

Kit Malthouse MP

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10th June 2019

Dear Mr Malthouse,

London Assembly Housing Committee investigation – Housing First in London

In April 2019, the London Assembly Housing Committee examined the Housing First model of homelessness service in London. We spoke to representatives from services who deliver Housing First in London, from Crisis and from the Greater London Authority's Housing and Land department. In this letter we set out some of our findings from the session, together with some recommendations as to how Housing First in London could be better supported.

Evidence base for Housing First

Throughout this investigation the Committee heard evidence confirming academic work¹ indicating that Housing First is successful in sustaining tenancy and ending homelessness for the most entrenched rough sleepers. There is also a large amount of research that has already been done looking at how Housing First could be scaled up and implemented across England². This suggests that the Government should no longer be funding Housing First pilots, but rather should commit to long term funding for Housing First services.

The Committee also heard that short-term funding for Housing First pilots stands at odds with the principles of the Housing First model – that tenancy and support services are provided to the individual indefinitely. Therefore, funding of Housing First services also needs to be provided long-term.

Recommendation 1:

The Government should consider providing longer-term funding to Housing First services now, rather than waiting for the evaluation of the current pilots in Manchester, Liverpool and the West Midlands.

¹ See, for example, Bretherton, J. and Pleace, N. (2015). [Housing First in England: an evaluation of nine services](#). University of York: Centre for Housing Policy.

² Blood, I., Goldup, M., Peter, L. and Dulson, S. (2018) [Implementing Housing First across England and Wales](#) Imogen Blood & Associates. London: Crisis and Homeless Link

Blood, I., Copeman, I., Goldup, M., Pleace, N., Bretherton, J. & Dulson, S. (2017) [Housing First Feasibility study for Liverpool City Region](#), London: Crisis.

A pan-London Housing First service

In his Rough Sleeping Plan of Action released in June 2018, the Mayor of London states that £316 million of funding from the Government is needed over the next five years to fund a number of initiatives to tackle rough sleeping in the capital³. Among these initiatives would be a pan-London Housing First service. This would ensure consistency in Housing First service delivery, and lead to a high-fidelity approach (ie one which is rigorously and consistently in line with Housing First principles) being delivered across the whole of London. The Committee supports the Mayor in seeking to establish this service.

In 2018, the Government provided £28 million of funding for three Housing First pilots in Greater Manchester, Liverpool and the West Midlands⁴. It is not clear to us why London was not considered for this funding, especially since the numbers of entrenched rough sleepers in London (the cohort which Housing First serves) continues to rise. The most recent data from CHAIN indicates that the numbers of people seen rough sleeping in London across a minimum of two years has risen from 2474 (32 per cent of rough sleepers) in 2014/2015 to 3028 (40 per cent of rough sleepers) in 2017/18⁵.

Recommendation 2:

The Government should provide funding for the Mayor to establish a pan-London Housing First service.

I would be grateful to receive a response to our findings and recommendations at your earliest convenience. Please could you send your response to Lorraine Ford, Senior Policy Adviser for the Housing Committee, (Lorraine.ford@london.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,



Sian Berry AM

Former Chair of the Housing Committee

³ Mayor of London (2018) [Rough Sleeping Plan of Action](#)

⁴ Press Release (2018) [Housing Secretary James Brokenshire awards funding to reduce rough sleeping](#)

⁵ [CHAIN Annual Report 2017/18](#)