

Response to follow up request for information from the 10 November 2020 meeting of the Housing Committee – COVID-19, Rough Sleeping and Homelessness in London

Request for information:

During the course of the discussion Members, requested that the Rough Sleeping Lead, GLA, provide the following information:

- How the Mayor and local authorities can best support people who are experiencing homeless with no recourse to public funds (NRPF);
- A summary of how the Mayor’s In for Good principle works, how it is evaluated, and what is known about its impact;
- Data on the schemes being funded under the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP), including the types of homes and tenancies, and an estimate of the revenue and capital amount needed per home under each scheme;
- A breakdown of the approximately £65 million rough sleeping budget including the source of the funding and what it is allocated to; and
- What data is available and what lessons have been learned in regards to people who have been evicted from hotels under the Everyone In Scheme and what level of support they received after their eviction.

Response:

Please see below answers to some of the questions – I am hoping to have the time tomorrow to send the final information requested across.

- **How the Mayor and local authorities can best support people who are experiencing homeless with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)**

We work in partnership with charities on a range of measures to support people in the mayor services. At present due to the pandemic it is possible for us to provide temporary accommodation to people regardless of status in the first instance. The hotels procured by City Hall have many residents who are not from the UK. Many non-UK nationals in the hotels have full entitlements in the UK and their move-on options will be similar to those of UK nationals, for example, private rented sector accommodation.

However, there are also large numbers of non-UK nationals who have unclear or insecure immigration status that might limit their move-on options. We are funding specialist immigration advice to help those non-UK nationals determine their rights and entitlements and to support any applications they can make to obtain secure status and access to public funds. We have also funded specialist employment support so that those that need to access work to fund their accommodation receive the help they need in these difficult times.

Under the current legislation, it is extremely difficult to find appropriate move-on support for those with limitations on their access to benefits. This makes it extremely difficult for ourselves and local authorities to provide appropriate support to those on the streets who are NRPF.

We have urged the Government to suspend all immigration-based exclusions from welfare and homelessness assistance – the No Recourse to Public Funds condition to ensure that everyone has access to essential support, and the Habitual Residence Test so that EEA citizens do not need to prove their ‘right to reside’ to access much needed benefits such as Universal Credit. We have also urged them to scrap plans for rough sleeping to become grounds for refusal or cancellation of permission to be in the UK, take action to prevent European Londoners from becoming undocumented and take all necessary measures to avoid pushing refugees and asylum seekers into homelessness.

- **A summary of how the Mayor’s ‘In for good’ principle works, how it is evaluated, and what is known about its impact**

The Mayor’s ‘In For Good’ principle, was developed as part of the changes that we have made to the Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP), it means that clients won’t be asked to leave accommodation until they have an ongoing offer of support in place. All Local Authorities have signed up to this principal for the last couple of years SWEP. We know that for the Mayor services, ‘In for Good’ last year resulted in 80% of those that came into Pan-London SWEP moving into more long term accommodation.

- **What data is available and what lessons have been learned in regards to people who have been evicted from hotels under the Everyone In Scheme and what level of support they received after their eviction**

Of over 2,200 people who have stayed in the GLA hotels, there have been 420 unplanned departures to date - as well as around 800 people positively moving on.

Unplanned moves happen for a range of reasons, including people abandoning the hotels, being evicted, or a long stay in custody or hospital. All the GLA hotels have support providers on site 24/7, working with guests to help them remain in the hotel and to positively move on. But hotels are not the answer for everyone, particularly those with very high support needs who need the more intensive support offered in hostels. So, there are inevitably occasions when clients’ behaviour puts other guests and staff in the hotel at so much risk that they can no longer be safely accommodated. Where unplanned moves are unavoidable, our charity workers work with boroughs, outreach teams and other partners to try to ensure alternative accommodation is secured and support continues to be offered. CHAIN also allows us to ensure any of those that have left the hotels and end up rough sleeping can be monitored and outreach teams made aware so we can ensure that more appropriate accommodation and support can hopefully be offered to the client.