

Brent Homelessness Forum

10:00 – 12:30, 5 March 2024

IN PERSON @ BRENT CIVIC CENTRE, Boardrooms 3 and 4

Minutes

Agenda item	Actions
<p>1. Welcome and introductions</p> <p><u>Attendees:</u> Atara Fridler (Chair, Crisis) Julian Saunders (Firm Foundation), Tami Adewunmi (Firm Foundation), Laurence Coaker (Brent), Spencer Randolph (Brent), Hannah Dillon (Shelter), Lisa Britto (Depaul), Nina Tissington (LNWH Pathway), Anne McBrearty (CLCH NHS), Amie Reid (CLCH NHS), Sophie Lease (Brent Foodbank), Devon Costello (St Mungos), Steve Davies (St Mungos), Priyesh Patel (Leader's Office, Brent), Catherine Martin (Brent ICP), Sam Thornton (Brent ICP), Marchell Davis (EACH Counselling), Jatin Patel (Social Interest Group), Jackie Casey (NHYC), Ryan Fuke (St Mungos), Bridie Lane-Williams (Brent + Crisis), Laura Potter-James (Crisis), Anita Silberbauer (SHPS), Anne Airebamen (NHS ICB), Tessa Munro (CVS Brent), Michelle Gray (Brent Council), Cassie Mouricette-Bailey (Brent), Sally Dickinson (Berkeley Foundation), Coco Khan (Brent), Max Griffiths (Via), Jerry Nicholas (B-3), Donna Gould (Via), Holly Cooper (Crisis).</p> <p><u>Apologies:</u> Noah Okunromade (Brent), Gerard Kelly (NHS ICB), Tom Shakespeare (Brent Council), Caroline Evans (Brent Council), Jane Cook (Groundswell), Versha Varsani (NHS ICB), Renee Gallagher (Ashford Place), Jacqui Crane (Groundswell), Daniel Smith (Young Roots), Beccy Mitchell (DWP), Shaheen Pathan (DWP).</p> <p>Minutes and actions from previous forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cllr Dar and Pakistan Community Centre are providing ongoing support to Brent WNS.- Holly has organised an information session on rough sleeping for Councillors in 2 weeks' time.- Jacqui to share resources for accessing healthcare with NRPF.- Cassie invited social prescribers to this forum but awaiting response.	<p>Holly to follow up with Jacqui for resources.</p>
<p>2. Brent Private Sector Housing Strategy</p> <p>Spencer presented slides. Draft strategy available online: Public participation platform of London Borough of Brent CitizenLab. Almost 50% of housing in Brent is private. A TA scheme of 45 units benefitting from council grants is going live today. Brent is building more council homes than any other London authority but will still not meet the demand. There's an estimate of 10,000 properties in Brent with a category 1 hazard – unsure where these properties are. Brent is a leading authority in taking enforcement action against landlords. Have 1 selective licensing scheme in place but will be introducing borough-wide licensing (apart from Wembley Park) meaning any landlord renting a property will need a license 50% of these (approx 20,000) will be inspected. Completed a survey on health and wellbeing questions before and after adaptations were made on homes – results showed people had a significant improvement after adaptations were made. Issue was raised that some landlords don't want adaptations – can't force them to make them but Council has the most funding for adaptations of any borough – most referrals come via</p>	

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<p>ASC with landlord consent. Have completed surveys with landlords and appears they haven't been too opposed.</p> <p>Asked when introducing the licensing schemes, was there any impact on the sector e.g. landlords exiting the market? No evidence of this across London. License = £640 for 5 years. Most landlords are not worried about the inspection. There are landlords exiting but this is due to other factors e.g. increasing mortgages. Holly raised that PRS tenants may not have capacity to pursue landlords even if they do know their rights via the proposed tenant toolkit, especially those on low incomes and/or at risk of homelessness– asked whether more resources will be allocated to support tenants with the process? This will be done via tenancy liaison officer and work with Advice for Renters to support tenants. Hosting a tenants fair at the Council with Al McAllister from Justice for Tenants.</p> <p>Asked why the licencing scheme won't cover Wembley Park? New scheme is predicated on poor property conditions – if you can show 20%+ of properties have poor conditions you can introduce selective licensing, predicted 36% across borough, with 46% being in PRS sector but in Wembley Park 98% is PRS and only 2% is poor – due to them being new builds. If you have 3+ people in a property in Wembley Park they are still licensed under HMO regulations. Catherine mentioned ICP are doing work with mental health and housing within social housing – asked if there is scope to do something around mental health within in PRS? Spencer advised they could be lacking in this.</p>	<p>Catherine to complete online consultation survey to raise mental health.</p>
<p>3. Rough Sleeping in Brent: Update</p> <p>Ryan and Bridie presented slides. Ryan raised that it's fine to refer people sleeping in cars as long as they are not fit for human habitation e.g. cars and vans not tailored for sleeping, or caravans in disrepair. Be mindful that they may drive around if sleeping in cars and should keep Streetlink updated if they move.</p> <p>Built for Zero -</p> <p>Doesn't come up with an immediate solution, allows data to drive changes - trial service improvements for shorter periods e.g. 30/90 days, rather than pour resources into inefficient pilots for 1 year+. Rough sleeping usually goes up in summer and down in winter but this past winter it has increased. BfZ takes a gendered approach to the definition therefore is broader than streetlink definition:</p> <p><i>Anyone in the community who sleeps or lives outside because they have no home or their home is not suitable for living in, or this has been their experience within the last 3 months. This includes individuals living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters (e.g.: cars, tents, squats & outside space including parkland, waste ground and embankments, businesses not meant for habitation). This also includes accommodation that has been cuckooed or is precarious accommodation that is a day by day transaction and the individual might have to leave quickly and have nowhere else to go.</i></p> <p>Bridie called for services to reach out to her if working with rough sleepers. Believe that their current data on women is accurate. London women's census saw 26 women rough sleeping in a week last September – Outreach snapshot counted 3 women. Over the last 6 months BfZ saw 30 women recorded but only 6 are still actively rough sleeping in Brent. Ryan's team continue to do gendered outreach shifts to capture these women after the end of census week. Over half of rough sleepers counted don't have their sexuality recorded.</p>	

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<p>Community of Practice session on 6th aims to help frontline staff feel comfortable having these conversations to make this 'unknown' segment smaller. 60-70% of rough sleepers do have recourse to public funds but have other barriers. Lots of the individuals on the by name list only have a single need and this is the lack of affordable and suitable accommodation. Maps of rough sleeping reports for BfZ and CHAIN are very similar meaning those reporting themselves rough sleeping to services are being found by outreach. CHAIN stats are different to BfZ because CHAIN records whether people have a mental health need whereas BfZ records whether mental health is a barrier to their housing. High number of people moved to inactive as not engaged with services for 30+ days, could be due to borough borders – people are transient and may be engaging with services in other boroughs. Aim to reach functional zero (more people becoming inactive/being housed than entering as newly active). Laurence suggested it would be good to know whether those with availability of PRS as their barrier are creating the flow as results show people are being moved into PRS despite this barrier. This cohort is mainly from SHPS refugee service, and they will be looking further into how long people are staying within each stage of the process.</p> <p>Max asked what it is about the substance misuse that is stopping clients from having a home as people can have these issues whilst being accommodated too, is it the financial repercussions or unacceptance from landlords? They are currently delving into substance misuse in weekly meetings. Tried to get people referred into Via but people were declining referrals. Some people may not want to change their behaviour but still want housing – for these people, if substance misuse isn't the barrier, what is? Seeing trends change, someone with alcohol misuse needs went into shelter and their behaviour changed as their alcohol use was situational. Nina advised in hospital discharge they see that alcohol/substance misuse are not always barriers to access housing but are barriers to sustaining their tenancy. Brent single homelessness team have been including engagement with services like Via as part of personalised housing plans in order to support sustainment. "Availability of suitable and affordable accommodation" includes accessibility. Catherine asked how they are getting the information about people's mental health needs – Bridie advised it's different depending on the service – service-users will report their needs to the services, or services will find out through ongoing casework. From CHAIN it's drawn from support needs assessments – St Mungos KPI of 80% service-users need an up to date assessment within last 6 months but BfZ is making this happen more regularly.</p> <p>Streetlink –</p> <p>Ryan advised the more information you give about a person's location and appearance, the better. Streetlink London will no longer be triaging alerts from April, flagging that we are unsure who will be doing this going forward, could be Council, Outreach, Rapid Response. May take a month or 2 to deal with transition. 207 Streetlink referrals received in Brent in January. In colder weather there was a day Rapid Response received over 60 referrals in one day. NSNO (No Second Night Out) reverting to old way of working which should lead to quicker responses – new West London hub opening in Brent at Pound Lane – should mean that rapid response will be able to immediately offer some rough sleepers a bedspace when seen on outreach. Bedspaces across all NSNO hubs is unknown but should be 14 in Brent. Other hubs in Hackney, Southwark and Camden. Ryan clarified that Rapid response is funded pan-London up to first contact and will refer to Council out of hours service. Local outreach team</p>	

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<p>respond to those not located by rapid response and hold caseload of those not in NSNO.</p> <p>2 ways to get involved with BfZ – if you work with rough sleepers in Brent and want to refer into the by name list, or if you don't want to refer in but want to review themes and join monthly meeting to become involved in decision-making around service improvement plans: email bridie.lane-williams@brent.gov.uk</p>	
<p>4. Brent Rough Sleepers Pilot</p> <p>Catherine presented slides. Brent Council was given health funding for a pilot targeting rough sleepers with mental health issues. Was meant to pilot last year but not able to due to recruitment issues, now being taken forward by CNWL. Target to support 60 people in Brent, noted that Camden and Westminster thought this was too high. NW10 and NW2 are mental health crisis hotspots so will focus in these areas. Complex needs practitioner is already in post. Have decided to reduce money spent on training to increase size of team – will include the training in the MH and housing workstream. Repatriation is just a part of it, not over-arching theme. Funding was for a year but there is an aim to make this ongoing – will be based on outcomes. Will be via referral from other services. Westminster's active caseload in January was 25 and Camden was 19 – main feedback was engagement takes longer than framework sets out. Team will sit within CNWL but closely linked with the Council. Despite Camden and Westminster not reaching anywhere near 60 people, they still have a business case to get more funding for this year so should not be a dealbreaker for Brent if we don't reach 60 – should still have a business case to extend.</p>	
<p>5. Brent Single Homelessness Service Update</p> <p>Laurence recapped on move from Civic Centre to drop-in at Turning Point due to clogging up of online appointment system. Feedback from officers is this has been a success but are eager to hear what customers experience of it is. What hasn't worked as well is co-location of other services due to constraints on building as it is too small. Not unusual to see 40-50 people, and as many as 70 in one day – putting a strain on the building. Identified privacy issue with booths. Update that the single homeless service is moving again – currently looking at alternative buildings and very likely they will be moving 10 minutes down the road to the New Millennium Centre which is owned by the NHS and leased to the Council – currently used by ASC as a day/learning centre. ASC will still be operating from there and Bridge Park food service also moving there. Ideal location as there are many different rooms. Very early stages and it has not yet been confirmed, probably looking at a new year move if/when confirmed. Interested in feedback from Turning Point, what did and didn't work to ensure the new building will solve this. May also have a shower accessible for rough sleepers, lots of potential to explore.</p> <p>New service opening – rough sleepers initiative grant funding a complex needs accommodation on Craven Park Road for 8 complex needs rough sleepers who have exhausted their options e.g. unable to sustain supported tenancy. Team of 4 officers to support these individuals. The have the building and are recruiting the staff, will be opening soon but date tbc (should be in coming weeks). Individuals will be from the St Mungo's caseload, already have 4 identified as suitable, no current time limit for stay. There will be a night concierge.</p>	<p>Attendees to email laurence.coaker@brent.gov.uk to help design new move.</p>

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<p>Marchell asked about Manor Works new TA as clients have been offered spaces but not had confirmation from Council yet – 45-46 units here, Laurence advised there have been delays in getting people in due to solicitor issues but the lease was signed yesterday so people should be receiving contact imminently regarding their offers.</p> <p>Julian asked how long partnerships took to build for colocation at Turning Point – Laurence clarified the partnerships were already in place through the homelessness forum which is very active, only constraint was size of the building. Concept was for co-location so that people could access immediate referrals/support for other relevant services when seeking housing support.</p>	
<p>6. AOB including forum subgroup updates</p> <p>Place-Based Work Evaluation has been completed and includes recommendations for Brent: Place based work Brent Crisis UK Together we will end homelessness. Atara gave a big thanks to all for contributing and for ongoing partnership.</p> <p>CVS Brent invites partners to attend their forum: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/vcse-connect-forum-tickets-825092242107.</p> <p>SHPS are recruiting a triage worker, deadline on 10th March: Crisis Jobs Search here for your perfect career - Job Information Apply for Triage Worker (SHPS).</p>	