**Addressing Complex Need. Improving services for vulnerable homeless people – practice exchange pre-read 23/05/2021**

How can we look at ways to continue to build on some of the excellent work done through the pandemic? With renewed efforts to rehouse more complex needs customers into long term, sustainable accommodation, will the supply of residential services for people who are homeless and have complex needs be able to keep pace with demand. Tenancy sustainment services play a vital role in preventing repeat homelessness, how can we balance the strain of high staff caseloads and financial pressures? How can we ensure a coordinated approach with health services, criminal justice agencies and employment schemes designed to address the single type of need which defines them as a service, continue to gain pace and become more effective? What can we do to make sure we have the right housing provision for this cohort and maintain supply against demand into the future?

**The future landscape**

The provision of good quality, appropriate and efficient support for complex needs customers has been a challenge for many in recent years. How much more support is needed now to support those housed under Everybody In? With many local authorities reporting that the levels of complexity are increasing in their local areas, is current provision meeting the need?

**Rough sleeping**

On 15 May 2021, the MHCLG announced that a further £203 million will be allocated to councils across England in support of vital projects such as shelters, specialist mental health or addiction services. The funding will be used by councils, charities, and other local groups to pay for up to 14,500 bed spaces and 2,700 support staff across England. For details, [click here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-given-further-200-million-in-next-stage-of-successful-rough-sleeping-programme). For the response of the Local Government Association, [click here](https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-responds-rough-sleeping-funding-announcement-1). For comment by Crisis, [click here](https://www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/mhclg-announces-200m-for-next-stage-of-rough-sleeping-programme-crisis-response/) and for that of Homeless Link, [click here](https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2021/may/15/funding-for-rough-sleeper-initiative-welcome-but-longer-term-approach). How does this funding link into future plans?

For the most complex people with multiple support needs, specialist programmes like Housing First are needed to help them out of homelessness for good. The commitment here is for long term, and in some cases lifelong support, at some points at extremely high levels. Without such sustained support, those helped off the streets today risk returning to them tomorrow and the cycle causing even greater levels of complexity.

To end rough sleeping for good, we urgently need long term solutions, where people are not only supported into safe and genuinely affordable permanent homes but afforded the type of support they need for as long as they need. This type of support is costly. How can we best support this group in a cost-effective way?

**Good practice in this area**

* Relationship building with customers prioritised.
* Working in close partnerships both internally and externally.
* Strong emphasis on prevention work from all work streams.
* Specific officers / support workers to manage our complex needs customers.
* Regular checks on customers and information sharing with other support services.
* Providing no strings attached support for as long as the customer needs this.

**Something to think about before the exchange.**

* What potential solutions have we trialled before? What potential solutions could we trial?
* How can we access excellent quality support services in the local area at a fair price?
* How can we work with existing providers to change support services to meet future demand?
* Can more innovation help us to plan and provide future services?