

# Minutes of Life Off the Streets Core Group: 6 June 2023

**In attendance:** Jamie Carswell (RB Greenwich, Chairing), Chris Pelham (City), Kathy Mohan (Housing Justice), Mark Billings (LB Hillingdon), Lorna Brooke (LB Kingston), Sylvia Richards (LB Kingston), Mike Fill (LB Tower Hamlets), Heather Clarke (Westminster), Rebecca Pritchard (RBKC), Paul Davis (LB Lambeth) Jeremy White (Homeless Link), Juliet Mountford (Crisis), Tom Preest (DLUHC), Jemma Gilbert (TPHC), Madeleine Kelleher (Southwark Law Centre), David Eastwood (GLA), David Orton (GLA), Luke Oates (GLA), Ben McDonnell (GLA), Emma de Zoete (GLA), Sara Bainbridge (GLA), Healah Riazzi (GLA), Michelle Binfield (LC), Ben Ridley-Johnson (LC, minutes), Rianne Lowe (LC), Karen Tipping (MOJ), Steph Ratcliffe (St Mungo's), Rosie Clewlow (LB Camden), Christian MacNamara (GLA)

## **1 Welcome and introductions**

Jamie Carswell opened the meeting and welcomed three first time attendees who introduced themselves as Rebecca Pritchard of RBKC, Healah Riazzi of GLA and Sylvia Richards of LB Kingston.

## **2 Minutes and Actions from the Previous Meeting (25 April)**

The minutes and actions were agreed to be accurate and true records. No other matters were noted as arising.

## **3 DLUHC Updates – Tom Preest**

Tom provided updates on three matters: the recommissioning of the London Streetlink service, the outcome of Headroom Funding Bids for London and the Night Shelter Transformation Fund.

On Streetlink, the service has been recommissioned and the contract awarded to Home Connexion. There is scope for stakeholders to feed into the way this service works moving forward.

On Headroom Funding Bids Tom updated on the additional £10m to London, he advised that DLUHC really pleased with the sub-regional co-production approach to formulating bids and noted that strong bids were received from all sub-regions. This year DLUHC will provide a communication to all in the Rough Sleeping system in London on the bids that were funded.

On the Night Shelter fund, Tom noted this is a £3.3m fund. The second round of funding is about to open and runs until the end of July and DLUHC encouraging bids from London organisations. DLUHC also interested in any sub-regional bids from a faith and community group for a capital asset.

Chris Pelham asked what the process for local authorities engaging with DLUHC on the Streetlink service recommissioning would be. Tom advised that there would be a general call for input but that in the meantime he would be happy to arrange a conversation with Chris.

Dave Eastwood noted that on Streetlink the service specification and contract had been completed but there was opportunity for input from boroughs on what information should be fed out of Streetlink.

Emma asked if the list of allocations awarded under the Headroom bids could be circulated to the LOTS Core Group. This could then be circulated to the ICS Inclusion Health leads. Tom agreed that was a good idea.

Jamie suggested the approach of DLUHC sharing information on all the allocations was a positive one.

Kathy Mohan thanked Tom and highlighted that identifying sites and making them work viably was the challenge. She highlighted Greenwich as an area where winter shelter accommodation had been improved and that it would be good to see more of this around London. Overall, she noted that conversations between local authorities and night shelter providers about sites was the key.

#### **4 SHAP Programme Priorities – Tom Preest and Dave Eastwood**

Tom advised the Single Homeless Accommodation Programme was a fund providing capital and revenue funding (the latter for 3 years), designed to increase the supply of units of accommodation for rough sleepers. There were a number of suggested priority areas for bids within the complex needs part of the programme, which the Core Group was asked to agree, namely:

- Housing First Schemes operating across more than one borough
- Abstinence accommodation-based services for people having successfully completed detox
- Accommodation for people who require on-going social care interventions
- Extended or permanent supported housing for people with high and complex support need

David Eastwood added that SHAP was also seeking to prioritise youth hubs for young people with higher needs within the young people's part of the programme.

DLUHC and the GLA are developing outline building specifications and will circulate to the sector shortly looking for potential buildings.

Jamie thanked David and Tom and highlighted some of the challenges present around site availability, competing demands for use of land.

Michelle asked if revenue being provided for three years was a barrier to bids being made given that the requirement on the capital side is for a 30-year lease.

David Eastwood noted that DLUHC colleagues had done a very good job to negotiate the three years of revenue support sitting alongside the capital funding but acknowledged that the point Michelle made was also being heard from boroughs and housing associations.

Tom Preest suggested that one solution to this might be around allocating future RSI revenue to such schemes.

Jamie Carswell asked if a piece of work should be done on RSI, SHAP, RSAP around what revenue was present in the system and what the pressures and needs are over the next 3-5 years.

There was a conversation about the priorities and data around need for certain services by particular groups in the meeting chat.

Mark Billings said that Hillingdon were seeking to create long-term accommodation of this type.

Priorities were agreed.

#### **5. NASS and Streamlined Asylum Process Update – Healah Riaz**

Healah updated that Government is seeking to reduce use of contingency sites and had announced an Operation Maximise Policy to increase numbers of people placed into the existing HO hotel estate. Many hotel rooms will be shared moving forward. Boroughs can access information about changes in hotel bed numbers which are expected to increase in parts of London via the Migrant Data Hub.

Healah advised that the Government is proposing to remove HMO licensing regulations to asylum accommodation at the end of July. The risk was that the standards of accommodation would

decrease and accountability of the private landlord provider would be reduced, raising a further risk of worsened standards in asylum accommodation.

Streamlined Asylum Process. Healah updated on issues of communication on decisions issued under the SAP. LAs are still not being informed. Healah asked that anyone on the call receiving contact from Clearsprings inform her. Subsequently several LA colleagues said that they had not received any contact.

Jamie thanked Healah for her updates. He noted it was disappointing that communication and notifications to local authorities from Clearsprings were not occurring as they should be.

Heather Clarke raised grave concerns about how severe this challenge was in Westminster, where there had been a situation with a group of asylum seekers being out on the street in Pimlico recently, refusing to share rooms with strangers in a hotel.

Madeleine Kelleher noted the increased risks for rough sleepers and the rough sleeping system of both the expected reduced standard of accommodation and policy of sharing accommodation which could lead to more people choosing to leave accommodation and go onto the street. She also flagged up the risks of the Illegal Migration Bill which is currently going through Parliament, especially around increasing numbers of people who are likely to be left without the ability to apply for asylum.

Michelle suggested that this matter be escalated to the Exec Board. A particular issue to pick up was the lack of information fed through to boroughs about decisions being granted.

Healah noted that she had written a paper for the Exec Board and would collaborate on asks around this ahead of next week with Michelle and the relevant people in Core Group.

Michelle suggested that at a London-level we work together to develop a service approach to meeting the needs of those with positive asylum decisions for low-need PRS or hostel accommodation with language and employment support that could be provided to help rough sleeping people with positive decisions off streets.

David Eastwood emphasised the importance of getting the Home Office and Clearsprings in the room, assembling case studies of how the SAP is not working operationally as it is contracted to and asking them to improve the situation.

Jemma Gilbert offered assistance with advocacy in this area from health partners

Riad Akbur agreed with Michelle that work needed to be done to develop and articulate ideas of responses to the group of low-needs people receiving positive offers, perhaps focused on work and advice on accessing benefits and PRS accommodation.

**Jamie asked that this work on a) lobbying asks of the Home Office, b) operational work to develop a service to respond to people with positive decisions and low needs c) meetings with Home Office and Clearsprings management to improve data sharing around SAP and future decisions and d) presentation to Exec Board be progressed by Michelle Binfield, Healah Riazi, and colleagues.**

## **6. NSNO recommissioning and Rapid Response SLAs – David Orton**

David Orton updated that NSNO was being recommissioned and the GLA were using this as an opportunity to review the design and operating model of the service. The GLA have commenced with market engagement and David offered to anyone on the call to get in touch with him to discuss this.

He also advised that the new contract for the Rapid Response commenced in April. Changes in the service included changes to shift times, work to strengthen joint-working with local boroughs and

outreach teams and make it easier to make referrals from Rapid Response into local rough sleeping beds. In this vein, GLA, Thames Reach were working to develop SLAs with local authority services.

Jamie thanked David. He suggested consideration that sometimes the link up between local authority teams and the Rapid Response service needs improvement. He hoped for the SLAs to make certain that there isn't duplication between these teams and services. David acknowledged this point.

#### **7. Hot Weather SWEP – Sara Bainbridge and Emma de Zoete (GLA)**

Emma sought sign off of the Hot Weather Protocol from Core Group.

Jamie thanked Emma and Sara for the paper and asked for approval of the protocol.

**Protocol was approved.**

#### **8. Cold Weather SWEP – David Orton**

David Orton introduced the paper which he noted included several recommendations and pieces of work to do in preparedness for next winter using the learning from 2022/23. David noted that last winter was marked by two long periods of cold weather activations and greater difficulty for boroughs in providing offers to individuals, more use of emergency centres and shared spaces. Pan-London referrals had to scale up to meet overflow demand from some local boroughs which was twice as high as the previous year.

David also commented some in some rare cases individual boroughs had not activated locally when the pan-London protocol was activated, reminding Core Group/boroughs that SWEP is a pan-london commitment all have signed up to follow.

The paper's recommendations were agreed as follows:

1: GLA to work with the Life Off the Streets partnership to review and reissue guidance on use of communal sleeping settings during severe weather, to help ensure there is always contingency shared SWEP accommodation available in the event of a shortage of single-occupancy units.

2: GLA to work with the Life Off the Streets partnership to develop best practice examples in ensuring that everyone sleeping rough has a suitable offer of SWEP accommodation. This includes providing tailored SWEP offers for those who are more vulnerable or have particular barriers to accessing SWEP bedspaces, approaches to scaling up local SWEP provision in prolonged cold snaps and working in partnership with neighbouring boroughs in the delivery of SWEP.

3: Local authorities to review and test outreach access arrangements for local SWEP provision, to ensure that everyone sleeping rough in the borough can always access local SWEP placements, including out-of-hours.

4: GLA to work with provider of pan-London SWEP to improve the allocation processes for overflow bedspaces, to help ensure they are best matched to the needs and circumstances of those referred.

5: GLA to refresh the pan-London protocol for severe weather and seek reaffirmed commitment from all councils to adhere to this.

6: Pan-London SWEP guidance to be amended to include further information on successfully applying the 'In for Good' principles, drawing on good practice from areas where this is working most effectively.

Jamie thanked David and welcomed this moment of reviewing and preparatory work.

Jemma Gilbert noted that last winter the pressures on A&E were exacerbated by people going out of the cold inside to A&E and that shared SWEP centres, while not ideal, were preferable locations to A&E departments.

Michelle thanked Dave and emphasised the point made by the recommendation around the need to accept that we may have to offer shared spaces. Last winter's evidence showed a need for planning rest centres in advance, and they may be more effectively staffed and delivered on a sub-regional or pan-borough basis. She offered to take forward developing this recommendation.

Emma offered to take this paper to Rachel Flowers and ADPH for her view in order to review the GLA guidance on shared spaces which can be circulated to boroughs to help prepare them for local conversations with Public Health leads on sharing.

Dave supported the point that planning of shared contingency spaces by location was necessary.

**The paper was endorsed by Core Group. Jamie asked for a short verbal item on planning work for winter 2023/24 at the next Core Group in July.**

### **9. CAS3 Update – Karen Tipping**

Please see slides circulated. Karen updated on CAS3 which was finally confirmed in April 2023 and launched in May 2023. It is intended for adult prison leavers of all genders who are aged 18 or over and who are:

- At risk of being released as homeless from prison following a custodial sentence to be supervised by the Probation Service; or
- moving-on as homeless from an Approved Premises (CAS1); or
- moving on as homeless following a period at a CAS2 residence.

The plan is to provide up to 441 units of accommodation in London, which is delivered by Housing Action Management. The CAS3 work is aligned with the AFEO work by DLUHC and councils.

Jamie thanked Karen for her update, noting considerable work had gone into getting to this point.

Michelle mentioned that Karen Tipping had agreed to sharing CAS3 data on referrals, number of lets and location of lets with Heads of Housing Needs and the Core Group. She also asked for confirmation that foreign national prisoners can access accommodation only in cases where they have entitlement to public funds and that under-35s were not eligible for exemption from the Shared Room Rate by virtue of a stay in CAS3 accommodation. Karen confirmed this was a national policy decision.

### **10. Strategic Insights Tool and Data Advisory Group – Luke Oates (GLA)**

Luke updated that the build stage of the Strategic Insight Tool had commenced. This is 13 weeks to the Minimum Viable Product of the tool.

The Terms of Reference of the Strategic Data Advisory Group had been amended to change the attendance list which is why this was being brought back to the Core Group to approve.

**Jamie thanked for the update and asked that Luke consider the best way to get feedback to the Core Group on this project. Core Group approved the slightly revised ToR.**

### **11. AOB**

Jeremy White updated on the homelessness careers fair taking place on 10 July at Box Park, Wembley. Preparations were well-advanced and the event was being advertised on Event Brite

alongside a range of social media channels and paid for advertising in magazines/newspapers. DWP also advertising across its job centres. There would be spaces for 40-50 organisations, currently seven local authorities signed up alongside a range of homelessness organisations. Jamie welcomed this cross-sector approach to the workforce recruitment challenge.

Emma de Zoete updated that a group called the London Health Equity group, chaired by Kevin Fenton has named inclusion health as one of their priorities and could be a point of contact/collaboration in the future.

**Jamie closed the meeting.**

**Next meeting Tuesday 11 July, 15:00 – 17:00 in person at London Councils Office, 59 ½ Southwark Street, SE1 0AL**