

All Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness



Rapid rehousing – Officers Meeting Minutes

6 March 2018, 14.30-15.30, House of Commons, Committee Room 9

Attendees:

Neil Coyle MP, APPG Co-Chair
Will Quince MP, APPG Co-Chair
Heidi Pearce MP
Matt Western MP
David Drew MP
Baroness Maddock

Parliamentary Assistants:

Polly Bam, Office of Lord Best
Dan Ellis, Office of Will Quince
Laura Hutchinson, Office of Neil Coyle
Jamie Sweeney, Office of Matt Western MP

Secretariat:

Leah Miller, Secretariat to APPG

Other:

Ieuan ap Rees, West London Housing Partnership
Caroline Bernard, Homeless Link
Charlotte Blake, Homeless Oxfordshire
Helena Brice, Crisis
Claire Dowan, Homeless Oxfordshire
Rosie Downes, Crisis
Matt Downie, Crisis
Katie Earnshaw, Emmaus UK
Amy Fleming, St Mungo's
Sarah Jane Gay, National Housing Federation
Jonathan Graham, The Salvation Army
Natasha Gyseman, CSTM
Seb Klier, Refugee Council
Zoey Litchfield, Prison Reform Trust
David Parker-Radford, QNI
Paul Prosser, NOAH Enterprise
Luke Stanley, Policy Research Unit
Louisa Steele, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
Kate Wallis, Shelter

Apologies:

Lord Best
Lord Bird
Sir Graham Brady MP; Altrincham and Sale West
Tom Brake MP; Carshalton and Wallington
David Davies; Newham
Frank Field MP; Birkenhead
Alistair Jack MP; Dumfries and Galloway
David Linden MP; Glasgow East
Maria Miller MP; Basingstoke
Victoria Prentis MP; North Oxfordshire
Mark Prisk MP; Hertford and Stortford
Danielle Rowley MP; Midlothian
Lord Shipley
Alison Thewliss MP; Glasgow Central
Tom Tugendhat; Tonbridge and Malling
Charles Walker MP; Broxbourne

Witnesses:

Lars Benjaminsen, Senior Researcher, The Danish Center for Social Science Research
Mike Taylor, Director, Plymouth access to Housing (Path)
Michael Scott, Path service user

Welcome and apologies	
Introductions	
	<p>Co-Chair of the APPG for Ending Homelessness Will Quince opened the session by thanking attendees and witnesses for coming.</p> <p>He went on to note that the APPG was formed in 2016 with the aim of placing homelessness at the top of the political agenda and developing the policy solutions that would end homelessness.</p> <p>In its first year, the group focused on preventing homelessness, looking specifically at three cohorts – care leavers, people leaving prison, and survivors of domestic violence. At the end of the year, a report had been published which set out a series of recommendations on preventing homelessness.</p> <p>He explained that the meeting was the second of the APPG on Ending Homelessness’ inquiry sessions for its year second inquiry into rapid response.</p> <p>The session on would focus on rapid rehousing models. Rapid rehousing models focus on supporting people into housing before addressing other support needs. They differ from Housing First in that they are designed to support those with lower needs through less intensive support over a time-limited period. The meeting would look at how these models might be rolled out successfully in the UK.</p> <p>The group would be hearing evidence from Lars Benjaminsen, Senior Researcher at The Danish Center for Social Science Research who would discuss the Critical Time Intervention method to housing support in Denmark; Director of Plymouth access to Housing Mike Taylor who would discuss the charity’s Renting Support service; and Michael Scott, a Path client who the charity helped into accommodation.</p>
Lars Benjaminsen	Lars Benjaminsen (LB) began by explaining that Denmark had employed a Critical Time Intervention approach to tackling

homelessness. The approach was suitable for the broad “middle group” of homeless people with moderate support needs.

It provided systematic, evidence based intervention aimed at supporting people in a critical transition period from shelter into their own housing.

The approach generally lasted for around 9 months with three phases, each 3 months long during which participants received specific support to meet their needs.

The approach originated in the United States, but could be integrated into other welfare and housing systems, he continued.

In 2007, the first national homelessness count was taken in Denmark, which found there were 5,300 homeless people. 1 in 10 were rough sleepers, but most used shelters or sofa surfed.

The count found there were high support needs among homeless people with 4 in 5 either having a mental illness, substance abuse problems or both.

Previously, the support they had received has been too fragmented and insufficient.

In 2008, the Danish Government produced its 2009-2013 homelessness strategy, which tested new interventions aimed at rehousing homeless people through systematic housing and support. Approaches were tested in 17 out of 98 municipalities in Denmark.

The strategy showed that the interventions were a success and worked very well at supporting people out of homelessness. The approaches were then mainstreamed into the general welfare system in Denmark in 24 municipalities between 2014-16.

The approach interventions were all based on a Housing First approach, he explained. Housing First represented a shift from a treatment first approach i.e. ensuring someone was housing ready before placing them in accommodation. Under Housing First, the focus is on securing early permanent housing with intensive social support, he continued.

It operates on the principle that recovery processes are difficult to achieve in an unstable housing situation and therefore that the housing situation should be stabilised as quickly as possible.

In Denmark, Housing First followed a general shift to recovery-based social services.

The Housing First approach in Denmark included three intervention models. For homeless people with complex, long-term support needs, an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) model, where support is delivered through a multidisciplinary

support team, and Intensive Case Management (ICM), where long-term support is provided.

For homeless people with moderate support needs the Critical Time Intervention model was used, where systematic support is provided during a time-limited critical transition period.

CTI, involved three phases, each lasting 3 months, he explained. The first phase involved a key worker helping the individual make the transition from shelter to housing, he explained. This includes supporting the individual to move from shelter to housing, building up contacts between the individuals and existing services in the local community. In phase 2, the focus is on strengthening the individual's support network, testing how it works and adapting support provided where necessary. In phase 3, the support offered transfer from the CTI key worker to local support networks and services.

In Denmark, public housing had been mainly used for CTI programmes, but the private rented sector had also been used to a minor extent and the approach could work with both types of housing, LB told attendees.

Denmark had 600,000 public housing dwellings in a population of 5.8 million people, he continued. Municipalities had a right to allocate one out of four vacancies to people in acute housing need.

An institutionalised mechanism for providing housing to vulnerable groups had been widely used to provide housing for the Housing First programmes.

Around 90% of CTI participants had been rehoused successfully. About half of the participants did not require further floating support after the nine months. The other half needed further floating support after the 9-months and were often referred to general floating support usually of a lower intensity.

The cost of CTI-intervention was approximately 4-5,000 € per person, whilst the cost of a shelter stay was approximately 4,000 € per month.

However, the lack of housing had been a barrier to upscaling Housing First. Furthermore, local authorities were not always willing to provide or invest in the social support methods needed.

It was also essential that CTI was used for the correct cohort, he added, stressing that it shouldn't be used for people with too complex support needs and could not replace ICM or ACT.

The change from a treatment first to a Housing First or housing-led approach would require cultural change at all levels, including in services, housing organisations and municipal administrations.

Mike Taylor	<p>Plymouth Access to Housing Director Mike Taylor (MT) spoke about the Path renting support service, which he explained aims to assist people at risk of homelessness into private rented accommodation.</p> <p>The key referrer was the local council. People who approached the council as homeless and are assessed as non-priority are referred to Path for assessment and advice.</p> <p>Due to high waiting lists for social housing, the private rented sector often provides a much quicker option for finding a person housing.</p> <p>Path offers a Deposit Guarantee, which functions instead of a cash deposit and lasts 12 months. It means that the charity agrees to cover any damages or arrears accrued in that first year of renting.</p> <p>The charity can also help ensure people have the right ID for renting, help with loans and grants for rent in advance, support opening a Plymouth Credit Union Account, which helps people save to replace deposits, and help understanding the rights and responsibilities of being a good tenant.</p> <p>Once the tenancy is set up, the charity monitors it for 12 months, checking in with both tenant and landlord. It aims to problem-solve, mediate and generally support the tenancy to last.</p> <p>Some landlords can be reluctant to rent to someone homeless or at risk of homelessness, meaning it is important that the charity is clear in its role to support the tenancy, rather than focusing solely on the tenant. The aim is to work with landlords as partners to ensure the tenancy can last. Even if a tenancy does come to an end, it is important that it ends well.</p> <p>Most people Path helps have somewhere to stay short-term, MT said. However, for single people who don't, the charity sees if it can offer them rooms in shared houses it manages as temporary accommodation. Those houses enable people to have somewhere to stay in the short-term and with regular visits from Path staff to check on the people and property. It enables some people to gain experience of sharing and also a reference for the charity from doing so.</p> <p>The charity is aimed at people who are homeless and tenancy ready. In terms of its contract with the local authority, it supports single non-priority clients, some priority clients and young people.</p> <p>In 2017, the charity accommodated 123 non-priority clients, 65 priority cases and 43 young people, making a total of 231 people housed.</p>

	<p>Through the PRS service, £47,862 was saved towards a savings target of £69,000.</p> <p>Furthermore, claims rates were very low showing the success the charity has delivered in terms of supporting people to maintain tenancies. If all the agreements the charity had to pay out against deposit claims went wrong, this could mean a payout of £80k. However, only £1,765 was claimed in 2017/18, despite £37,350 worth of deposit guarantees ending.</p> <p>Deposit Guarantees were a vital element to ensuring an effective PRS access. Although it can mean charities holding high liability at any one time, with the right support claims rates are low.</p> <p>What makes Path's scheme different from other PRS models was its savings scheme and the resettlement houses used to provide accommodation for those in need before a placement is found.</p>
Michael Scott	<p>Michael Scott explained that until the new year, he had been living in a shared house for 6 years. However, a couple moved in in the November who were arguing constantly and disrupting the house.</p> <p>It made his living situation untenable and he ended up having a nervous breakdown, feeling suicidal and being hospitalised. On approaching his local authority for help with evidence of his mental health problems, he was told he wasn't a priority for help and referred to Path.</p> <p>He told attendees that Path has given him his life back. By offering him structure, focus and helping him regain his self-respect back. The charity had found him a new place to live, where he was much happier. The charity had saved his life, he concluded.</p>
Questions	
	<p>Moving on to questions, APPG Co-Chair Neil Coyle MP questioned what the timeline should be for the rapid rehousing process, from identification to permanent housing.</p> <p>Responding, LB said the key questions was whether or not the individual concerned had somewhere safe they could stay. If staying with family or friends, they might be there for a few weeks before being housed through rapid rehousing. The key thing was ensuring that there was a menu of options for individuals whose needs could change.</p>

	<p>APPG Co-Chair Will Quince MP asked how the model could fit alongside other housing options models in the UK.</p> <p>Responding MT said it was crucial that the combination of housing support offered in the UK was right and appropriate to meet the needs of the individual. Different models would work for different people and it was important that these options were available.</p> <p>LB said that in Denmark, there was a large public housing sector that was used to house most homeless people. However, there were alternative models in place, such as supported access to the private rented sector, for the 10-15% of people who were unable to be rehoused this way.</p> <p>Heidi Allen MP highlighted that the housing market in South Cambridgeshire, where she was an MP, was under substantial pressure with demand greatly outstripping supply, and the average price of houses was very high. She questioned how rapid rehousing models could work locally.</p> <p>In reply, MT said that in areas with high rents, Local Housing Allowance rates weren't keeping up. The gap between LHA and rents was increasing, resulting in higher levels of homelessness.</p> <p>There were various models for setting up rapid rehousing programmes, he continued. Crisis with funding from the DCLG has run successful PRS access schemes in different areas of the country, he added. This had included funding from the Government for a Deposit Guarantee service. He suggested that the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act would help highlight what more needs to be done to address homelessness in local areas.</p> <p>Ieuan ap Rees from the West London Housing Partnership question what the reasons were for the 10% who had been unsuccessfully supported through CTI in Denmark.</p> <p>In reply, LB said that one of the reasons was an inability to predict in advance who would be unlikely to be successfully supported through the scheme. For some of these people, a Housing First approach might be more suitable to meet their particular support needs, but this might not be immediately evident. However, he stressed that 90% was a very good success rate.</p>
AOB	
Overview	WQ thanked the witnesses and all other attendees for coming parliament and discuss. The APPGEH's recommendations on

	the subject would be published in the wider APPG report. The next meeting of the APPG would focus on youth homelessness.
Actions and deadlines	Secretariat to send around minutes to witnesses and Chairs.