

## London Assembly Housing Committee – Tuesday, 2 April 2019

### Transcript of Item 4 – Housing First in London

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** That takes us straight on to today's main item, which is about the current delivery of Housing First homelessness services in London.

Can I welcome our four guests? We have Mark Taylor, Assistant Director of Services at the Single Homeless Project, which delivers Housing First services to a number of boroughs; Stuart Nevill, Chief Executive Officer of Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond (SPEAR), which also does a form of Housing First homelessness services in London; Hannah Gousy, Policy and Public Affairs Manager for Crisis; and David Eastwood, Rough Sleeping Lead Manager for Housing and Land in the Greater London Authority (GLA). Thank you all for coming.

Before we start I wanted to just briefly ask Mark Taylor to give us the definition of Housing First. What we are talking about today in terms of how it differs from other approaches to chronic homelessness services?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** Thanks. I will try to give a reasonable definition as I understand it. I guess Housing First turns housing-related support on its head a bit. Rather than the traditional approach, which is to warehouse vulnerable rough sleepers in large hostels and then expect them to engage with support and overcome a number of hurdles to maintain their residency, Housing First begins with the very simple principle that everyone has a right to a home and, essentially, they have a right to their own front door. Rather than housing people within warehouses or large hostels, Housing First clients get their own home, which may be provided through the private rented sector (PRS), through social housing or through registered social landlords, and then underpinning that and supporting that is the support, really. Fundamentally, the home is the basis on which people can begin their journey of recovery.

Traditionally, Housing First is aimed at the most entrenched rough sleeping group. This is the group that it is seen to work most fundamentally for and where it is the most cost-effective. Alongside the home, we offer flexible and open-ended support, which again is unusual because most support - floating support, as we would call it - tends to be time limited. The recovery journey is basically determined by the client, the length of the support and how much support they engage in. It is very much a client-centred approach.

Effectively, we are separating housing and support. The housing is delivered and the support, whether or not the client engages with the support, the amount of support they get and the amount of engagement is very much determined by the client. It is a client-led approach, really, and that works much better with a client group that has found themselves outside of the mainstream of supported housing.

We tend to use a strengths-based model. Is that enough?

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** That is quite a lot. We will come back to you to ask for more details. Essentially, you are saying that housing is given unconditionally to people who have chronic homelessness and possibly multiple problems, and support for other problems is provided on top of that?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** Yes, and when they are engaged with our services, we would support the client to link in with drug or substance misuse services, mental health --

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Yes. Rather than housing being conditional on engaging in support first, the housing is provided first?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** That is right.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Thank you very much. Also, to David Eastwood, you are the Rough Sleeping Lead Manager at the GLA. What responsibilities does the Mayor have for rough sleeping? Rather than going into detail about your work, what are his statutory responsibilities here? What does he have to do?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** He does not have any statutory duty, but in terms of duties the Mayor has two functions. One is providing the strategic direction, which he does through the No Nights Sleeping Rough Taskforce, and the other one is through commissioning services. We commission pan-London services where it makes sense to commission pan-London services, such as No Second Night Out or the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN). We also provide services to fill the gaps where boroughs do not commission their own services, such as London Street Rescue where we provide outreach in the 13 boroughs that do not commission their own outreach services. Therefore, he has, yes, two main functions, one strategic and one the operational services.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Thank you very much. We will move on to our questions now. I will start by asking about the need for this and the demand for this. This is a question to Hannah first of all. We know there are issues with counting rough sleepers and with knowing the scale of the problem. Do we know how many Londoners there are in need of help with chronic homelessness?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes. Just to set the scene in terms of the numbers of people in London who are experiencing the very worst forms of homelessness, we recently commissioned Heriot-Watt University to undertake a piece that looks at people who are sleeping rough, who are sleeping in cars, tents and on public transport, people who are living in unsuitable forms of temporary accommodation (TA) such as hostels and also people who are sofa-surfing, people who are staying with strangers from night to night and do not have any certainty about where they will be going from there. We found that in 2016 there were around 60,000 people living in London who were experiencing these worst forms of homelessness. We found that if we project forward into the future, by 2026 that number is projected to rise to 90,000 people if there is no significant change to Government policy.

Last year [2018] we published a plan [Everybody In: How to end homelessness in Great Britain] to end homelessness and, as part of that plan, we commissioned Imogen Blood Associates to look at the demand for Housing First across the United Kingdom (UK) or in Great Britain. We found that there is a huge mismatch between demand and the provision of Housing First services. There are around 2,300 people, we have estimated, in London who would be eligible for a Housing First place and that is based on their current experience of homelessness, so how long they have experienced homelessness for, and also based on the fact that they have multiple support needs. We know from that research that there are currently only around 84 people in London who are being supported by projects and so there is a huge gap in terms of provision at the moment for people.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** That seems absolutely huge. You are saying that of the 60,000 people who are experiencing the worst kinds of homelessness, there are 2,300 people with long-term experience of this kind of homelessness plus other support needs?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** What are those other support needs?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** In terms of support needs we are looking at people who have a history of offending behaviour, who have mental or physical health problems, and also addiction issues in terms of alcohol and drugs.

It is worth saying that that 2,300 number is a fairly conservative estimate and so it only estimates the number of people who are in need of Housing First right now. It does not calculate future needs. It may be that we have people leaving the care system or the prison system who would also be eligible for a Housing First offer, but that number just calculates the current need provision for Housing First.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** In terms of London, David, how are you looking at this problem? Are you taking note of Crisis's figures and making plans? Are you commissioning any further research at a London level? It is great that Crisis did this, but if it is the Mayor's responsibility should we in the GLA be looking at this more closely?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** We are. As Hannah said, there are different ways of cutting numbers and looking at numbers. You can look at the numbers and work out about 3,000. You could look at CHAIN. We commission CHAIN. We know there were about 7,500 rough sleepers last year [2018]. Of that group, if you take the flow out, which is around 4,000, you end up with about 3,000 individuals who are your stock and returner numbers, whom you could say could benefit from a Housing First or housing-led approach.

At the moment we have some very good hostels that work that are commissioned by local authorities and the Mayor does not get involved in relation to the commissioning of hostels. That is very much from the borough level.

If you are looking at Housing First and you are looking at that step change in relation to an approach, it is very much a different approach to what is currently offered across the board. You need to look at it at scale. You need to look at the feasibility about putting money all in one pot and then working out how to divide it best, which is very difficult when the Mayor has only limited powers in this area and limited funding in this area.

We are in conversations with Crisis and with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) about looking at a London-only feasibility study in relation to Housing First, and in relation to what scale we will need to step up to, to be able to do those changes, to make the changes at the scale that is needed to mean that Housing First is a step change approach.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** We will get more on to what the Mayor is doing much later on in the meeting. Have you been looking at Manchester? We have seen reports that Manchester has set up a Housing First service.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** We have indeed, yes.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** The count of rough sleepers in Manchester was estimated at 278 and that was everybody, not just the long-term ones but the short-term ones as well. They had over 500 referrals in their first year. Are you concerned that estimates of need might be too low and that once this is set up, the demand might outstrip what is being provided?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** Not necessarily. We are very lucky in London to have CHAIN and we know more detailed information than Manchester does.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** This is calculated differently than the census?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** It is different to a count. A count is a one-off snapshot when people go out. In London we have CHAIN where all outreach workers record everyone who is seen rough sleeping and provide an intervention in terms of that and so we know, across the entire year, everyone who is seen rough sleeping by an outreach worker in London. Manchester does not have that same level of information. We know more in terms of what client groups are there. We know, like I say, that 4,000 people are only seen rough sleeping once and interventions are provided and those people do not return to rough sleeping. They do not have that level of information in Manchester. We have more information and so we have better data. We know more of what the needs are for that group. We know the support needs of everyone who is on the streets. We know more information than Manchester does.

In terms of whether demand will outstrip supply, that depends on what model you use for Housing First. It depends on the cohort that you choose. We can choose the cohort in London, which we did before in relation to the pilot we did back in 2011, which we did in relation to Housing First. We piloted the approach from the GLA and piloted a pan-London approach to try to test the water and see if it could work in the hope that boroughs would then end up implementing the model. A number of boroughs did, such as Camden, in terms of taking that forward. We had an approach to try to test the market back in 2011. Now we are looking at what more we can do.

Yes, it is an approach that has some evidence of scale. Manchester was very lucky to get funding from central Government. That was not an open bidding process in relation to how Manchester, Liverpool and the other areas got the money. The Government just went to those areas and suggested it would do Housing First. We were rather disappointed that it was not an open bidding process and that we were not allowed to bid because we would have been putting forward that. We did publish the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Plan of Action in June last year [2018], which had Housing First as one of the areas that we would like to develop. The Mayor is very much interested in taking it forward, but we need to do this at scale for it to work.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Hannah, did you have any further comment on that?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** In terms of the cohort in Manchester and why there is a bit of a mismatch between the numbers of people who are sleeping rough and the numbers of people who have been going into Housing First, it is worth saying that this is not just an intervention for people who are rough sleeping. This is also an intervention for people who are using the current hostel system. We have found that there is a number of people who cycle around that hostel system and that current homelessness services are not working effectively in terms of ending their homelessness.

The other thing I wanted to say in terms of meeting demand and the fact that Housing First could potentially be a service that could become flooded in terms of demand is that it needs to be situated within a broader homelessness strategy that also focuses on prevention so that we are turning the taps off in terms of the people who do go on to experience chronic homelessness.

Also, we need a wider housing-led approach. If we have a system in London where we have Housing First that prioritises rapid rehousing for people with the most complex needs, at the same time we need another system in place that prioritises rapid rehousing for people with lower support needs. The main difference would be in terms of the intensity of support. As David [Eastwood] mentioned, we have done a feasibility study in the

Liverpool City Region looking at Housing First and we did that ahead of the funding it was then allocated by central Government. We found that without that wider housing-led approach it was almost impossible to implement Housing First at scale successfully because it would become flooded as a model.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Thank you very much.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Could I ask for some context first? We all know you do a great job, but this paper we have been given by our officers does not actually say who does what. There is no mention at all of the Government's recent paper in here. There is hardly any mention in terms of what the boroughs and then the partners do. What would be really helpful, David, maybe post-meeting, is a basic chart that shows what the Government does, where the money flows down, where it goes to the GLA, what the boroughs do and what the partners do. I broadly know because I have been a councillor forever, but anybody watching this will be confused when we go straight into a name, Housing First, which does not mean anything to anybody who is not within your specialities.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Assembly Member Devenish, we are exploring Housing First specifically today.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Yes, but we have to have some context --

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** If you have questions about the Government funding, the question we are proposing to ask Hannah about what is going on around the UK would be a good way to get more information about that.

**Tony Devenish AM:** The point is that there is not even any mention of the Government trying to end rough sleeping by 2028, was it?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** 2027.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Just the context would be quite useful. My question - within context would have been helpful - is: how popular is the Housing First model in the UK, please?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** In terms of popularity, we know that it has gained significant political interest in this issue. At the beginning of last summer [2018] the Government allocated £28 million to Greater Manchester, the Liverpool City Region and the West Midlands to pilot the Housing First approach. In the last couple of years, we have seen a fairly significant increase in the number of Housing First projects that are run in England. There are around 32 projects that provide Housing First assistance to between 300 and 400 people. As I mentioned earlier, we have done some research that looks specifically at the number of people in London but also across the whole of Great Britain that would be and should be eligible for Housing First. That stands at around 18,500. Even though we have seen an increase in the number of projects, there is certainly still a huge demand for provision nationally.

The other issue in terms of popularity is that whilst we have seen a fairly significant growth in the number of Housing First projects operating across England, there have been concerns or interest around the fidelity of those projects in terms of the model. There was a piece of research that was conducted by Homeless Link in 2015 looking at the extent to which projects that claim to be Housing First are really delivering Housing First in terms of particularly the intensity of the support that they provided. Actually, quite a lot of those projects could probably be more accurately described as housing-led approaches to ending homelessness. As Mark [Taylor] described, the real difference with Housing First is that that support is unconditional and is

open-ended. Even if somebody does not access support for two or three years, say, after a five-year period of accessing support, they can go back to that project and access support later on. That kind of support was not necessarily being operated by all of the projects.

In terms of popularity, there is definitely significant interest in growing more projects and significant interest from the Government, but Labour has also committed to this as a policy if they were in power as well.

**Tony Devenish AM:** In terms of ending rough sleeping by 2027, how much of a component of the complex process to do that is the Housing First model?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** In terms of the Government's current commitment, it has dedicated funding to piloting Housing First. In terms of ending rough sleeping, Housing First would not necessarily work for that entire cohort. We have estimated that around 18,500 people across Great Britain would be eligible, which probably makes up around - gosh, off the top of my head - a fifth of people who are sleeping rough.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Sorry. What proportion of people sleeping rough is the 18,500?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Sorry, I should have been clearer. The 18,500 figure is for England, Scotland and Wales. Of that figure, a proportion will be people who are sleeping rough, but a much higher proportion will be people in the hostel system because there are many more people who are cycling around in the hostel system than there are sleeping rough. I can definitely provide a breakdown for the Committee in terms of the number of people who are sleeping rough versus the number of people in the hostel system.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Yes, and that is my final point, really, but maybe David and Hannah together can come up with a nice simple diagram chart for those who do not do this for a living 24/7 so that it is nice and clear who does what and what you are trying to achieve. A lot of people have expressed some surprise that my Government has said, "We are going to end this by 2027". I just want to know how we are going to do it.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** It is worth saying in terms of the MHCLG and the Government's commitment in terms of piloting of Housing First, they have been very clear because we have had conversations with them that they will not commit any further central [government] money until these pilots have taken place and have been fully evaluated, which in the sector has caused some potential ripples because Housing First has been extensively evaluated in other areas. As Hannah said, Crisis has carried out extensive evaluations. There have been extensive evaluations from the work in Finland. There is a little bit of concern that they are going to wait three years until this has been properly done in those areas before they are going to do an evaluation and then come back and, we would imagine, say, "Yes, this works", in which case we have already lost three years when they could potentially have been funding it in other areas. There is a concern around that.

In terms of the Government's commitment, how they are going to be measuring their success is based on the count and so is based on that one-off snapshot across the country because that is all the information that they have available. Yes, that is how they are planning on measuring it. Their target is to halve it within this Parliament and then end it at the end of the following Parliament. They might be more ending the need for rough sleeping rather than necessarily ending rough sleeping, but that would be my personal view around that target.

**Tony Devenish AM:** That was very helpful. Thank you.

**David Kurten AM:** From the 18,500 people who need your services, do you have any information on the nationality of those people? How many are UK citizens and how many are Polish, Romanian and other nationalities, where we know there is a big problem with homelessness within the UK?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** We do not have a nationality breakdown in terms of that 18,500 figure. That number is largely drawn from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation work on destitution, and I know that a significant proportion of people within that study were non-UK nationals and had become destitute as a result of that. The number also draws upon the Lankelly Chase *Hard Edges* research, which looks at multiple disadvantage and exclusion. We do not have a nationality breakdown.

That is one of the things that I would recommend if London was looking at Housing First and was looking at a feasibility study in terms of scaling up. It would be something to take into account, looking particularly at multiple needs amongst non-UK nationals because, as I am sure you will be aware, there will be additional barriers for that group of people in terms of accessing housing support and that will impact in terms of the success that Housing First can have amongst that group of people. We do not currently have a breakdown in terms of that 18,500 figure.

What you probably could do on CHAIN - and I do not think this is publicly available but I am sure the cross-references are possible - is to look at the number of people who have more than one support need, which has been rising as a proportion in the last couple of years, and cross-reference that with people's nationality because that is available on CHAIN.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** Yes, you could carry out that analysis on CHAIN. The difficulty very much is that part of the funding in relation to Housing First is in relation to Housing Benefit. If a group is not eligible for Housing Benefit - and the likelihood is that those individuals who are non-UK nationals especially are without access to that - the funding that is required becomes even higher because you do not have the money from welfare to cover those other costs. It is very difficult and none of the pilots that the Government is funding will be working with non-UK nationals.

The issue in other areas of the country is not quite so high. In London at the last count in terms of CHAIN, 52% of those people on the streets were non-UK nationals. It is very difficult in terms of the service offer that we have for that group if they are not eligible for welfare. One of the things that the Mayor has been calling for is the opening up of welfare, time-limited, for that group so that we can help provide more interventions for that group.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** The Committee has looked at rough sleeping in general not that long ago and we explored this issue as well.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** To Hannah first of all, in your experience, is Housing First successful in sustainably housing chronically homeless people with complex needs?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** There is overwhelming international evidence as well as evidence from the UK to show that for people who have high and complex needs, Housing First is incredibly successful in terms of tenancy sustainment. It tends to work for around 80% of people who have high and complex needs.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Are you measuring success in terms of tenancy sustainment or do you have other measures as well?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes, Housing First is principally measured in terms of tenancy sustainment, but there is evidence that it is also very successful in terms of improving other health and wellbeing outcomes. One of the pieces of evidence that I would strongly recommend having a look at is the piece that was done by the University of York in 2015. They looked at nine Housing First projects around England and were looking specifically not only at tenancy sustainment but at improvements in terms of physical and mental health outcomes and also in terms of addiction to drugs and alcohol as well. For all of those categories, there were improvements shown.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Even though there is no compulsion on people to access services, it is actually more likely that people will end up accessing the services?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes. What is really important to note around Housing First is that it is aimed at a cohort of people who have been repeatedly excluded from services. They are a group of people that often have things done to them rather than having control and choice over the support they receive and the way they receive it. Having lack of conditionality between support and housing is really important in terms of helping them to access support. It really is about enabling people to make their own choice about how they access it and the way they access support services, if that makes sense. That can mean on a shorter-term basis that people do not necessarily engage in support in the immediate stages, but in the long term they have a more sustainable relationship with the way they access support and it is much more successful.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Would you say based on the evidence that Housing First is more successful at housing chronically homeless people with complex needs than traditional ways of doing things?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes. We commissioned a 'what works' review looking specifically at rough sleeping services and services for people with complex needs last year [2018] as part of our plan to end homelessness. We found that there is a significant lack of evidence around hostels and supported accommodation in terms of their ability to move people on from homelessness. It is not so much that there is an overwhelming amount of evidence to show that they are less successful.

We do have more experiential evidence from people who are using supported housing in the hostel system to show that it does not necessarily work particularly well for people with high and complex needs. When we carried out the feasibility study in the Liverpool City Region, the researchers undertook a number of qualitative interviews with frontline workers and also with people who had experience of using the homelessness system there. They found that it was not working for a number of groups --

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Traditional services, sorry, for Housing First, was not working for people with high and complex needs?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes. In terms of traditional services, I am referring to hostels --

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Is it the staircase approach?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes, essentially a system that requires people to move through a number of transitional stages before they are able to access permanent accommodation. What we found was, for people who have high and complex needs, living alongside other people - on a congregate site in a hostel, for example - who also are facing similar challenges, other people who have



addictions or who have very severe mental health problems, can prove a very chaotic environment. It can be very challenging for people if they are trying to get off drink and drugs.

One other thing that people found particularly challenging was around that assessment process to move into permanent accommodation. That caused people a lot of anxiety and a lot of stress around that entire process.

There is also quite a lot of evidence from Homeless Link, which does an annual survey every year of support that is provided to single people. It found is that a significant proportion of hostels and supported accommodation providers are reporting that they are having to turn people away who have high and complex needs because they simply do not have the resources or the capacity to deal with people in that situation. It is a problem for people when they are in them, but it is also a problem in the sense that people are being turned away.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Are there any groups of entrenched rough sleepers that Housing First does not work for so well or does it work across the board for people with complex needs?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** We do tend to find that for about 10% of people who have high and complex needs, Housing First does not necessarily work for that group. It might be that they need another form of supported accommodation. That might be long-term ongoing supported accommodation that is able to provide the healthcare support needs that they need in that situation.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Mark, can I put the same questions to you? Do you agree with what you have heard? Is there anything you would like to add or do you disagree with anything you have heard?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** I generally agree with it. For us, one of our key pieces of work is Housing First for women who are experiencing complex needs. Of the women within our Fulfilling Lives project, which is funded by the Big Lottery, over 90% had experienced domestic violence. Housing that particular group in a hostel is often counterproductive and just reinforces a lot of the experiences they had before. Housing First has proved to be very effective for that particular group.

The other thing in terms of it not being effective is - yes, I agree very much - that there are a lot of guys who have been on the streets for a long time and have very prominent physical health conditions and may need some form of registered care type of provision. Clearly, that is not going to work for them. Also, ultimately, the guys have to pay the rent. If they are not going to pay the rent, it is not going to be sustainable, really. I guess that is where the support comes in, but it is not always there.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** There is an issue there with welfare. I presume there would be direct payments to landlords in the case of people going through Housing First?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** Yes, that is certainly a mechanism by which we can achieve that. I do not know if we are going to get on to the barriers and where it is problematic in terms of accessing PRS accommodation.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Yes, we will come on to that further down the agenda. That is a very important point.

David, could I ask you to comment on what we have heard? What are your views in terms of the success or otherwise of a Housing First approach?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** Sure. Finland is normally held up as being the mecca in relation to Housing First and what is achieved over there is extremely inspiring in terms of the changes they made to their hostel system and the changes they made to their supported housing. Very much over there when it started out, there was more dormitory accommodation and mass areas where people were sleeping and being warehoused in large rooms. They changed that approach to more single rooms and also had Housing First coming alongside that at the same time.

We are in a different position in London. We have learned a lot from psychologically informed environments in hostels. In the majority, people have their own rooms and people have their own bathrooms. It is a very different setup to what there was in Finland.

It is also worth saying in relation to Finland - and I have been lucky enough to have quite a lot of conversation with Peter Frederickson, who was a special adviser to the Finnish Government at that time when it was looking at Housing First - the approach was to look at it systematically and it was a huge investment that was made in relation to this change from what they had previously. They were looking at investing around €240 million in terms of capital funding. There was €100 million in terms of support funding. These are large sums of money and it was a large change across the entire way they worked.

One of the key changes and one of the key costs in relation to that was the support. Support was offered initially on a one-to-two basis and so they had a caseworker working with two clients only, which is a very costly approach. It is a very effective approach, but it is not an approach that you should be doing across the board for everyone. That is something that I think we would all agree with in terms of the panel: Housing First works and can work for a specific cohort and you have to make sure you are getting that cohort right. It is people with very entrenched needs whom the current system is not working for.

The hostel system does work and we know in terms of our Clearing House properties that they work. We have a 97% tenancy sustainment rate in Clearing House, which provides floating support. We learned from our Housing First pilots that we did back in 2011 in terms of looking at more of a housing-led approach in relation to Clearing House properties so we do take some people that have high support needs straight from the streets into that accommodation. However, that is not Housing First because, if someone is in a Clearing House property, they have to engage with support. The agreement we have with the registered social landlords that provide that stock is that support will be provided and so that support is mandatory coming in. Therefore, it is not pure Housing First.

That is where things can get quite difficult. I know you asked at the beginning for a definition of what Housing First is and it is difficult. There has been much debate within the sector about the purity of the Housing First model, which, like I say, came from Finland and from Canada. It was very much that everyone is given a tenancy for life and is given support when they need it throughout the course of their life. That is very difficult to achieve in England where we are commissioning services on a two- to five-year cycle. To say that that person is going to have support forever and is going to have a tenancy forever is very difficult to do and should only be for those people who really need that support.

The other thing I would say is that even within Finland, even within Helsinki, the numbers of rough sleepers that are now on the streets and in long-term homelessness is still relatively high. Although they have provided a solution for many people, their last count was back in 2017 and there were just over 1,000 rough sleepers in Helsinki, which is a comparatively higher number than we have in London. Although Finland is held up as being the model in relation to Housing First and how successful Housing First can be, there are still some challenges and limitations with that model. Yes, it should be part of the solution and it should be part of the toolkit that we use in relation to tackling rough sleeping, but, as Hannah has mentioned, Housing First is not

just about rough sleeping. In its purest model, you are looking at helping people who are struggling in tenancies currently. You are looking at helping people who are in TA and getting people straight from TA into housing. It is very much across the board rather than just tackling rough sleeping.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you. Just quickly – and this relates to Assembly Member Kurten’s question earlier – are there any restrictions in terms of who is eligible to access Housing First in terms of immigration status? Is it open to European Union (EU) nationals and non-EU nationals? What will happen after Brexit?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** That varies depending on the individual project and depending on how the individual project is funded. In the majority of cases, individuals have to be eligible for benefits to move into it because that is how in the main the rent is going to be paid. Therefore, an EU national who is eligible for benefits – and there will be some who have previously worked – will be eligible for Housing First. If you are not eligible for welfare, in the main there are very few Housing First projects that you could access.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you. Could I move on to you now, Stuart, and SPEAR’s approach? Can you outline for us SPEAR’s homelessness service, which follows the Housing First principles?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person’s Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** Sure. I do not really recognise the difference between the traditional approach and the Housing First approach. There are principles of Housing First that are quite common in the sector, not universal. The way that we work in SPEAR we would not call ‘Housing First’ necessarily but many of the principles we adhere to.

We focus on the Borough of Richmond upon Thames. We provide a pathway. We work with people on the streets. We have short-term emergency accommodation. We have a hostel that is a psychologically informed environment and so it is a recovery hostel with a high level of staffing, partnerships with other agencies, etc. We have second-stage shared supported accommodation. Then we have independent accommodation that is time-limited and there is an exit into both social housing and PRS accommodation, which we broker. There is tenancy support in that independent accommodation. Therefore, it staircases but it is not delivered in a fashion that has been described in the traditional model, which is that if you do not engage with an addiction service, you cannot move on and otherwise you will be evicted. We would not work in that way.

It is strength-based, it is person-centred and it works extremely well. We have tenancy sustainment rates in the region of 90% once people are in independent accommodation. Across the board, even in the direct-access hostels, we have an 84% tenancy sustainment rate. It works very well.

The principles of Housing First that we recognise are very much that to engage people with complex needs you need to build trust because, if you have had trauma and if you have complex needs, you accept support from people you trust and you trust people whom you believe have your best interests at heart. The approach that is described in Housing First of saying, “How can I help you? What support can we provide? Where do you want to go in your life?” is much more effective than saying, “If you do A and B, you will move on. If you do not, we will evict you”. That is not an approach that we would ever advocate at SPEAR.

That is not, in my experience, very common in the homelessness sector, generally speaking. It is common, however, in the provision of statutory services. If you go to engage in mental health provision or addiction services, there are often thresholds in that way. If you do not meet certain criteria then you will not be able to stay in the service, essentially.

We did have some Housing First funding from the GLA and the service was not delivered in isolation. It was integrated into the rest of the services we provided in Richmond and Wandsworth. Essentially, it enabled us to have additional staff so that the staff-to-client ratio was lower and a smaller number of people had more support. Undoubtedly, that helps. It helps a lot. If you have staff who are paid reasonably well and you have a staff-to-client ratio that is more generous, then people get more support and they do better.

In our case, we provide our own accommodation or we manage it. Some of it is supported shared housing. Some of it is independent accommodation. If we are effectively the landlord, then we can be much more tolerant and we can take an approach we describe in the sector of taking positive risks. We know if we move someone into independent accommodation or a small shared supported housing scheme where there is no staff onsite - there might be four people living together and somebody visiting every so often - we are taking a positive risk. If you have more staff support you can take more positive risks and if you are the landlord, even more so.

When you are working with housing associations as partners or with PRS landlords, you are somewhat limited because the tenancies have conditions. Even if we are supporting someone in a social housing unit, if somebody does not pay their arrears or behaves in a certain way, they will breach their tenancy agreement. From a pure perspective, you have limited control over the tenancy management if you are not the landlord. If you are, it is easier.

However, even if you increase the staffing, you have skilled staff and you have a higher staff-to-client ratio, you are still limited in the wraparound support you can provide for this cohort if you do not have robust partnerships with mental health, addiction and physical health partners. An issue that we often face is, for example, when we have somebody with very serious mental health issues. For their tenancy sustainment long-term, they need to engage in mental health treatment. Their local mental health services do not have a bespoke way of either promoting access to or engagement in health treatment. They do not have a bespoke way of multiagency case management with voluntary sector partners. You might spend a year lobbying the local mental health service to take on one of your clients; you may or may not be successful in that; and if the mental health issues are not addressed, the client's recovery is inhibited by that. Therefore, we do not look at the housing issue on its own. We look at the support we provide, the partnerships and what we need from Mark [Taylor] and our health partners, and also the co-operation that we need from our landlords.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Does that differ from traditional Housing First or mainstream Housing First?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** Coming back to what Mark said at the beginning, if you define Housing First as a set of principles, we deliver them and have done for some time, whether we call it 'Housing First' or not, but there are limitations to the application not of the principles necessarily because the principles are quite generic but in terms of the purity. To provide the housing regardless of whether somebody engages in support or not, you are limited by the nature of the tenancies depending on whom you are working with, whether you are providing yourself or you are supporting people to move into social housing, for example.

My view is that to take this forward and what we are doing in our area independently with partners is to develop the partnership working with both the registered provider partners - so that they are on board if you are taking positive risks with people who are going to move into tenancies and you recognise the risk of there being problems as higher - and also with the local health, particularly mental health, and addiction treatment providers and commissioners with us, the charity providing the services, and council colleagues. When you

bring those together, you have a much greater chance of success in people being ready and wanting to move into independent accommodation sooner.

The other thing just to add is that, not everyone said this but the assumption is that, hostels or supported shared supported housing projects are not effective. They can be. For some of our clients, if we would say to them, "We have developed a relationship with you. Would you like to move into a hostel where you are currently residing on the streets and you know us and you know if you move into the hostel you will get this type of support, or would you like to go into independent accommodation but out-of-borough in another part of London?", the majority of our clients would say, "I will move into the hostel". Some of our residents would say, "I would rather be in the hostel for a period and stabilise and then I will move on to independent accommodation later". That is the client's choice and our view is that it is in their interests to give people the option.

I would not advocate the provision of independent accommodation in lieu of supported housing or hostel provision, but I would say that hostel provision needs to be resourced in a way that enables more intensive support so that the staircasing is client-led as opposed to punitive.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** We have actually moved on slightly as well to question 8 in terms of the funding that the Mayor has given to the to the project. I just wanted to finish off with a question about whether you think Housing First is always the appropriate service for chronically homeless people with complex needs. It sounds like you are saying not necessarily?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** It depends how you define it. If you said that there is a provision of independent accommodation with a high level of support that is delivered on a multiagency basis for people as early as they want to move into independent accommodation, then I would say that undoubtedly it would be hard to justify any other position, but that does not necessarily mean that recovery-focused hostels or single shared supported housing do not also have their place in a somewhat staircased approach because many people benefit.

Picking up on what Mark [Taylor] said earlier about women's provision, we have been having bespoke services for women who have been street homeless with domestic violence, etc, and we do women-only supported housing projects on quite a small scale with four or five women living together. The women love that. They would rather live in a house with three or four other women. Men are not allowed into the service. It is safe. The location is anonymous. There is a peer-support element to it. There is a bit of a community. People make friends. That is a precursor to people moving into independent accommodation.

The model we have developed at SPEAR is a pathway model where we have supported accommodation that precedes independent accommodation, but not always and not for everybody. Certainly, if people who are street homeless or were street homeless and are now in supported housing have the opportunity to get into independent accommodation as soon as possible, as soon as they want to - to an extent as soon as they are ready, but that is often their own assessment more so than anyone else's - and if with that there is the support, then great. However, I would say that to facilitate people moving into an independent accommodation as soon as possible and to sustain it effectively, there is so much we can do ourselves in the voluntary sector but it is the partnership with the statutory agencies and the mental health and addiction providers that needs to be improved. If we are talking about social housing as one of the exits into long-term accommodation, then we need to work with registered providers in a more structured way.

Together we can do this, but otherwise people do come up against limitations of other agencies' criteria. If you breach certain rules, you cannot get the mental health support. If you breach certain rules, you cannot stay in a social housing provision.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you. Mark, do you want to comment on what you have heard about the SPEAR approach?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** I suppose I would need to understand a few more details, but I suppose in a sense we can talk about the fidelity of the model and purity and suchlike, but we do not want to get too hung up on those issues. Really, it is about what works. For SPEAR and for that locality, if the approach they are taking is what is working, whether it is a variation on Housing First or not, then that is primarily the issue, really. There are local variations that would mean that one approach is much more appropriate than another, perhaps, and also about the access to the various types of housing. In Islington, for example, where we have a Housing First approach, they are providing social housing to support that. That is highly unusual but incredibly positive. That is a pilot but they are going to scale it up. It is five units at the moment and they are hoping to move that up.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Is that the only borough to provide that? Are they providing their own council housing?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** Council housing, yes.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** Southwark also has a Housing First pilot doing the same thing. The question is how to increase that stock. As Mark mentioned, if there are five units, if you are doing Housing First properly, those individuals will remain in those five units for the rest of their life unless they would like to move. Therefore, you have to make sure you are going to be increasing the stock to make it work. Otherwise, all you are doing is providing support for those five individuals and that is going to be it. It is how you scale up and increase that stock, but not to the detriment of other groups who are coming in and who equally would like that housing stock. That is a conversation that we have with our colleagues in relation to statutory housing. The council waiting lists are very long and so are you jumping the queue if you are potentially going through this model? Are rough sleepers jumping the queue in terms of those individuals who are waiting for council housing stock? It is very difficult for a local authority to juggle that and to balance that, as you can imagine.

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** In Richmond we have 32 flats provided by two housing associations. Access is given to the local authority, which delegates that to us. Then we have a quota of 20 housing association flats per year every year as part of that pathway. It works extremely effectively, but nevertheless the housing association that is signing the person up for the tenancy, both in the interim period and in the long stage, still needs to assess that person as being suitable and is still the landlord and still puts certain conditions on the tenancy agreement. Our support for that person is ongoing whilst they are in that tenancy, as long as they need it, but also in those earlier stages in their journey into that independent accommodation. Some people will go there quite quickly; some people will be in the supported accommodation first. Yes, it is relatively unique, what Richmond has done there.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** I have a couple more questions about the types of people different models may be suitable for. I wanted to ask Stuart about the kinds of people who get referred to you and whether or not you assess people for whether or not it might work for them. One of the things that attracted me to talking about

Housing First is that it is rights-based and person-centred and it is people's choices what things they take up, whereas the traditional supported housing and hostel model is more institutional and less individual. Mark [Taylor] has described, for example, women who have been victims of domestic violence and who might have trauma in their lives needing to be alone and not in a place that might be more chaotic and have more people coming in. Some people with long-term rough sleeping may be very individual-type people. They may not respond well at all to being in an institution. Others may be more institutionalised if they have come out of prison, for example. Therefore, I can see that different models might work better for different kinds of people.

To go back to my question, Stuart, do you select people who might be more amenable to your more highly regimented [accommodation] and who want to be in those stages before being in individual accommodation? Do you select people for suitability or are you just handed people and it works for some and not others?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):**

We do, but it is very case-by-case. There are certain lessons you learn about what works and what does not and that informs your practice, but it is pretty person-centred, I agree. There are certain general rules. For example, for women who have had trauma, have experienced domestic violence or have been on the streets, in our experience - and this is generally held up - women-only provision is safer for that cohort. If you have women in a large mix-gender hostel, I have seen evidence in the past that women do not do as well in that setting. To say that women would necessarily, *en masse*, in that situation want to be in independent accommodation as opposed to a small house with four people sharing, my experience does not bear that out. It might very well be the case for an individual person that they do not want to be in that shared supported housing scheme and wants to be independent and that might be what works out best for them, but there are other people who go into independent accommodation and it does not work out for them. They needed the shared supported housing with somebody holding some boundaries.

I would not say it is regimented. Certainly, the hostel provision we provide is much more about creating a culture of recovery. It is psychologically informed. If you look at the recent reports from the South London and Maudsley National Health Service (NHS) Trust, in partnership with Graham House and Thames Reach, hostels can provide opportunities for recovery and personal development. The communal living aspect of it is really important and you would not get that necessarily if someone was living alone. It is very person-centred.

To a certain extent, it is also compromised by availability. There is a reality check to this. If you have a vacancy in a hostel but a waiting time for somebody to go independent and both are open for somebody, there is something about availability.

Most of our most complex-needs clients would tend to go into the supported housing environment, but if it does not work for them or they do not like it and we can provide more intensive wraparound support, then for sure independent accommodation is on the menu for them as well.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** What you said earlier was when people are ready to move on is their own assessment, essentially. Is that the case?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** To a certain extent, yes.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** There is no testing to say if you are ready next month or something?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):**

The client group does not fit into the boxes that we might want to define them into. Just as an example, we

had a lady who had been rough sleeping for 30 years. She had an addiction. She had mental health issues. She had learning difficulties. She had been street-working for many years. She was in a mixed-gender hostel. She was violent to another resident. She was evicted. She was back on the streets. We were still working with her because we have a rough sleeper outreach service. We were still working with her. We did not say, "That is it. You have blown your chances. We are not going to help you anymore". We carried on supporting her, but she could not stay in the accommodation. We then moved her into a smaller shared supported housing scheme. Things did not work out there. She was bringing men in, which was against the rules. She could not stay there. We then moved her into an independent training flat and provided her more support there. That failed due to people taking advantage of her vulnerability and using it as a base for dealing drugs and other activities. She could not manage that independently. She moved back into the supported housing scheme. Then, through her choice, she was from Scotland and she wanted to go back to Scotland. We helped her resettle into independent accommodation in Scotland.

She has successfully sustained that. She contacts us from time to time and asks for a little bit of advice. She is happy and her life has stabilised. During that period of - whatever it was - five or six years of her being in different services, the principles that we are talking about here were very much at the heart of the approach we took. We never rejected her. We never said, "We are not going to help you anymore. We are not going to support you". We were always open to different options for her, but the chaos of her life and the difficulty in changing her habits was such that it took that sustained service through different types of models - whether the accommodation was independent or shared or supported or single gender or mixed gender - and she went through a process of growth.

For most of us on the ground who do the work, we are person-centred. We are looking at people's strengths. We are looking at their aspirations. We also a stakeholder in terms of the support we provide and managing boundaries. We kind of work on it together.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Thank you. Mark, just finally, do you have a comment on the question of this more medical, mental health type of support? Your model provides a keyworker who provides outreach and links. Do you experience the same problems in getting people access to mental health support and medical treatment for things like addiction?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** We do depending on the location. The reality is that - and maybe this is where we do differ somewhat from Stuart's service - a lot of the guys we are supporting into Housing First are on the streets when we engage with them and so they are not engaged in any services at all. The challenge is to get them engaged in services, but the principal issue is to get them engaged in our service and then get them into some form of housing. From there, the conversations can start about accessing the wraparound support. That tends to be a journey and it tends to be much later on down the line. Yes, those challenges exist. They exist for all the clients more generally within the population, but ultimately the challenges we face are about engaging with the guys when they are on the streets because they are basically locked out the system entirely or have opted out of the system entirely.

**Tony Devenish AM:** I just wanted to go back to my famous point about context. Stuart, you mentioned the figure of 84% achievement, I think you said. How many people are we talking about? I know it is not that simple. How many years have you have been doing this? That is not in the papers. Perhaps Mark [Taylor] can give us an idea of how many customers he has in his work as well.

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** SPEAR has been working in southwest London for 33 years. We started off in the Borough of Richmond upon Thames. We now work in Richmond, Sutton, Kingston, Wandsworth and Merton. The service is principally



directed towards people who are street homeless. We have a separate division that works with young homeless people. The street homeless services are outreach and accommodation and we differentiate women-only provision as well.

Last year we worked with 620 people, most of whom were street homeless, and we provided 157 tenancies, most of which were in different supported housing settings or shared housing. Probably 50-plus were in independent accommodation units. Does that answer the question?

**Tony Devenish AM:** That is perfect. I just wanted to get a feel for it.

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** We have four Housing First projects at the moment, one in Newham, where we currently have 15 people housed. It is funded to that level and they are going to look to double that for the next year if the funding is available. We also have around 15 in Redbridge. Again, we could ramp that up if the funding was available for the additional workers. Then we have two projects operating across Camden and Islington. We have the Fulfilling Lives project with about 15 people. Then we have the pilot in Islington, which has five in it at the moment.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Thank you.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Thank you, Assembly Member Devenish. Hannah, you wanted to come back with something?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes, just on that point of context and what we find overwhelming from our services. We provide frontline services in England, Scotland and Wales, and we do have three delivery centres in London: in Shoreditch, Croydon and up in Brent. We deliver services to around 11,000 people and around 4,000 people in London.

What we overwhelmingly hear from people when we ask them what is needed to end their homelessness is, "A home". Often when people tell us that they do not necessarily want that, it is because their experience of living independently has not been matched with the appropriate type of support that they need. Whether or not we are working with people with low support needs or high support needs, we almost all of the time find that scattered housing within communities is the answer to their homelessness.

We worked with Hammersmith and Fulham Council about 18 months ago on a commission that they had around what was needed to end rough sleeping within that borough. As part of that piece of work we commissioned Groundswell, a homelessness charity that operates there, to interview 108 people who had experience of sleeping rough in the borough. Of those 108 people, only two people told us that they wanted to move into a hostel. There was a lot of concern amongst people with high and low support needs about moving through transitional TA before they move into housing.

Therefore, even if people say, "I do want something else", it tends to be because their experience of living independently has not been matched with that support. Overwhelmingly, housing and homes are what are needed in order to end people's homelessness.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** I just wanted to ask one thing of Stuart. When you talked about women sharing, is that for life? You talked about women wanting to be together and sharing.

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):**

No. It might sound a bit old-fashioned but we deliver a pathway. The pathway typically is that somebody could move from the streets into independent accommodation --

**Nicky Gavron AM:** And that would be for life, would it?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** --

not necessarily, but normally they would move into shared housing, which is either a slightly larger-scale hostel or a smaller-scale shared supported housing project. The women's projects that we have - and we have a number of them - are small with three to four people living in a house together.

It is time-limited because there is a continual flow of people every year. Women would normally be there for period of time and then move on into independent accommodation. Some of the independent accommodation we provide is time-limited to two years and we provide more intensive support.

Often that is a precursor to social housing when we are in Richmond because Richmond makes social housing available to us at 20 units a year. Other boroughs do not do that. If it happens to be in Richmond, then there is a step-on. If it is outside of Richmond, we typically broker somebody's access to PRS accommodation. The issue with that is that the tenure is much less secure. A private landlord can at any time say, "I want to sell the property. You cannot stay there any longer", or they might want to put the rent up or what-have-you. Private rented sector accommodation as an exit is less satisfactory than social housing, which is typically a home for life.

Just to go back on what I said earlier, if you were in a situation where there was much greater availability of social housing or secure tenure and assured tenancy for life, more people in supported housing would take it if there was the right support for them.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Yes. I suppose the point is that we are talking about people who have come off the streets with entrenched homelessness and very complex needs and it is in the nature of it that they are going to need some support for their lives, are they not? Is that not the point of Housing First?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):**

Not necessarily. We have many people who were entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs who a few years down the line live independently with little or no support.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** These are people with complex needs?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):**

Absolutely, yes. There are people who work for us. Over 10% of our workforce has experienced street homelessness. People do recover. Not to sound like a broken record, but often the recovery is underpinned by both the stability of that housing and also the effective joint working between us and what we provide and also our partners in mental health provision, addiction services and physical health provision as well, with a co-operative landlord, typically a housing association. When that comes together, people do recover much more effectively.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** I do not know how comfortable I feel with this question, but anyway. It is about comparative costs, in a way. The research seems to be inconclusive about the cost savings with Housing First to Government services, to local authority services and to homeless charity services. That is in the longer term

that the research is inconclusive on these cost savings. I do not know what experience people have of this and so I would like to leave it open as to who answers first, but if that is the case, what research is needed?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):**

We have done some research into this and I brought a copy today of a report produced by the Young Foundation. Comparable to Mark's [Taylor] organisation, we were funded by the Big Lottery to deliver our health and homelessness service. This was particularly to build bridges between our client group and health providers. We find that street homeless people or ex-street homeless people with complex needs often do not really want to engage in mainstream provision and also that mainstream provision does not easily engage with this cohort. This is mental health, physical health, primary care and addiction. When we deliver a service to bridge the gap, the access to health provision goes up significantly. Most people do want to engage in health treatment if they have the support from us and have built the relationship and the rapport. They tend to stay engaged longer and their health improves.

The Young Foundation did some evaluation. It is extremely hard to find the metrics to measure cost savings but they have done it nevertheless, but in quite a limited fashion. They have looked at reduced accident and emergency department (A&E) attendances and people going to primary care instead of an A&E, reduced ambulance call-outs and reduced inpatient stays in wards as opposed to health treatment in the community. There is evidence from our work in that field.

We are not alone. From the Department of Health, St Mungo's, Homeless Link and other organisations there is emerging research around the costs to the health sector from a voluntary sector partnership with health agencies. Other reports have been carried out into cost savings to the public purse. We all intuitively and anecdotally understand that there are savings through prevention and through upstream work in the community, but there is not definitive evidence so much so that there would be a business case to persuade, for example, Clinical Commissioning Groups or NHS trusts or the NHS to put some of its funding more upstream.

One of the reasons for that is that the evidence that has been collated so far, as far as I can understand, comes from the voluntary sector databases, not from the NHS database. One of the recommendations of the Young Foundation as this service carries on is for us to try to work with the NHS so that we can use their data for the shared client group so that the business case about the cost savings comes from within the NHS where it is more likely to drive spending at their end around prevention and saving money elsewhere.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Is that comparative to what would have happened if the person being helped was not in Housing First but was on the street or in a hostel?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):**

For us, we cannot say it with 100% certainty and, just to clarify, it is not necessarily just the Housing First service. It is SPEAR's services more generally.

In our case we looked at the cohort of people and the number of A&E attendances and ambulance call-outs before and after and it had definitely reduced. I would say that the evidence is relatively robust. You cannot say 100% that the A&E attendances and ambulance call-outs would not have gone down anyway, but probably not without the support.

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** This was one of the things that we focused on when we did the feasibility study in the Liverpool City Region. One of the key factors of that study was looking at cashable savings for all the boroughs in the Liverpool City Region. We model two different

scenarios of implementing Housing First. The first was quite a conservative implementation just for the people who needed Housing First alongside existing provision. The second scenario looked at introducing Housing First for the cohort of people who were identified alongside homelessness prevention interventions and also a wider housing-led model as well. In that first scenario, we found that after around five years of implementation there were cashable savings for the entire Liverpool City Region of just over £1 million, but if you implemented Housing First as part of a broader strategy that also focused on prevention and housing-led solutions, there were cashable savings of over £4 million for the Liverpool City Region. That was in terms of cashable savings. Quite often we talk about savings for health and things in terms of admissions, which is very useful, but it does not necessarily mean that you are going to close an entire A&E and that you are actually going to see cashable savings. We looked at what we could save in terms of cash across health and justice budgets but also across housing and homelessness budgets.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** One of the crucial things you said was that after about five years and the question also is in the longer term because this is housing for life and you have to look at the long term.

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes, exactly. It is really important to say that if you do Housing First properly and in line with the principles - and it is a high-fidelity model - then it is not necessarily cheaper as a solution compared to other homelessness services and current provision, but we do know that it is more effective and so it is better value for money.

What we also found in the Liverpool City Region in terms of scaling Housing First up appropriately and responsibly is that you would have to double-fund existing services alongside Housing First for about one to two years. During that period there would potentially be additional spend and it would not necessarily be cheaper, but in the long run you would see cashable savings, particularly if it is done as part of that broader homelessness prevention and housing-led strategy.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Do you have a view on this, David?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** In terms of around the money, yes, it depends on the fidelity of the model and it depends on where you go with it.

Our view is that Housing First should be part of the toolkit. If you are working with the most entrenched on the streets, a personalised solution is what you should be working with. It is what we do with the Social Impact Bond, which works with 350 of the most entrenched individuals on the streets in London. We operate with very much a personalised approach. We work with the providers St Mungo's and Thames Reach and we pay them based on outcomes rather than the model they have to go through. We are pay on accommodation outcomes for the individual to get into accommodation and then to sustain that accommodation. We do not say what that kind of accommodation is. We do not say that it has to go through a pathway.

We know personalised solutions work for the most entrenched. Making people jump through hoops in terms of that old-style, standard, classic, "This is the pathway off the streets that you have to go through", does not work for the most entrenched, but it will work for quite a number of people. Trying to have that personalised approach is what is going to work.

Is Housing First cheaper? No, it is not going to be a cheaper approach. As Hannah said, it is more likely to be really successful for a group of people. What we found from the small pilot we did previously was that it is very difficult to predict the individuals it is going to work for and is not going to work for. I was in Westminster at that time and we put forward people to be part of this pilot. We put forward five people. I thought three of

them would do really well. With two of them, I was like, "Blimey, they have been around every single hostel. It is never going to work for those two at all". Three of them worked; two of them did not. It was not the two people I predicted would fall out. They fell out of it within six months. It did not work for them at all. They could not cope in terms of living on their own. They were not quite ready for that.

It is very difficult to predict. It should be part of the toolkit. We should be looking at taking people straight from the streets into accommodation if that is what they wish and is what we think is going to work for them, but it needs to be a balanced approach. No, you cannot say that you should disinvest in every single hostel and turn everything into Housing First. That is not going to be the best approach and that is not what they have done in Finland. Like I said, everyone harks to Finland and says that they have done everything and everyone gets their own flat. They do not. Lots of people get supported housing based in blocks, which is very similar to what we do in terms of hostels. There has to be that mixed approach.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Does anyone else want to comment on what has been said by David?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** In terms of the Finland stuff, what is really important and the biggest distinction between that model and what we have here is that they have more dormitory-style accommodation compared to here. We have a more advanced supported accommodation system. However, everybody, even if they are living in congregate sites in Finland, does have their own tenancy. That has to be the biggest difference between what goes on there and what goes in here in terms of security of tenancy. Even if people are living together in congregate blocks and have their own flats, they should have security of tenancy. There is no need for not providing that within supported accommodation.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Is it a life tenure?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** It depends on the tenure. Housing First can certainly work in the PRS and it is working in London in the PRS. If it is in the social rented sector that tenancy is more likely to be for life, but we would not necessarily see a barrier in terms of people moving into the PRS. The most important thing about Housing First in terms of housing and the choices people have is that it should reflect generally what other people are experiencing in the market. There are lots of people here living in the PRS and so we do not necessarily see that as a barrier to people moving into Housing First.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** In terms of the research and the evidence for this question about costs, I tend to see this as a moral and a humane issue and not as a cost-saving issue. On the other hand, it is back to what you said. It is about what is effective and what works. Do you think there are some gaps in the evidence and what it is we really want?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** There is certainly a gap in London. That is why, if you were undertaking a feasibility study here, that analysis of the cost-effectiveness of Housing First would have to be essential. We could look at what we have learned in Liverpool, but the provision in terms of accommodation between Liverpool and London is very different. For example, in Liverpool there was a lot of expensive supported accommodation and that is why we saw some of the savings we did. In London we have a lot more large-scale hostels and so that would affect the extent to which we saw cashable savings. Undoubtedly there would be cashable savings in London, but we would have to model that looking specifically at the context here and the provision of services.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** Does anyone else want to comment?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** I agree with David's [Eastwood] point that it is part of a toolkit and not to, as I said earlier, disregard the place of supported housing. I am slightly repeating myself, but if it is about the provision of more independent accommodation that is more secure earlier on, if there was more of that, undoubtedly that would be a positive thing.

The funding for the charities principally that are providing the support needs to go up. There needs to be more support at our end.

However, what Mark said earlier is right. There is a piece of work to engage people in the support you are providing if they are entrenched and not engaged in any support whatsoever. That is the first step. Then do not disregard the challenge of the next step, which is that people need support from mental health, physical health and addiction services as well as the support from you as a charity, and that is not an easy thing to do. From a commissioning perspective, I would really like to see on a local basis or sub-regional basis a smaller number of boroughs working together with the local council, the local charity, the local health treatment partners and the registered providers working together on this to find a solution for that locality. If you have all the partners together, you are much more likely to succeed in this aim than if what the health treatment providers in particular are bringing is mainstream provision as opposed to bespoke provision.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** That is one of the bits of research that needs to be done because partnership working in the way you are suggesting would be more cost-effective as well as effective for the individuals?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** It would be both, yes.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Thank you. We were talking about saving money, but one of the things that that rough sleepers and people with multiple problems experience is really high levels of mortality and low life expectancy. That is a long-term outcome. Has anyone looked at that? Do we know if there is any evidence of improved health outcomes in that respect? Stuart, you talked about ambulance call-outs, but one would expect people living in secure accommodation with support needs to have much lower rates of mortality than people living on the streets. Has that been looked at all yet?

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** It is definitely worth looking at some of the research that has been conducted by the University of York on this. That looked at tenancy sustainment and looked at improvements in mental and physical health. It also considered things like use of A&E because we know that that is one of the biggest differences between people who are living on the streets and facing high and complex needs. They end up having to use A&E as if it is a general practice service because they face such extreme barriers in terms of access. Things like that were considered as well. Because that research is specifically looking within the context here in this country, it would be a useful one to consider.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Yes. Like Assembly Member Gavron, I am not particularly comfortable putting cash values on things like that, but you can put a value on a year lost.

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes. They have also done quite a lot of evaluation of a Housing First project that I would really recommend that the Committee looks at up in Manchester called Threshold. They work specifically with women who are experiencing multiple and complex needs. As Stuart has described, this is a group of people for whom Housing First works particularly well. They have also looked at a lot of those other elements in terms of health outcomes as well as the tenancy sustainment model.

**David Kurten AM:** Mainly, I will be thinking about how Housing First is delivered in London. If I could ask you, Mark, first of all, you are piloting lots of services in London boroughs. What are the main difficulties that you are finding with doing the services in the London boroughs that you work with?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** It varies from one to another, but the primary challenge is accessing accommodation, really. The private rented market is challenging. The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are set at such a rate that it is difficult to access housing, particularly local housing in the boroughs where we are operating. Ideally, the guys we work with would want to live or remain living where they are, but that brings a challenge because we cannot afford the accommodation.

Also, there is an incredible amount of competition for private rented accommodation, particularly now with guys who claim benefits and they are not willing to take those guys because the councils are all competing for this accommodation for their own homeless population. That is that is one of the main challenges, really.

The other one is staff and getting the right quality and experienced staff. Recently we have seen quite a bit of money come into the sector from the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and so forth and so a lot of these projects have started up. We are struggling to recruit the people with the sorts of credentials we need to deliver this sort of service.

**David Kurten AM:** Thanks. You mentioned that you have five units from Islington Council and so something is happening in some of the boroughs, but what other social housing providers have helped you with accommodation or is that something that is particularly difficult?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** Yes, that is very particular to that borough. They took the decision to go down that route and it is something we welcomed. In other boroughs where the services are commissioned, we are largely reliant on private rented accommodation. I know that Hackney is going out to the market for a new service and is looking for the provider to bring with them a registered provider to offer the units. That is another option but is not something that we are familiar with so much.

**David Kurten AM:** What about other social housing providers apart from councils? Do you work with them at all or do you have any sort of help from them?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** No, we have not had any help from them, no. I know that Stuart [Nevill] has described his very different scenario, but for us it is definitely the private rented market.

**David Kurten AM:** Yes. For you and also for Stuart as well, how do you think the Mayor could help you source accommodation for what you do? Is there anything he could do that you have thought of that could add to your strategy?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** I guess there is an amount of influence that he has on the central Government, ultimately. We have not seen any increase in the LHA rates at all and so we are competing with a lot of other purchasers. We are competing with the boroughs. We offer incentives to landlords, but then the local authorities are offering incentives as well to meet their Homelessness Reduction Act [2017] priorities. Something that is happening is that boroughs are now beginning to work more closely together so that there is more of an economy of scale really, but we would

want ideally to be part of that so that we could have a share of the private rented market being sourced by the local authorities and are not trying to compete with them all the time.

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** In terms of what the Mayor could do in this situation, the housing supply problem is particularly acute in London but it is also faced by other Housing First projects throughout the UK. I could not agree more with Mark on the issue around the LHA. Anything the Mayor can do in terms of influencing the future spending review on that and ensuring that LHA rates are returned at least back to the 30th percentile would go a long way in terms of helping to access accommodation.

The other thing that we think would be incredibly useful in terms of sourcing accommodation and something that we recommended in the Liverpool City Region - of course they are not facing quite the housing supply problems that we are here - would be the establishment of a pan-London local lettings agency. It would be a lettings agency that specialised and recruited staff who are specialists in managing property and acquiring property. That property could be sourced from the PRS or the social rented sector.

The advantage of having a pan-London local lettings agency rather than people doing it in individual areas is, first of all, it helps to overcome some of those problems that we see in terms of competition between boroughs. Also, in terms of economy of scale, if you are managing housing like that across the whole of London, it does make housing management cheaper.

It also means that you could deliver lettings via an agency like that both for Housing First and also for people with lower support needs. That overcomes some of the obstacles that we see in terms of both private landlords and social landlords who do not want to let to people who have high and complex needs because they are worried about that tenancy. If you have a local lettings agency, you can take those properties off people's hands and redistribute them on a pan-London basis and that would go a long way. It also helps to overcome some of the barriers that people face in terms of local connection.

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** I agree with both of my colleagues. I wonder whether there is a win to be had with local authorities if there was the expectation or just a request for local authorities to pick this up themselves and think, "How can we implement this ourselves in the council's housing department?" They have close relationships already with the registered providers. As Mark [Taylor] says, they already have teams that go out and source PRS accommodation. They commission locally organisations like ours to deliver services. They are also working very closely with colleagues at the GLA and the MHCLG to come up with local strategies to end rough sleeping.

If the local authority itself was engaged in this, then we could look at the scope for tackling the issue together as opposed to competing with each other. There is a question about whether somebody who has had an experience of rough sleeping gets priority access to social housing or not, as well as whether the council's resources for accessing PRS accommodation could work with us so that that cohort are built into those mainstream services. Without sounding like a broken record too much, it has to be, "Let us work together with the local stakeholders to try to implement the principles, if not the purity of the model, locally". If that was an outcome it would be hugely beneficial. I would say it should not be just the housing department of the council, it should also bring in the Health and Wellbeing Board so we can look at homelessness with health, housing and social care interventions collectively.



**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** One other issue is maybe around the security of tenure. The ability of landlords just to give two months' notice puts people in an incredibly precarious position. That is not just Housing First tenants but anyone within PRS generally.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** One difficulty that I would mention - I am surprised nobody else has, but probably because of a Commissioner [of Services, the GLA, being] here - is in relation to the funding of the support. One of the difficulties in relation to implementing Housing First, even at a local level, has been that the support funding has been on quite a short basis. The idea of piloting Housing First, when it is supposed to be potentially a tenancy for life when you need it, is a confusing concept. That would be one thing that I would mention as one of the potential difficulties for the moment. If you are looking at doing Housing First to scale and you are looking at doing Housing First properly, you need to be looking at longer contracts for the support providers. They need to be in place for a longer length of time to say that this support is going to be there.

Therefore, you need to fund it for longer than just saying, "We are going to do a pilot for one year of Housing First". Great. By the time you are working with the client and you have gained your client's trust, you are looking at winding down some of the projects. We have seen that with some of the projects that have been implemented in London and nationally, whereby you look at it too early, you say, "We are going to do a short Housing First pilot and get people in", and you manage to get people into a tenancy but by the time they are accessing support the support contract itself is disappearing. Therefore, you are setting up the individual potentially to fail in that housing because the support is no longer there. That is something that needs to be looked at as well.

**Nicky Gavron AM:** I do not know who would know the answer to this, but those boroughs who have social lettings agencies, are they not in a much better position to be able to secure long-term tenancies?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** Potentially, and there is some work, I would say, around that Londonwide local lettings agency. There is work going on with London Councils and with the GLA in terms of the Capital Letters project, which is looking at how to pool across TA. At the moment, as was mentioned, this is not just rough sleeping services trying to access the PRS, this is local authorities trying to access the PRS for individuals coming through TA.

There is work going on in relation to how to do this across TA. We have been involved in those conversations in relation to rough sleeping, I have been a little bit, and been told, "At the moment, let us try to get TA and try to get the Capital Letters working in terms of TA, getting that agreement from local authorities, and then let us look at rough sleeping". I am constantly trying to muscle rough sleeping in there in relation to how that works. I think you are right, at the moment our services are fighting among themselves for PRS units because, like you say, there are very few that meet the LHA rate and there are very few that meet the standard in terms of a decent enough place for someone to move into. Therefore, you end up potentially driving up the market and driving up the price of those areas.

Yes, looking at it on a pan-London basis or a sub-regional basis makes sense and I think --

**Nicky Gavron AM:** You are doing it already and this is called a capital letting agency?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** It is called Capital Letters. They are trying to develop Capital Letters and London's councils are leading on that piece of work, trying to pool across all local authorities how to make sure you have one point of access in

relation to PRS because, as I am acknowledging, at the moment local authorities are fighting among themselves for those units and, like you say, playing landlord potentially --

**Nicky Gavron AM:** It is not a Londonwide social letting agency, it is something rather different?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** Capital Letters is Londonwide. It is looking at that and looking at pooling all of that together. I am not that close to it.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** We looked at TA and part of the team from Capital Letters came in to talk to us about that.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** Perfect. I thought you did already, yes.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Not that long ago. We have not published what they said yet but there may be a transcript we can look at already. It is a very interesting project. This was in the context of TA but, like you say, it could be used equally well for this.

I had one final question, which is about the insecurity of PRS tenancies. Obviously, the [London] Assembly as a whole, as a majority, voted against Section 21 and voted to support the campaign to end Section 21, which can lead to those evictions. I am just wondering what happens if that happens to someone who has been placed in private rented accommodation by Housing First. If they get a Section 21, do you kick back in and find them another one quickly? Do you take the stress out of that process?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** In the rare event that that has happened, we would always support them into another form of accommodation. Generally, the relationship we have with the landlords is such that they do not randomly issue Section 21s - it will be in response to perhaps serious antisocial behaviour or what-have-you - but the sustainment rates are so high that it is not something we experience very often. More often it is an abandonment rather than someone being evicted, but in the event that they were then we would always support someone into another form of accommodation if it is felt that it is sustainable.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Stuart, we already moved on to this a little bit in our conversation earlier because you received, I think, the only mayoral funding for a Housing First project, which was £18,500. Do you want to say anything more about specifically how the money was used in the programme?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** Yes, for sure. As I understand it, the amount was double that. It might have been that that £18,500 was in one financial year.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Was it an annual --

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, Greater London Authority):** It was a two-year.

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** There was £37,000.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** It is £37,000 over two years? Thank you for clarifying that.

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** It was 12 months but it went over two financial years. Effectively it funded a worker. That worker, as we said earlier, had a smaller caseload, worked with the cohort that had most complex needs, worked with people on the streets, worked with people in those training flats that I described earlier that we already have, worked in our shared supported housing schemes, in PRS and also worked in the council-nominated social housing. We have people who either were in those types of accommodation or were street homeless and then moved into one of those different types of accommodation, and when they were there they had this additional support. The cohort that was selected had particularly complex needs, as I said. The work that that person did was not hugely different to the work we would typically do anyway with people with that level of complex need, they just had more time to do it. Their client load was much smaller. Over the year, we had --

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** So it was additional capacity?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** Additional capacity, and the design of the post itself was to work with a smaller cohort. We recruited somebody with particular experience and background to do this type of work and they could focus a lot more on liaising with the landlord, for example, and with local treatment providers and so on. It was successful. In terms of the 30 rough sleepers worked with, the targets were exceeded. Fourteen people were accommodated. There was a pretty high tenancy sustainment rate, I think, and engagement in mental health treatment as well.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Is that how you are measuring the outcome? Are those things you have listed the indicators that you are using to measure the outcome?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** Yes. It is tenancy sustainment and engagement in health treatment.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** OK. Were you saying that both of those have improved as a result?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** Yes, undoubtedly.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Excellent.

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** If you have a lower staff-to-client ratio, you can do more work with more people with complex needs. It is both with the individual and with the other stakeholders in their housing and their support. Undoubtedly that helps. You would not design a service where one worker has a caseload of 30 or 40 clients with complex needs, but sometimes funding limitations are such that that might be a typical caseload. If you can have a smaller caseload per worker, you can do more work and it is more effective. Because we were working on what was already in existence in Richmond and Wandsworth it was not necessarily about finding new sources of housing, it was across the different types of tenures that were available in any case.

The other difference was that through local authorities being stakeholders you could get a shared understanding that there is some positive risk-taking going on, offering independent tenures to people with more complex needs and saying to the housing association, for example, or potentially the private landlord, "Look, this person does have complex needs. There is more support in place. We will be there to help you and

the resident if something does not work out but we are going to try our best to make it work". There is something constructive about giving that message to landlords and trying to get that buy-in to the principle of it. Just to pick up on what Mark [Taylor] said earlier, when we as a charity like the Single Homeless Project (SHP) recruit private landlords to work with us, we do find private landlords that have a genuine interest in the public benefit that will follow from working with a charity, which makes life an awful lot easier. It is similar with housing associations, but you do need that co-operation.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Can I just ask finally on this bit, has the project continued after the mayoral funding has ended?

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):**

Yes and no, inasmuch as the service itself has not - it is being replaced like for like - but the provision has increased in those two areas on account of other funding that we have brought in. For us, we try to keep service provision going and to scale it up as demand goes up, but different funding streams come and go.

Recently, we have been very successful with MHCLG funding. That is specifically to bring rough sleeping down as much as possible, the RSI funding and the rapid rehousing pathway funding. We have had some corporate funding going into Wandsworth for outreach provision as well. Often when you get time-limited funding it can bridge a time gap but it can also generate evidence that you can use to secure more funding to come in. It does not always work, but in this case it has worked and over the recent past it has worked. There is undoubtedly learning from what works that is natural and organic over time. When you have smaller caseloads and you work effectively with people with very complex needs, that does inform the approach that organisations take in future.

It was certainly helpful - so thank you, David - and time-limited and part of a bigger picture. That is for us.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** OK. If I could turn to you now, David, why was this the only Housing First project the Mayor has funded so far?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** I would say obviously that the GLA did fund, as I said, back in 2012 to 2015 --

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Yes, there was a --

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** There was a Housing First pilot. I would disagree that it is the only thing.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Sorry.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** It is the only thing this Mayor has funded.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** This Mayor. Apologies.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** In my lifetime here there has been a previous Mayor and we did fund something in relation to Housing First to pilot the approach, as I said.

In terms of this being the only thing funded, this was funded through our Rough Sleeping Innovation Fund. We have a Rough Sleeping Innovation Fund that goes out and basically says to providers and to boroughs, "Would you like to come and test innovative ways of working?" This was the approach we got in relation to Housing First. This is the only Housing First application that was made in relation to that funding stream, hence it is the one that we have funded. Obviously, we scored it against all the other applications that we got in at the same time, which included a number of different projects. That is the reason.

The main reason why the Mayor has only looked at funding this project rather than anything else is that, as we mentioned at the start, in terms of the feasibility study and looking at doing this at scale, all the research that is out there, in terms of the Nicholas Pleace [Director of the Centre for Housing Policy, University of York] research that they did with St Mungo's, is that for Housing First to truly work in a large area, it needs to be done to scale and it needs to look across the entire system. To do that, you need to be looking at it more strategically. You need to look at the additional funding and you need to look at potentially getting additional funding in.

As Hannah [Gousy] has mentioned, whichever way you look at it there was going to be that short gap where you are dual funding aspects of things. That is the reason why obviously we were very disappointed not to get the money from MHCLG for the Housing First pilots that they are doing in other regions, because that is what they are providing. They are providing that money that goes in between to fund that stop-gap. If you were looking at doing that in London, you would be looking at £84 million for the numbers that we are talking about. It is a substantial amount of money that you are talking about in terms of funding that would potentially be needed to cover that gap and basically enable that systematic change.

That is not to say that the Mayor is not supportive of Housing First. I have had quite a lot of conversations with James Murray [Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development] about Housing First and about what we should be looking at doing, more and more of a personalised approach, but it is difficult to do that at scale. We do not have the funding for hostels, as I mentioned. The funding for supported accommodation is at borough level. We need to bring boroughs along with us in terms of looking at how this model might potentially work.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** You mentioned the money you did not get from MHCLG. Does that mean that you cannot go ahead with the pan-London Housing First service?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** That does not mean at this stage you cannot do that.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Right.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** I am saying basically that if you are looking at the numbers we have, the 3,500 individuals who we said at the start might be eligible for Housing First, the pilots that they are doing in the regions are targeting 1,000 people with £28 million. If you do the maths, that means it is £84 million --

**Tom Copley AM:** For London.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** -- that you would potentially need for London to provide that type of service. It does not mean that we cannot look at it and that is the reason why we want to do the feasibility study but to get to that stage we need to bring boroughs along with us and we need to bring the housing associations along with us. This is more of a long-term thing.

That is the reason why we want to do the feasibility study, so that potentially we have that evidence base to say, "Will this work in London? Which partners do we need to bring along with us? How exactly will we get there?" Then we will be in a position to hopefully get to the relevant people.

Boroughs can do small-scale work, which they are doing, and there are some really good small-scale projects that are working with specific groups in terms of Housing First. If you are looking at doing Housing First pan-London, then you need to be bringing everyone along with you.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Can I just get clarity on what happened with the pilot funding from MHCLG? You had this pilot that you already had, we have the statement in the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Action Plan that we wanted to do pan-London work, and yet I think what you said earlier was MHCLG did not even approach us about this, they just kind of decided to look at Liverpool and Manchester. Why do you think that is? Is that because they wanted to pilot it in smaller but largish cities and they just went to them and did not think of coming to us?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** Potentially. Obviously housing stock is a lot more difficult in London and housing prices are a lot more expensive. I do not know. I am not central -- I do not work --

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Yes. They did not discuss it and then say that?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** I do not know. Obviously, I do not work for MHCLG. No, they did not discuss it and say. We had some early conversations and we shared our learning with Manchester especially in terms of, "This is what we did in relation to the pilots, these are the specifications we used and this is what we would suggest", once they had been allocated the money. But no, it was not that we had any informal conversations with them before the announcement or anything like that. It came as quite a surprise to us.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** That is really interesting. Maybe we might want to write to them and ask because £84 million sounds like a lot but for emergencies like the homelessness crisis that we have, money does come from central Government in those kinds of quantities.

**Tony Devenish AM:** Chair, I suggest you ask James Murray [Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development] first before you ask the Government.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** Yes, we will have some questions for the Mayor as well about whether he has been putting in suggestions, but I think it would be interesting to know what their reasoning was for not even getting into a conversation with London. That would be interesting to know.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Before we get on to the pan-London service, is the Mayor considering funding any further Housing First projects or is the focus going to be on this pan-London service?

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** We have the latest round of the Rough Sleeping Innovation Fund and the rest of my team are currently looking at those bids. I do not know what came in. The deadline was only on Friday [29 March 2019] and they were looking at bids yesterday and today, so I do not know whether there are bids in there in relation to Housing First. Not that I am aware of, until we have done potentially this feasibility study.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Thank you. Moving on to the pan-London Housing First service, moving back to Mark, Stuart [Nevill] and Hannah [Gousy], how beneficial would this be in tackling the increasing problem of chronic homelessness and what are the key elements that are going to be needed to make the service effective?

**Mark Taylor (Assistant Director of Services, The Single Homeless Project):** An equal offer across the boroughs would be great. This is quite anecdotal, but we are finding in those boroughs where there is an offer, not purely in terms of Housing First but in terms of service provision generally, it tends to almost operate as a magnet. We are seeing an increase in the newcomers to the streets there so there is increased pressure on the services where there is an offer. In Newham and Redbridge, I think that is something that we have seen.

Given the fidelity of the model is an issue, at least a pan-London service would offer a model that shared similar attributes and the offer would be the same. Clearly the boroughs are experiencing different levels of need but I think a service like this would be able to respond to those and respond to the need as it emerges in each of those boroughs. The delivery of a model of that scale is a challenge but I must say we deliver pan-London service for offender services and we have found that to be relatively effective. It is definitely doable.

**Stuart Nevill (Chief Executive Officer, Single Person's Emergency Accommodation in Richmond):** My view is somewhat different. I think that if you are looking to trying to reduce rough sleeping and street homelessness, if that is the aim and the purpose of a Housing First commission service, then it is important to look locally first of all. You look at what is already in existence and make sure that if you commission something else, it integrates with what is already there. The MHCLG is putting a lot of funding in at the moment on a local level, as are local authorities, and I do not think it is an impossibility but there is a challenge of linking local or sub-regional provision, a small number of us working together, with regional provision so that they work together. When you are thinking about councils, voluntary sector organisations, housing associations and health treatment providers coming together, if you work on the basis that that is going to be part of the solution, then you need to work local up. You need to work on a local scale up. That is my view.

There are exceptions and there are examples of where pan-London provision works extremely well. You do have a proportion of people who are street homeless who do not strongly identify with one area, who move in and out of boroughs. You also have people who do not have a strong local connection to one particular borough. But what I do believe passionately is that once somebody who has complex needs starts to build a trusting relationship with a charity or a health professional, the social capital of that engagement is hugely important moving forward. Consistency of support is really important in that person's recovery further on. If somebody is doing well and is linked in with local services in Richmond and then we say there is accommodation available in Newham, they may very well move to Newham and engage with services there and they may do well, but you have a much greater success if you can try to find the solution locally, build on what is already there and keep the momentum and the consistency in service provision. The challenge is to integrate the regional and the local.

I would give credit to the recent commissioning approach of the MHCLG. They have very much worked with councils and their partners to say, "What do you have? Where are the gaps? Tell us where you think you can build on what is already there to address the gaps", and they scrutinise that. What has been very effective about their commissioning approach is that it is capacity-building not just for local voluntary sector organisations but the councils as well, and the partnership between the council and their delivery partners. Together you go on a journey where you have a better idea, with external scrutiny, support and funding, of what a local solution looks like. I would advocate the balance between local and regional.

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** I completely agree with Mark in the sense that one of the most important elements of having a pan-London approach to this would be ensuring consistency across all of the boroughs, particularly in terms of the fidelity of the model. When we are thinking about the evidence on this and those really high tenancy sustainment rates that we are seeing in this country but also in other countries across the world, those pieces of research are being conducted with projects that comply with a high-fidelity model. Ensuring that high-fidelity approach across the whole of London and that consistency between projects would be incredibly important.

The other thing that we found in Liverpool when we were looking at having a pan-local authority approach to Housing First was that some of those really important partnerships that Stuart [Nevill] described earlier with other public bodies – say the NHS, for example – are done much more effectively across boroughs. Having a consistent approach in terms of how you develop and work with those partnerships is much more effectively done that way, rather than each individual borough having to negotiate some of those really important partnerships. Most of the other stuff has probably been covered and you are probably running out of time but local connection is incredibly important on a pan-London basis.

Also, at the beginning I mentioned that there are around 2,300 people who would be eligible for Housing First. That is around 70 to 80 in each borough but you would expect those numbers to be probably a little bit lower in the outer London boroughs.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** Yes. They would be concentrated in certain boroughs.

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes. In terms of providing that consistency and support to outer London boroughs, that would be well achieved through a pan-London approach. I guess that is the way the Mayor already delivers a lot of the pan-London services in terms of outreach but also more specialist services for people with complex needs. That is obviously well evidenced in terms of having good results.

**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** Yes, I would agree with the rest of the panel. I agree with Hannah. One thing I would say in relation to the potential feasibility study is that we are trying to get MHCLG to hopefully joint-fund part of this. That is what we are trying to work out at officer level and James [Murray, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development] is trying to work out as well, because we think if we can get them to buy into this then hopefully that will help in terms of moving forward. That is the reason why we have not just gone ahead and done it ourselves. Just as Crisis is, we want to make sure we are bringing all the relevant partners along.

I agree explicitly around the fidelity of the model and making sure there is that consistency. As you have seen from the panel, the definition of what Housing First is and those principles are key but can be interpreted in very different ways. We took elements of a more housing-led approach and have included that within the Clearing House and in our tenancy sustainment, but we were very clear during the course of that that it is not Housing First. Although we are taking people, as I said, directly from the streets, because they have to engage with support as part of it that is not Housing First. Even though there are still some people and some services that would label themselves as ‘Housing First’ if they were doing that, the reality is that is not the purity of the Housing First model.

**Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair):** You mentioned some funding potentially from MHCLG, some joint funding for this, but how do you think the Mayor could ensure the right funding is available in the long term to make sure the service is sustainable?



**David Eastwood (Rough Sleeping Lead Manager, Housing and Land, GLA):** That is a question around how exactly we show the long-term benefits of what we are proposing to do. From the services that we run in terms of pan-London, in relation to the Clearing House, we know we have 97% tenancy sustainment within those units. We have built that up over a number of years. We would be looking at doing something similar. If we are looking at doing something pan-London we obviously would be commissioning that service out. We would be commissioning that service out with very robust key performance indicators, as we do for the current services. There would be that aspect of it.

More longer-term funding is a very difficult question. As everyone has mentioned, in relation to potential savings to other areas and in relation to money coming in from areas, that is where it is key to bring along the other partners and bring along partners in health. I used to be a Substance Misuse Commissioner myself. Public health has been substantially cut in terms of local authorities accessing those services. We need to bring those partners along with us to ensure that that funding is there and looking at more joint commissioning is probably the way forward.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** That was very interesting. It was good to have that quite open-ended discussion. We might have some follow-up questions. Hannah, you may have promised us some data.

**Hannah Gousy (Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis):** Yes, I think I did.

**Sian Berry AM (Chair):** David, we will probably write to you via the Mayor to ask for some more details of what you are doing, and we might write to MHCLG to see if they can break their rule about waiting for the evaluation before they start funding something in London. That would be really useful of us.