastic work that has been done by Housing Justice and Homeless Link. The first thing is that as much as Christmas come and festivals come, winter comes around, and so SWEPE, the Severe Weather Emergency Provision, is, sadly, a typical part of the rough sleeping homelessness agenda. There is how are you preparing for that, and there is always then a spike in the need for that accommodation. In the 21st century, the fact that that accommodation tends to be dormitory-style accommodation is not right, and really it should move from that.

Then you come to the hostel accommodation, the type of accommodation that we provide. Housing Justice and Homeless Link have done some great work with MHCLG and others to try to provide guidance on what

COVID-safe accommodation can look like. It does really good work to try to provide that guidance. We have looked at that and we do not think we can make our accommodation COVID-safe. We will continue to look, and we will look as we see more guidance, but we do not think we can make it COVID-safe for our clients, which means that we cannot make it COVID-safe for our staff.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** The staff, yes.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** We have the responsibility as an organisation, both to our clients and to our staff.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Of course, yes. What is the alternative?

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** This is why David may want to comment as well. With all of the caveats that sometimes hotel accommodation, that type of accommodation is not right, it is better than non-secure, non-COVID-safe supported hostel accommodation. Our position is: let us get the supported and let us get that accommodation.

Quite interestingly, Tony, we think that there are empty properties, we think there are voids, we think there are bed spaces that can be used from existing stock across the sector. We think that type of accommodation could be used. I think that the estimate at the moment is that there are about 700 additional bed spaces that might be needed during the winter period. We think that with the will of partners, with local authorities, housing associations and homelessness charities, that type of secure accommodation can be found. Classically, it comes back to: but who will pay for it? I do believe that the accommodation is there, and it can be COVID-secure. I suspect David might want to comment on that.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** I think Tony might as well because I can see him nodding a lot. I worked in housing for a long time, looking at short life properties to rent them out for short periods of time. That was partly because the grant regime worked in a different way at that time. I remember going to visit Arlington House and being quite shocked, but then you spoke to some of the people who were there, and it was better than the alternative. I think, for all of us there is that sort of dilemma that something that you think is non-COVID-safe and not really what you would prefer might still be better than other alternatives. Thank you, and I am glad you could stay for a little bit longer, Steve, thank you. Tony?

**Tony McKenzie (Member Involvement Co-ordinator, Crisis):** Thank you very much. I am not going to take up a lot of space, I am going to bring David in. I am just echoing again what Steve said, we have to be more creative. I remember when we were talking about "safe sex" and then we had to change the language to "safer sex", and I do not know if anything is COVID-safe but we can have safer. I know when COVID started, Crisis and eventually other charities and the Government gave a lot of grants out for people, and deep cleaning was one of the big things for the hostels. That is so, so, so important. Keeping that up helps make things safer.

This is what people on the street say, they always point to a building and say, "Well, why are you not housing homeless people in there? Why all this space?" We need that creativity, we need that will, we need that joint working.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Given the crisis, maybe looking again at short life, having leases for six months from November through to the spring. David, I am going to bring you in now.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Thanks, Léonie. I would echo, yes, very much what both Steve [Douglas] and Tony [McKenzie] have said. Funding is crucial in terms of our ability to be able to do that.

We have rolled out a COVID risk assessment tool. We have worked with colleagues in health to roll that out. I totally agree with Tony and Steve's point that nothing potentially in the community can be COVID-safe, but what we need to be ensuring is that if we are in a position where there is not the funding available and we have to look at alternative measures, we are in the position that we are putting people who are at least COVID risk into that type of accommodation. It is something that we have rolled out to all outreach teams. All outreach teams are using that. I totally echo Steve's point. We, ideally, want to ensure that everyone can access self-contained accommodation, but that does have a funding implication.

The Government announced last week an additional potential £15 million through the Protect programme. That is £15 million nationwide. We know in terms of London alone we would probably need that amount of money to be able to ensure that everyone that we need to would be able to access that self-contained accommodation. I do fear that we are going to have to be creative and we are always up for the homeless sector being as creative as possible and, as Steve mentioned, looking at voids, looking at other things we can use. Time is potentially against us and I am concerned that we have ended up in this position. We have been raising it with the Government since the start of lockdown. As Steve said, winter is coming. SWEP is coming. What are we going to do? Winter night shelters cannot work. We fund six Housing Justice workers, who have been working to ensure with faith-based --

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Yes, and the Mayor has been writing since August [2020] about some of these things to the Government to try to get these things.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** I know.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Of the £15 million, is any of that coming to London?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Yes. We understand that a proportion of it will be coming to London, but that is not going to be enough. It is how we can work as creatively as possible ourselves, local authorities, providers, to ensure what we can do is the best we can do. I do fear that it is not enough funding to be able to do it. It is a lot less than came in in terms of everyone the first time around and it is winter now. It is more concerning in terms of people being out on the streets in the cold weather. Yes, we need to work out what we can do. As Steve said, we need to look at voids. We need to look at voids. We need to look at doing more joint work in terms of the housing associations.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Are you going to be doing things like writing to all the directors of housing in the 32 boroughs and potentially the City [of London Corporation] as well? Not all voids are suitable. Some of them are unsuitable to be short-life. Having inspected a few myself, I can absolutely say that. Some with a minimal amount of intervention on the capital and physical side, you can get them -- the more expensive thing is then if people need support to continue once they go in somewhere. Directors of housing know what their long-term and shorter turnaround voids are, will they not?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Yes, we are having those conversations with housing directors. We also want to have conversations with housing associations to see what properties they have available. As you mentioned, it is the funding to provide support for people moving into that accommodation. That is crucial. We do not want to be putting people into accommodation with no support. That is not something that I personally in any way can advocate in any way in terms of what GLA

services would ever be able to do. We cannot put people just in accommodation and leave people there. That is not the way we should be doing stuff. We do need the funding to be able to provide the support and that is the difficulty.

It is not just about the properties. That is where it often gets difficult. Like you say, people look around and say, "That building is empty. Great. Why do we not use that?" No, we need to have providers to provide support for people while they are in that property and to help people move on. As we have all mentioned, if anyone is coming in - and I am really proud that we have introduced *Everyone In* and the Mayor's *in for good* principle that we have done - when people come in through the SWEP, they will not leave until there is an accommodation offer on the table for that person in terms of moving on. We want to ensure that if we do get people in, this is an opportunity for them to stay in. It is not just, "In. It is cold. Back out you go". That is not what the service should be looking at providing.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** No, that is really unsatisfactory. Martin, I am still conscious that Steve [Douglas] is going to have to go. Did you want to come in with a brief point? I have another final question for Steve before he dives off, probably into another meeting like this, I should imagine, and will not move.

**Martin Burrows (Director of Research and Campaigns, Groundswell):** I will do my best to keep it brief. Gill [Taylor] also had a point, perhaps, to raise.

We have been doing some work with Housing Justice recently and I have been incredibly impressed with how they have managed to turn on a sixpence from providing accommodation in churches to all sorts of creative approaches like using bubbles, having pods, taking over houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), taking over bed-and-breakfast properties. It is incredible what is possible for them, mainly with church-based volunteers, to have done this incredible work. It is possible but, as David [Eastwood] says, the support needs to be there.

Steve [Douglas] raised an issue with this point around making hostel accommodation COVID-safe. Some of our findings from our research around the restrictions placed on hostel accommodation show that they have a significant impact on the lives of people living in there. It builds the institutional feel. We have had examples of where kitchens have been closed off and people are no longer able to feed themselves and are reliant on buying sandwiches, which uses up all of their benefits. It can have a real impact on people.

There is an example in Westminster, where one of the hostels we have been working with there was able to move people out and into hotel accommodation so that they could lower the capacity in the hostel in order to run it in a more COVID-safe way. As David said, it all takes funding to be able to do this.

As my final point on this, going back to the question that we initially had, COVID has been really important in trying to put the health lens on homelessness. This needs to be ongoing. We need to continue looking at not just COVID but wider health issues that the homeless population faces. That needs to be central to our ongoing planning and also our exit strategy.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Absolutely. I hate to say there is any kind of silver lining from COVID, but in the sense of trying to get everybody in and trying to put health together with housing in a much more proactive way, which some of us have been arguing about for a long time, it has kind of made that happen. It would be really nice if, coming out of this, we can also recognise that mental health is a respected part of health, not just something we tack on, and also that people with alcohol and drugs needs need to have those addressed from a health perspective and not from a punishment perspective, which we have had a little bit of a tendency to do in the past.



We are talking here about some of the Mayor's wider programmes to tackle rough sleeping as well as this particular crisis. Is there anything that you think should be changed in those programmes in light of COVID-19? What would you say are your learnings and experience from the *Everyone In* programme? We can make some recommendations from this Committee. If anyone else wants to come in on that, I will bring you in after Steve. Thanks.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** Thank you for that, Léonie. In a sense, you almost answered the question yourself in your last comment. *Everyone in* from our perspective was a fantastic effort between all of the housing elements. What you have on this call today is housing. We have housing GLA, we have housing local authorities commissioning, we have housing providers, we have housing advisers. Having health around the table for the conversation was essential for us. The triage work that we did had local authorities, us as providers and GPs doing those early assessments. That made such a difference to being able to make the assessment, say what is needed, provide the thinking around long-term support.

The Mayor has the responsibility for the Health Strategy and so Public Health England. The linking up of that Health Strategy with the work that is done by housing at a GLA level and then at a local authority level could make a real impact.

We spent some time with [health] commissioners last week. We had a roundtable for all of the commissioners we work with across our areas of operation. Camden told the story of really positive engagement with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as part of *Everyone in* and then having to have a conversation about whether there would be longer-term funding for some of the support that was required. Because it was a particular budget, the confirmation was that it would not be available. That just felt like a missed opportunity.

If there is anything that the Assembly and the GLA can do, it is to continue to make that link between housing and health and the health interventions that make such a difference to the lives of those who are sleeping rough, alongside the accommodation that is required.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** That is really helpful. Thanks very much, Steve. I can see David is indicating that he would like to come in on health plus housing and my point about, I suppose, getting rid of the stigma. That is really important, for me, anyway.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** Yes, agreed.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** I totally echo Steve's view in terms of around the funding. It is weird for me to be criticising the Mayor's services a little bit, but I will tell you. What happened in terms of around health colleagues that worked in the immediate response is they were working outside of contracts. It was an emergency response and people were doing stuff. I was having phone calls with previous colleagues in Westminster going, "Can you help do this? Yes, I can". We had the green-light volunteer medics working with Steve's team in the triage hubs. All of that was happening a little bit outside of the standard contracting arrangements. Colleagues in health are doing a phenomenal job of pulling stuff together. I was on phone calls at 9 o'clock at night with Gemma, who is our Director of Transformation going, "Can you do this? Can you do the other?" All of that was amazing.

It is how we build on that and ensure that that is reflected in the [CCG and] Integrated Care Systems' (ICS') contracts that they have and that they view this as an ongoing priority and are focusing the resources in the right area. I had a lot of conversations with them going, "It is great that you want to concentrate on going to the hotels, but actually where we need you is in the hostels where people have higher support needs. I do not need you going to the hotels and doing another survey and working out what is happening. We need you

where people need more support". The more we can do that and the more we can continue those conversations, the more positive we can get from it. Yes, I totally echo that.

I am conscious that Gill has probably been wanting to come in for quite a while and so I am going to be quiet now.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Thanks, David. Gill, we will bring you in there and get your comments.

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** Thank you, David. You have asked a number of questions, Léonie. In terms of following on from David's point, in the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) areas, North West London, for example, the CCGs have been doing a lot of work around the long-term intentions for homelessness health.

One of the major points that has been made and been discussed is that there is an obvious invest-to-save narrative here in that if we prevent somebody from having their health needs escalate, we are not looking at having people discharged from hospital to the streets or dying prematurely. There is a huge amount of evidence that we all have. The challenge is that the infrastructure and the way that CCGs and local authorities are funded means that diverting that money to the preventative primary care aspect of health is really challenging when it is currently being spent at the acute end of healthcare. There are a lot of very difficult discussions happening, but it has been amazing to see how willing CCG and National Health Service (NHS) colleagues have been to have those conversations. It has felt like an opportunity for them to say, "We have wanted to do something around this for quite a long time and so what can we do now?" I certainly feel like I have had better engagement with CCG colleagues in the last seven months than I have in the last 10 years. That has really been quite impressive.

You mentioned something in your first question about domestic violence and I am going to return to this because it relates to other things as well. In London and in other major cities, there is a need for a pan-London response, domestic abuse being one really good example. There is not a pan-London response. There are some but there is not a unified pan-London response. It relies on individual local authorities to commission services from their budgets, which will not benefit their residents because of course people do not stay in the refuges in their boroughs. There is unequivocally a need for more specialist domestic abuse provision, in particular for women from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people and for stateless women, for whom there are almost no protections.

That is the same around rough sleeping. The efforts that have been made around pan-London responses to rough sleeping have had a real impact. The same sort of approach needs to be thought about across the board in terms of accessing supported housing in different boroughs and accessing services that might be needed or might be available in perhaps a borough like Westminster but not available in an outer London borough, for example. There is something about how we can collaborate not just in terms of the way we speak in meetings together and on individual cases but on the broader strategic response to rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness as well.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** You are making me have déjà vu because some of these services used to be funded on a pan-London basis, not just what Steve was saying about very similar things to do with getting different boroughs to share best practice but also what you were saying about that pan-London approach, which we used to have with the services being funded across London but of course it was mainly voluntary-sector organisations that were being funded in that way. That has, of course, fallen away over the last 10 years.

You are talking about restoring that to create that network, which is so essential because we have all experienced that. It is really hard to explain to someone who comes to you like a young woman who is trying to move out of a gang situation and saying, "But I cannot be housed here because I will see other gang members. Even though my specific ex-partner might currently be in jail, some of his colleagues and cohorts are going to know where I am and what I am doing. I need to be somewhere else". It is really hard to get people moved in those circumstances, in my personal experience. That is what I have found. That is a really well-made point. Thank you.

Steve, we understand if you suddenly vanish from our screen. We will give you a videocall wave.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** Thanks, Léonie. Take care.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Cheers. Nice to see you, by the way.

**Steve Douglas CBE (Chief Executive Officer, St Mungo's):** Likewise.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Thank you, Steve Douglas.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Tony, you wanted to come in as well?

**Tony McKenzie (Member Involvement Co-ordinator, Crisis):** Yes. I just wanted to make two really quick points. One is around domestic abuse as well. There was a comment you made about women leaving. I am not going to try to teach grandmothers to suck eggs, but I need to flag that that is the most triggering time in the domestic abuse cycle. When women leave, that is when they are affected. When we are talking about domestic abuse and the relationship that it has with COVID, we are talking about lives being at risk here. Steve [Douglas] also mentioned football being off and men being at home and all of that. Some people are even convinced that COVID must be female. On a serious note, it is really important to think about all the ramifications of COVID and how it affects people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), how it affects people experiencing domestic abuse and how it affects people who are in same-sex relationships. It is really important to bear that in mind in all our planning going forward.

The other point that I want to make is around the health relationship and homelessness. There are a few projects. Martin [Burrows] could talk more about health now, but the relationship is so important. In Haringey, for example, we have Mulberry Junction, which is a one-stop shop for single homeless people. In Hackney, we have the Greenhouse. Having the triage and all of these services in one place breaks down so many barriers. We need more of these one-stop shops with health, housing and other support providers there so that people are not travelling across boroughs to access services, which delays them making appointments and all the other barriers that are put up.

Those are my two points. When we talk about domestic abuse, we are talking about a risk to life. When we talk about housing and health, homelessness has multifaceted aspects. A person is not just homeless. They come with all these other things. When we start seeing people holistically, then we get a clearer indication of what is needed to support and help them with their homelessness.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** That is a very good point about needing to see people as people and seeing them holistically and not just seeing them as homeless people or people with health needs or whatever.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Thank you all very much for your helpful answers.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Thank you, Léonie, for covering that whole area. We have covered also ground that Tony [Devenish AM], Siân [Berry AM] and I will be asking questions on and so let us not try to repeat the ground if possible, at all to make up a bit of time. The next section, sustainability of *Everyone in* and the Next Steps accommodation programme will be covered by the Assembly Member for West Central, Tony [Devenish AM].

**Tony Devenish AM:** Thank you, Chair. David, I am going to give you an easy start, if I could, and ask you the following and ask if you can put perhaps even more thought than you would be able to verbally now and give the Committee a written answer, although I am sure Assembly Member Berry wanted to come in with some specifics.

The question anyway is: how does the Mayor's *in for good* principle actually work? How is it evaluated? What do we know about its impact? The comment I have had from the papers is that there is limited public information at this time. Do you want to very briefly try to answer that but mainly answer it in writing afterwards, David? Is that OK? We have time pressures because a lot of people have already spoken on a lot of things.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Yes, of course. The Mayor's *in for good* principle is in relation to severe weather with the SWEP style of things and how we evaluate it is through CHAIN. We know if someone ends up rough sleeping again. How we work this out is that we give the offer to someone.

It is difficult, as Gill [Taylor] has mentioned earlier. The high number of non-UK nationals and those people with NRPF makes it extremely difficult to be able to make an accommodation offer to everyone. What the Mayor's 'in for good' principle looks at is making an offer to someone. We make sure that there is an offer, but the best or the only offer we can give that person at that stage is potentially reconnection back to their home country. That is potentially something that that individual does not want to take up, given where we are. It is difficult around that.

It is not an accommodation offer for everyone. I would love to be in a position whereby we had sufficient funding and were able to say that, regardless of status, we can look at putting people into accommodation. Unfortunately, we are not in that position. What the Mayor's *in for good* principle looks at is making sure there is an ongoing offer to that person. How we evaluate it, like I say, is we evaluate it through CHAIN to see whether people are seen rough sleeping again.

You are right that at this stage that information is not in the public domain. I will pull something together for the Assembly and get something across to you. Yes, that is in broad terms how the 'in for good' principle works.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Thank you, David, for being so succinct. As I said, a broader answer in writing would be fantastic.

My question again I am afraid I am going to ask you to put in writing afterwards as well. Sorry for giving you all this homework when you have a major job already. I do appreciate, by the way, the work of all the people who have come today. You do a fantastic job, everybody. Thank you, all.

My next question, David, is: what type of homes will be provided under RSAP, ie purchase and repair, new build, conversion of existing buildings? I presume it is probably not new build simply because of the time lag.

It is probably all of the other things. What type of tenancies will be available? Again, please answer succinctly with a far more detailed written answer.

For my next question, you will be glad to know, I am allowed to actually ask the question rather than ask for writing.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Thanks, Tony. That is not a problem. Yes, I will definitely put something in writing because there are 38 different schemes that we are funding through RSAP. If I were to go through every single one, we might be here for quite a long time.

As you mentioned, yes, there is very little new build within it. As Steve [Douglas] mentioned earlier, this is a four-year programme and so we are hoping in years 2, 3 and 4 that we will be able to look at more potential new build properties coming in. Given where we were and given the focus in terms of this year, the majority is looking at purchase and repair.

As Gill [Taylor] has mentioned earlier, we are looking at in the main two-year ASTs for people in terms of moving in. In part, that is to mimic the Clearing House initiative we have, and they are the alternatives that are being offered within that. There are quite a high number of Housing First schemes that have come in. Although people were being offered two-year ASTs, the likelihood is that they will be renewed. It is not that we are expecting people to remain in those units just for two years. There is a whole different variety of schemes that are being funded through us.

I will put in writing to you the full gamut of where they are and what they are because, otherwise, yes, I would be here for the next half an hour just listing through all of them. I am very conscious of time.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Thank you. To Gill, how does Haringey support people who are experiencing homelessness with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), please?

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** Thank you. That is a really great question. Over the course of the pandemic, one of the things that we have really grown and expanded is support for people with NRPF in the number of supporting housing services that have been made available to people with NRPF. We have provided food and vouchers for supermarkets to people with NRPF throughout the lockdown period since March [2020]. We have commissioned some specialist immigration support and advice to help people resolve complex immigration issues and issues with their European Union (EU) settled status applications as well.

One of the things that are also looking to do now is to support people to challenge the NRPF condition where we think that is appropriate. Partners here will agree with me that the NRPF condition is devastating to people in any situation but particularly when facing homelessness. It blocks off just about every avenue to access support for housing, employment or anything. When it is in place for people, there simply is no real route out of homeless. It is one temporary situation to another.

For us, one of the things that politically in the borough, but also at a service level, is doing everything we can to fill the gaps that the NRPF condition places on people within the legal requirements that there are for us and what we are able to do.

One of the things that we have needed to rely on and have been very fortunate to be able to rely on is an incredible network of community organisations that are advocating for people and providing support for them with everything from food to family to reconnection to legal advice. A huge number of organisations are

working with us in Haringey on our Welcome Strategy, which is about how we support people to be part of the communities that they are living in and how we recognise that every person in our borough has value and is important and that actually the NRPF condition is something that they are experiencing, not something that they are. There is a tendency to homogenise people. What that fails to do is recognise the important relationships that we all have with people around us with different immigration statuses.

That would probably be the quickest synopsis I can do on what we are doing in Haringey.

**Tony Devenish AM:** That is really helpful, Gill. Thank you. I am also going to ask everybody else to write to me on the following question. How can the Mayor and local authorities best support people who are experiencing homeless with NRPF? The thing I always prefer rather than millions of words is almost a Venn diagram or chart of your experience and how you have managed to do that. That may illustrate the point really clearly.

My final question - and then I will pass on to colleagues who are saying they want to come in because it is such an important subject - goes back to David. The Mayor has been granted £19 million from my Government - and I am delighted that my Government has done that - to continue to support rough sleepers, as announced at the September [2020] Mayor's Question Time (MQT). How will this be used, please? Including this £19 million, what will be the total budget for this financial year 2020/21 for the Mayor's rough sleeping programme actually be, please, David?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Sure, Tony. The £19 million that we were granted is for the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and is, in the main, to continue the work we are doing in terms of hotels and keeping those hotels open, as well as this, as part of this money, we have accommodation to set off what we are doing in terms of triage hubs.

At the start of the pandemic, the Assembly and all colleagues around the table know in terms of *No Second Night Out*, that was one of the Mayor's flagship services. With that, we had to cease *No Second Night Out* because the start of *No Second Night Out* in terms of the hubs is communal sleeping and so that does not work. What we have done is to introduce triage hubs. We have one working in east London, we have one working in south London and we are about to have one operational covering Westminster and Camden. What these triage hubs are doing is trying to help those people who are on the streets and have been rough sleeping since the start of the pandemic. We have broadened out the criteria in terms of *No Second Night Out* rather than it purely being focused on those people who have been rough sleeping to focus on those people who have been rough sleeping since the start of the pandemic. As part of this funding, we have further hotel provision. In Wandsworth, it is going to be based on these principles, looking at turning people around quickly, having people stay for 28 days and getting people into permanent accommodation. Part of the funding we have is to continue the hotels. The other part of the funding is to do the work around the triage and helping the funding for the other hotels.

As well as that, we have additional funding to focus on the most entrenched people who have come in through the hotels through the Target 1000 work. We will be having a small team from St Mungo's, which will be helping us around that group. We also have some further additional funding for Roma mediators to work in a number of London boroughs to look at helping that very disadvantaged group and help that group go through.

In terms of the total funding pot - because that was the other question you asked me - this year our funding now is just shy of £65 million for rough sleeping services, of which just over £16 million is GLA funding. The other funding is from MHCLG. The vast majority of that funding is for the COVID response. There was £19 million plus the £8 million plus the £7 million that we were allocated before. Of that £19 million, I would

say that we were lucky enough to get some pre-allocated of that money. In terms of the hotel provision, we had pre-allocated money to help us provide through August and September [2020] because the hotel provision is extremely expensive, and we were in a position where the funding was looking at running out. We were lucky to get that pre-allocated. The £19 million is to cover the hotels but from June onwards and then the additional provision that I have also talked about.

**Tony Devenish AM:** David, that is brilliant. You are so precise. You would never make a politician. You do not waffle. Can I please thank you once again and ask if you can write and break that £65 million down to the Committee? That would be great.

Chair, I will hand back because I know that both Assembly Member Berry and Assembly Member Gavron want to step in my place. Thank you, Chair.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Yes. Thank you, Tony, for bringing us in on schedule with your written requests. Much appreciated. I am going to move on to the next section. Siân [Berry AM], if there is anything in this area before we move on to the next area?

**Siân Berry AM:** Yes, it is related to budgets and finance. Hopefully, it will be very quick. It is to David Eastwood.

You have just outlined the additional funding you have had for winter accommodation. Maybe the £43 million across London and £19 million for the GLA is specifically to help with the winter problems, although you have just said some of it was used through the summer. How does that compare to normal budgets, though? It is all new money. None of it is what you would normally receive from the Government. How much do we normally put into winter accommodation?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Yes, the £19 million is for the hotels. It is not just about winter. The £15 million that the Government has just announced is more about winter and the Cold Weather Fund that also central Government has announced is about winter.

In terms of how much money we would normally put in in winter, as Steve [Douglas] and other colleagues have mentioned, we co-ordinate SWEP. We put it generally on overflow SWEP accommodation, but that is communal sleeping. That is something that is very different this year.

In terms of the funding that we have, if you separate out the COVID money, if you separate out that additional £36 million we have in terms of the COVID response, then the budget that we have this year is a little bit more in terms of the GLA and is a little bit more in terms of the MHCLG, but that is reflected in the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) that the Government has and the additional funding that comes in through that. Outside of the COVID money, the budget we have this year is similar to what we had last year.

**Siân Berry AM:** How much is it? What is your normal budget in comparison to what you are spending now?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Sorry, Siân. The normal budget we have in terms of the GLA budget is between £13 million and £16 million. In terms of additional money, we have from the MHCLG over the past years, it has generally been around £8 million to £10 million from then.

**Siân Berry AM:** It is triple the rough proportion?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Yes, the COVID response has meant that we have significantly more funding this year than we have had previously.

**Siân Berry AM:** OK. Great. I also want to ask about the Next Steps Accommodation Programme funding. As I understand it, we have received £66.7 million in the initial tranche, of which £57.8 million is going to capital and £8.9 million to revenue. In terms of providing this kind of thing, is that a normal ratio that you would expect for capital to revenue?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** We are so pleased this year that the Government has listened to our requests in terms of having capital and revenue together. We brought this up when we first got the *Move On* Fund money a few years ago. We were saying, "You need to have revenue. You cannot just have capital. This does not work in this area". We are so pleased that that has been listened to and, yes, there is that joint funding.

In terms of the ratios, it is probably about right or it appears to be about right in terms of this round of bids. It would be very interesting to see in future rounds. There is the concern - and this is something that we are making sure we are feeding into the Spending Review - around that more long-term funding. Only having revenue funding for four years is great. That is a great improvement on having no revenue funding, but four years is not necessarily long enough to help people turn around their lives, especially if they are moving into Housing First or that kind of starter initiative. We need to ensure that that funding continues and ensure that as Gill [Taylor] has mentioned -- I personally would be a big fan of ringfencing coming back on in terms of supporting people and funding in terms of local authorities to be able to do that. There is a real risk as budgets get tighter and tighter in local authorities that non-statutory functions such as services to rough sleepers get cut more and more and we see fewer hostels being around and less supported housing being provided. We need to ensure that that continues.

**Siân Berry AM:** OK. Great. Then my final question is related to that. You have the £66.7 million, which is the one-year pot, effectively. You would expect more to come in later tranches running up to spring. The Mayor has said at the end of October [2020] that he is going to fund 903 homes with this. I have done a bit of maths and that works out on average to about £73,000 per home.

I wondered. When you are giving us this information - you said you would send us information about the RSAP and the 37 different schemes - can you give us an estimate of the amount needed per home under each scheme? Supported housing needs more revenue. It would be great to know roughly how you budget up each different type of scheme that you do, and which ones are more capital-heavy and revenue-heavy, if you see what I mean. It would be incredibly useful from the point of view of scrutinising the budget and making proposals to be able to do those estimates of how much it costs to scale up each thing.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Yes, we can do that. We did have some bids that were revenue-only. There is that balance out. Like I say, the revenue money goes for four years and so that does mean that in some instances that revenue could look quite high if you look at it and think about it as purely one year, but that is four years' support. Some of the capital -- it is balancing out. We were in a position whereby we needed things to happen quickly and we needed things to happen immediately. In terms of the scrutiny, we are going back and forth with bidders at the moment in terms of doing the due diligence to make sure that this is going to be achievable, it is going to be able to happen this year and we are getting the best value for money.

Yes, Siân, we can break down each scheme in terms of capital and revenue allocation. That is not a problem, but in many ways, you are comparing apples and pears within that. I want to make sure that everyone is clear



that not every scheme is delivering exactly the same thing. This is not just us providing a block of flats and each flat is the same and then the level of support is the same. There are different projects within that.

**Siân Berry AM:** Yes. That is fine. In the Housing Committee we are used to looking at the other housing programmes and realising that an average is an average and all of that, but it would be really great to know, yes, roughly what is going on, especially for things like buying back and repairing homes, for example. That has to cost a lot more than £73,000 of capital. There are going to be different balances between different schemes where you might be renting things over eight months instead and that sort of thing.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** OK. Thank you. We have less than quarter of an hour left. We have answered all the questions on preparing for winter during the pandemic, particularly on winter night shelters and what can be done over the Christmas period. I suggest that we go into the wider forms of homelessness in London during the pandemic. Siân, you will lead on this issue?

**Siân Berry AM:** The question is really to get some recommendations from you at this time for how the Mayor's wider programmes to tackle rough sleeping need to be changed and any key differences in what was previously being done compared with now in terms of long-term support. If you can give us any additional recommendations that we can make to the Mayor, that would be really useful.

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** Yes. One of the things that has come to light for us - and I know this is a pan-London issue - is around youth homelessness and young people being affected by rough sleeping. We know that young people have been affected by furlough and by precarious working situations. We have seen that on the streets. We also know that if you are rough sleeping when you are young, the chances are you are much more likely to be rough sleeping when you are older. There is a real need, well highlighted by the [London] Youth Gateway, around rough sleeping services specifically for young people that really quickly take them into youth-focused environments and get rid of some of that stigma and the relationships around traditional rough sleeping services. For me, youth homelessness would be a really important addition to the Mayor's programme.

**Siân Berry AM:** Thank you very much. I was going to try to raise that with you all and so thank you, Gill, for bringing that up. We have seen some evidence in the latest data that people in precarious situations are the ones who are becoming homeless. The renters who have solid contracts, who know their rights and who can resist a section 21 are staying in their homes. We have done this as a Committee before. We have looked at hidden homelessness, people who sofa surf and the reasons for youth homelessness and people needing to escape their homes. Those are things that will have been more serious during lockdown.

I have done some research by YouGov - because there is enough of it to show up in opinion polling - that people have been turning away people whom they would normally put up as a sofa surfer or in a spare room for reasons that it has highlighted. It is potentially illegal to bring someone into your home now under the COVID regulations and potentially that needs to change. Also, people are concerned about their own health.

Can I put that to David? What are you doing to respond to this particular growth in young people who potentially might need specialist services?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Thank you. Within the provision I mentioned in Wandsworth as part of our triage health response, we have Depaul, which is coming in and doing a dedicated service for under-25s and under-35s. That is separate to what is being provided within the rest of that provision. We are looking at that kind of dedicated approach to this group. I appreciate that it is not as much as we might want to be able to be doing around more work in this area, but from our side it is the start

of an approach. We can look at how that works and how we work differently with that group rather than, as Gill said, them just coming into a standard rough sleeping service. This is very much a separate project within the hotels. There is a separate floor. Depaul is going to be running the support for us around it.

We are starting that work. It is very much to look at what we need to include within our next round of recommissioning. Where we would have been without the pandemic in terms of my team would have been working at recommissioning all the Mayor's services as we speak now. However, with the pandemic, we have delayed that work and are looking at extending the contracts. What we want to see from this pilot that we are doing within the Wandsworth hotels is how this works, whether this is an area of work that the Mayor should be getting involved in, whether it is something that should be pan-London, whether it makes more sense to be doing from a local authority perspective and what more we can do. We are really looking at how we can do this, working with Depaul around what works and what does not work, whether we have the pathways out and whether they are different pathways out than we currently have. It is something that we are keen to look at, but I would agree with Gill that it is an area that we need to be focusing more on given the rise in numbers of young people who seem to be sleeping rough.

**Siân Berry AM:** Gill, I think you want to come back in. You mentioned earlier that pan-London responses might be needed for these groups of people that are smaller and therefore there are not that many in each local authority. Would you like to comment on that?

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** Yes, absolutely. Youth rough sleeping is really a good example of that. Certainly, in Haringey we have a very small number of people and the evidence base for commissioning of separate services is not there. In the north London sub-region and then more widely pan-London, that is absolutely the case. Also, young people really do not want to be homeless in their borough. The shame that they feel around rough sleeping - that their friends might see them, that they are near to their college - really affects where they go to sleep. That does mean that you end up creating a much more pan-London experience of homelessness for young people. Sleeping on night buses, for example, travelling through all of the different boroughs, they will be picked up by different outreach teams. A pan-London response would be great.

I do have another point, but I will wait until other colleagues have spoken on that.

**Siân Berry AM:** OK. Tony, you wanted to come in?

**Tony McKenzie (Member Involvement Co-ordinator, Crisis):** Thank you. I was going to highlight the need for the pan-London [services]. Gill has done that. That is brilliant.

The other thing I wanted to do was to go back a little bit to the NRPF and what the Mayor could do. Gill mentioned this as well. We need more funding for legal advice and advocacy. Just because someone has been branded with NRPF does not mean that that is the case.

This might be a bit radical. We need to encourage housing associations to provide more free accommodation. If we do not ask, we do not get. The other thing is funding employment programmes especially targeting European nationals who do not have entitlement to public funds until they can find work. What we are talking about is creating stepping stones or ladders just enough to get people back up and back on and then moving forward.

I want to touch on the last point that Gill made about youth homelessness. If we have a pan-London approach, people will not be going to other boroughs and then getting ping-ponged across boroughs because

they do not have local connection here or everybody ends up in Westminster - it is that whole Dick Whittington thing - because there are more services there. We really do need to look at how we can work smarter together with more partnership working.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** I hear the pan-London calls. We have to appreciate, though, that in quantum terms the City of Westminster stands out a mile in terms of the number of homeless with 900 compared to about 150 or 200 in other local authorities. Martin [Burrows] has emphasised that a few times. That is another reality that we should not forget.

**Siân Berry AM:** Yes. The final question out of all of that is to say, in terms of the eviction ban that was supposed to end, people seemed to get some confusion about whether or not they could be evicted. The protections that are in place now are just a delay until the new year, as far as I can tell.

Are you seeing signs that people are being evicted from private rented accommodation now or that they are coming out because the pressure is too much? Maybe Gill is the best person to answer that from a local authority perspective.

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** Thank you. Yes, we are seeing people who have experienced illegal evictions. We have also seen people who have approached us after they have left a property having been threatened with eviction and not having understood their rights.

One of the things that recent changes in legislation have done is meant that there have not been many illegal evictions over the last few years because landlords do not need to use that process to do that. Of course, now that there is a stronger relationship from the Government to landlords around evictions, what we are seeing is that unscrupulous landlords are evicting people. As was mentioned earlier, it is the people in more precarious situations who face that reality. Those of us who are renting, who know our rights and who understand how we can resist eviction, for example, are much safer than families and people in overcrowded HMO situations who are often subject to precarious employment situations as well. We are seeing an increase in that.

We are also very concerned that, as you mentioned, it is only a delay. What happens at the end of the delay when we are suddenly faced with, in our case, several hundred people and households who are at risk of eviction? That is a very real and significant issue for London to think about in the long term.

**Siân Berry AM:** Are you able to reach out and capture those people although they are not homeless now? The new prevention duties and things should mean that you are able to attract people so that at least you know they are under threat and then you can --

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** Yes. We have - and I know that other local authorities have as well - some pretty wide-scale analysis of the families at risk, how we reach out to them, how we make sure that they have access to all the things they might need to either prevent the eviction or avoid falling homeless if the eviction is carried through. We are working with colleagues in Citizens Advice and a number of other advice and organisations to help families in particular to maximise their income, apply for Discretionary Housing Payments and things like that as mitigating factors.

It is helping. It is really good that we have that early engagement, but it does not go as far as we would like it to in actually genuinely preventing those evictions from taking place.

**Siân Berry AM:** Great. David, this is not particularly your job, but what do you see as being the role of the GLA in this? The Mayor has potentially the loudest voice in London for making people aware of their rights. Renters are quite organised around this, but the renters' organisations have limited reach. Can you see a role for helping prevent homelessness simply by making people aware of what their rights are?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Yes, Siân. It is not 100% my area, but it is definitely something that we need to be looking at that is taking place. As Gill has mentioned, we are very concerned about when the ban finishes and when furlough finishes and all of that. In my own work, that is a big concern for us about that potential wave of people whom we are potentially going to be seeing hitting the streets if we are not careful. Yes, the more work that can be done in terms of educating people around their rights in the private rented sector and all of that is extremely helpful.

There are those difficulties that we saw in the first lockdown in terms of people who have tied accommodation linked to their employment. All of that is going to lead to more people potentially ending up on the streets. The more work we can do to stop that and prevent that is always the key. Educating people so that they are aware of their rights is definitely the key to ensuring that that does not happen.

**Siân Berry AM:** Great. I might hand back to the Chair now for any wrap-up gap-filling that needs doing at the end of the meeting.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** OK. Thank you, Siân Berry, for that. We have, yes, come to the end. We have covered all the ground.

I wanted to be sure before I close the session to our panellists. Are there any emerging issues that we should look out for in the rise of homelessness that we have not normally picked up? These are very different times. Pandemics are once-in-a-century events. I wondered if you had seen anything on the ground that suggests to you that it may result in rising homelessness, more so than the authorities can pick up on at the moment? Yes, Martin, please.

**Martin Burrows (Director of Research and Campaigns, Groundswell):** The elephant in the room with all of this is Brexit approaching us. We are soon to have thousands of potentially homeless EU citizens who are likely to become undocumented at the end of the Brexit transition period, which potentially is going to give us a big flow of people who have a similar status to having NRPF and will have no access to support. If people cannot feel safe to access support and do not have routes to access support, what we do is we risk pushing people underground into riskier living situations and riskier working situations like modern slavery. That is not just a personal risk to people now, but during COVID-19 it is now a public health risk. Yes, building on the NRPF and acknowledging that Brexit is going to be a significant factor is quite important.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Thank you, Martin. That had not occurred to me. Gill.

**Gill Taylor (Strategic Lead – Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults, Haringey Council):** Thank you. Following on from that, really, one of the other things that is really crucial that the pandemic has highlighted for us is about the ongoing impacts of racism and racial inequality. We know that disproportionately people from BAME backgrounds are affected by homelessness and in particular are more likely to remain homeless. We also know that black men are more likely to be affected by eviction from hostels and by particular experiences with the police. One of the things that the Black Lives Matter in the United States and increasingly in the UK has shown us is that there is actually a lot of work to do in the rough sleeping space and in the homelessness space around tackling racism. Thinking about NRPF, we now know - and if you go and visit any of the hotels - the majority of people who are still there are people from

BAME backgrounds. That racial inequality is something that we should not be afraid to talk about and that we should not be afraid to have the difficult conversations around what that tells us about what is going on both within homelessness and also within our society in general that leads to those things in people's experiences. For me, that is something that has come out really strongly over the last few months, which I hope we take forward into the future.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Thank you, Gill, for raising that. David?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Yes. I wanted to build on what Martin said. It is a huge risk in terms of EU nationals. Also, the Home Office policy that was announced around rough sleeping and around enforcement action gives a huge concern that people will stop engaging with support. It is unfounded but there is such a risk. The lack of joined up policies in terms of rough sleeping and the Home Office is a huge concern to me and I know other colleagues.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Thank you for those last words. I still have a few Assembly Members who want to make contributions if you can spare a bit of time for Andrew Boff and Nicky [Gavron AM]?

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** Thanks very much. We know that of the GLA's £4.82 billion Government-funded Affordable Housing Grant, about £535 million is yet to be allocated. Do you think the Mayor should look at that unspent amount in the light of the rough sleeping successes that we have had and talk about reallocating some of that towards solving that problem?

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** David, I think you are the only person to respond to that at all.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Andrew, potentially yes, but as we mentioned earlier it is that revenue support and ensuring people can have that revenue support in terms of moving into that provision and matching some of that with revenue. I am sure we all would welcome that, but my concern is always that we look at going, "All right, capital. Yes, there are some flats for people. They can move in. They are ready to move in". We need to ensure that actually there is the support there for people.

We could look at what more we can do around helping people move out of Clearing Houses and move out of those supported units when they are ready to move out of those supported units, but for that I would much rather units were flipped. My personal opinion is, in terms of when someone has moved into a Clearing House unit, being able to flip that unit, the person stays in that accommodation and we provide new accommodation for another rough sleeper to be able to move in so that that person can remain in their home. That would be the better way of doing it and then the support moving across.

Yes, we could look at doing something like that, but my concern is more that actually we need revenue to support people. People need support, even if it is only for the first six months as they are getting used to things. We need to make sure that we have both revenue and capital.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** With the lines being blurred specifically on rough sleeping initiatives and grants from the Government, it does free up some of that money that is allocated to capital from Government to go to revenue. Would that help?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead, Greater London Authority):** Essentially, I never quite understand how you can flip capital to revenue, I am afraid. Yes, if it is possible to be able to do that flipping, then, yes, that would make perfect sense. You need the capital and you need the revenue to be able to ensure that people have the right support.

**Andrew Boff AM (Deputy Chair):** After a few years of budgeting experience, I can tell you it is highly possible.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Thank you, Andrew. We are actually over our allotted time. Nicky, can you be very brief and to the point, please?

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Yes. Chair, this is a question from way back, but there are lessons to be learned. When we were talking about moving everyone out from hotels, there was a question about eviction. There has been a proportion of people being evicted from hotels. Very compelling points have been made for support. I wondered whether we track these people and how much support they get. There are obviously lessons to be learned from this. I do not know who would answer that or whether you would like it as a written answer.

**Murad Qureshi AM (Chair):** Nicky, can I suggest that our panel has had two hours of being questioned exhaustively? Can I ask for some written responses from them if at all possible, on Nicky's last question? That would be greatly appreciated if you could make that effort after the huge effort you have already made for the past two hours in responding to our questioning.

Can I use this opportunity to thank our guests, David Eastwood, Steve Douglas who left earlier, Gill Taylor, Tony McKenzie and Martin Burrows? Thank you very much for your contributions. They are noted and we will take them on board in any recommendations we make or views that we express to the Mayor on what could be done to improve the programme for the second lockdown that we are going through at this moment and - who knows - maybe subsequent ones as well. Thank you very much for your contributions.

**Léonie Cooper AM:** Hear, hear. Thank you.