

Brent Homelessness Forum

Friday 21 July 2023, 10:00 – 12:30

Minutes

| Agenda item | Action |
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| <p>1. Welcome and introductions</p> <p>Apologies: Glaiza Padulla, Rumi's; Max Griffiths, Via; Raj Kapoor, Citizen's Advice; Noah Okunromade, Brent; Hassan Atteyeh, NHS CNWL; Gerard Kelly, NHS ICB; Lucien Lawrence, Housing Justice; Tom Shakespeare, Brent; Raj Kapoor, Citizen's Advice.</p> <p>In attendance: Atara Fridler, Crisis (Chair); Bridie Lane-Williams, Brent/Crisis; Amisha Babla, NHS; Muna Omar Kalif, Crisis; Nicola Hayler, Shelter; Sophia Povey, BANG; Shaheen Pathan, DWP; Beccy Mitchell, DWP; Carolyn Connage, Brent SMART; Versha Varsani, NHS ICB; Jacopo Bisagni, SHPS; Amarjit Bains, Bridges Outcomes Partnerships; Maria N'Daye, Social Interest Group; Jatin Patel, Social Interest Group; Coco Khan, Brent; Penny Karioki, NIA; Cassie Mouricette-Baily, Brent; Francesca Caporiccio, Brent Health Matters; Lara Parizotto, Migrant Democracy Project; Louis Gilbert, B-3; Andy Brown, Brent Public Health; Ryan Fuke, St Mungos; Steve Davies, St Mungos; Robin Sivapalan, English For Action; Anne Airebamen, NHS ICB; Polly Stephens, NHYC; Jackie Casey, NHYC; Ammaarah Felix, Sufra; Zena Zazeme, Sufra; Annette Heney, Cooperative Support; Ella Dane-Liebesny, Brent; Charles Austin, Brent; Lola Falana, DWP; Thandie Lawrence, Brent Health Matters; Caroline Evans, Brent Public Health; Laurence Coaker, Brent; Grace George, Pathway; Nina Tissington, Pathway; Holly Cooper, Crisis.</p> <p>Actions from previous forum were followed up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Laurence brought flyers regarding single homelessness service relocation for attendees to take.- Holly submitted request to Brent Safeguarding Partnership for cross-agency training on sharing information in safeguarding context on grounds other than consent. Request was successful and Brent Safeguarding Partnership are due to organise this for autumn.- Holly nominated Rumi's Cave for Brent Health and Social Care Inequalities Award on behalf of the forum and Rumi's have been shortlisted with winner announced at the event on 6th September. | |
| <p>2. Rough Sleeping in Brent: Update</p> <p>Ryan presented slides.</p> <p>Outreach are improving at locating Streetlink referrals for urban parks but struggle with bigger parks as don't receive many referrals – tend to see rough sleepers around outskirts of parks in areas typically used by dogs/dogwalkers. Tip given to use what3words for Streetlink referrals to pinpoint location. St</p> | |

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| <p>Mungos are in talks with the parks teams to develop a response to park rough sleeping – looking to have an agenda item on this in future forum.</p> <p>CHAIN annual reports: A big portion of rough sleepers have only been seen once, partially due to rapid response verifying them and linking them into NSNO quickly. Europeans seen are mostly Polish and Romanian and have some form of status (settled/pre-settled). Unfortunately, CHAIN reports don't break down eligibility despite this being a main driver. Females usually make up around 10% in Brent but this year at 12.6%. Some definitions were changed in October so harder to track data across the year. From October they have been capturing data on people who have returned to rough sleeping: more people returning to rough sleeping from hostel/supported accommodation evictions than PRS. Much higher number of rough sleepers in June 2023 than 2022 may be due to limited access to NSNO due to union strike. People exiting NASS accommodation onto streets hasn't been reflected in RS stats but still imagine it may come.</p> <p>Data reflects cost of living and effects of Brexit i.e. people not formalising their status – a lot of their work for this cohort is signposting and supporting to access legal advice. Still open, working and conducting 4-5 outreach shifts despite strike.</p> <p>Asked why there are fewer females, Ryan advised they may ask for support prior to men, rough sleep in other ways e.g. sofa-surfing, squatting in crack houses, sex-working for shelter. Women's census completed for first time last year to identify those not seen, will be completed again this year. Built for Zero is tying in with this and will aim to identify the women experiencing hidden homelessness.</p> | |
| <p>3. Brent Single Service Update</p> <p>Laurence picked up on streamlined asylum process. People will receive 28 days' notice following receipt of refugee status. One reason we haven't seen spike in rough sleeping yet could be due to issues with the fast-tracking process: the Home Office distributed the forms in English, meaning many people either didn't know how to respond or responded with incomplete forms. Due to this they are starting the process again, but we are unsure what support will be given to complete the forms this time round. We are being told that if people don't return their forms, their applications will be closed and they will be served with notice to leave their accommodation. There are 3 hotels filled with asylum seekers in Brent – very concerned about impending evictions. Majority are single men and will not meet the threshold for temporary accommodation. This has come at worst possible time for the housing market in London. Brent have access to Clearsprings portal so can see who has been given status and eviction notice therefore will attempt to engage with them as early as possible.</p> <p>Single homeless team is moving to Harlesden to get back to face-to-face working. Start date is due to be 7th August but building works are ongoing to make the building user-friendly so will confirm opening date in coming weeks. Good location in area of demand. Acknowledged there will be some people</p> | <p>Laurence to confirm opening date and send jpeg/png version of comms to Holly to circulate to Forum mailing list.</p> |

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| <p>who can't go to Harlesden for variety of reasons so will still have some presence in Wembley. At the moment 80% of approaches are people who are already homeless, need to flip this and get people engaging at prevention stage. Brent have moved away from translating flyers as there are 149 languages spoken in the borough. Nicola suggested having a QR code people can scan to access the information online and translate it. It was asked what will happen for those that can't access face to face services in both Wembley and Harlesden – Laurence advised services will cater to individual needs e.g. calls over the phone/on teams or by conducting home visits. Also asked how the Council engaging with asylum seekers early will affect services making Duty to Refers? Laurence advised the Council will only be engaging with those in hotels, won't have information for the people who are currently making their own arrangements - so services are asked to keep making referrals as usual. Pathway requested a procedure in place for those in hospital – Coco is in touch with hospital discharge around this.</p> | <p>Anyone to email Laurence if need more paper flyers Laurence.Coaker@brent.gov.uk.</p> |
| <p>4. Brent Drug and Alcohol Partnership</p> <p>Andy presented slides.</p> <p>Drug and alcohol related deaths are at all-time high. Central element of strategy is increasing engagement numbers. Brent are slightly ahead compared to other areas. Brent have recruited a number of drug and alcohol workers over last 2 years but there is a skill shortage. Rough Sleepers drug and alcohol grant confirmed for another 2 years. Conditions on spending are strict - will be determining local priorities that fit in with national framework. There will be drugs workers present in new Single Homelessness service in Harlesden as we need a comprehensive needs assessment that includes housing. Andy referenced B-3 as a good example of local residents taking control of their recovery. 20% increase in alcohol related liver deaths over COVID needs to be addressed so Brent included alcohol in the drugs strategy. Identified the need to engage those who are under-represented (mostly women). Want to pick people up at an earlier stage rather than through hospital. Key finding of Dame Carol Black review was to avoid letting people out of Prison on a Friday with instruction to present at drug and alcohol service as this doesn't work in practice. Just under 50% of domestic abuse perpetrators who are charged are tested positive for cocaine.</p> <p>Asked whether Brent will open a walk-in drug clinic as there are currently long waiting lists – Andy advised that Via is already a walk-in site. Hospitals are seeing many people with NRPF with dependency issues – is there any provision for this? Advised that every case will be assessed as it comes and acknowledged that pathways for beds and support are often only funded for those with recourse to public funds. Asked if there is a separate front door to access the pathway for rough sleepers as St Mungo's are struggling to get people into it - Andy asked to take this up separately as there shouldn't be an issue.</p> | <p>Andy to get stats on NRPF accessing treatment.</p> <p>Andy to clarify how partners can feed into focus groups and finalised strategy to be fed back to forum.</p> |
| <p>5. GP Practice Scheme on Homelessness</p> <p>Versha presented slides.</p> | |

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| <p>People experiencing homelessness are often physiologically 30 years older than their actual age. Want GPs to identify people who are/have experienced homelessness and link them in with other services. Also want our services to contact GPs if the cohort are not receiving the healthcare they need. Social prescribers can support cohort via GP. Scheme will be evaluated at end of financial year. Asked how we go about referring – can set up appointments or email GP practice directly (can copy Versha or Anne in if there are any challenges with access) GPs will check records to ensure everything is up to date. Dentistry was brought up – doesn't currently fall under Versha's remit but may do in future – people can contact 111 and retrieve list of dentists open for referrals.</p> <p>Issue brought up about GPs charging for medical letters which is a barrier to services e.g. Home Office. Providing medical letters isn't within GP contract hence the charge some request – if you advocate around being unable to pay and housing issues, GPs often lower or waive fees. Jacqui brought up HC1 and HC2 applications which provide access to free prescriptions, dental etc. All GPs are involved in this new scheme but is a challenge to keep consistent because all GPs are individually contracted. Asked how we overcome barriers to registration for migrants - work has been done around raising awareness and accreditation of practices with Doctors of the World. If people continue to see barriers to GP access for clients, requested that you email clcht.brethhealthmatters@nhs.net (clinical team) to raise the issue. Wider BHM team which includes clinical team, mental health practitioners, health educators and other council and NHS services can be contacted at brethhealthmatters@brent.gov.uk.</p> | <p>Holly and Versha to link in for homelessness awareness for GPs.</p> |
| <p>6. New Horizons Youth Centre: New Enhanced Services</p> <p>Jackie presented slides.</p> <p>New worker starting in September on Vanguard project working with people from Lambeth, Lewisham and Brent. Service manages approximately 50 young people. Currently open 5 days per week but may move to 7 next year. They go into prisons to engage young people and make support plans to house them within a week or two of discharge. Cognitive assessments completed which often helps neurodivergent young people who haven't previously been diagnosed. 70% of young people re-offend but this comes down to 30% if engaged with services like NHYC.</p> <p>Up to the young people what pace they go. Some can't access centre due to area risks so they will meet people in other safe spaces including Civic Centre, libraries, cafes etc. Hostels are full and some are closing down; natural move-on flow has been blocked. Also do street outreach pan-London. Main hotspots are Kings Cross, Euston, Camden and West End. Seeing care leavers abandon accommodation around UK and come to London - will liaise with social workers and pay train fares back to accommodation to work on a planned move and prevent rough sleeping. Centre also offers showers, laundry, breakfast, hot lunch and various workshops including recording studio for music and podcasting, and football team. Other services will come in e.g drug and alcohol services, Praxis and Common Voice. Lots of young people have</p> | |

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| suspected PTSD, their psychologist can diagnose them which grants access to treatment. More young people evicted over COVID as friends/family worried they would bring COVID into household. | |
| <p>7. London PLUS updates</p> <p>Nicola presented slides.</p> <p>Request made to inform them if there are any topics people would like training on: London.plus@homelesslink.org.uk.</p> | |
| <p>8. AOB</p> <p>Lara explained Migrant Democracy Project's work to help migrants with voter registration and advocacy around voting rights: Migrant Democracy Project (migrantdemos.org.uk).</p> | |