

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Task & Finish Group

TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Members

Cllr Zaffar Ajaib (Chair)

Cllr Christine Hulme

Cllr Harjinder Minhas

Cllr Waqas Sabah

- Meetings ran from October to December
- Spoke to 42 people from 18 different organisations
- Interviewed several different SBC teams and a broad range of partners in the public, voluntary and housing sectors.
- Also had the opportunity to speak to former rough sleeper clients directly to hear their stories.



RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES



**Partnership and
collaboration**



Communications



**Commissioning and
complex needs**



Health and mental health



**Skills and
strengths**



**Localities and
customer service**



Safety



PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Findings

- Lack of collaboration or coordination between different organisations.
- Financial barriers for partners in using SBC premises.
- Need for shared strategic approach.
- Opportunity to build on OneSlough

Recommendations

- New strategic partnership group
- Explore opportunities for partners to operate alongside SBC teams, out of locality hubs and other SBC premises.
- Explore the viability of an alternative giving scheme in Slough.





COMMUNICATIONS

Findings

- Can be hard for people to find information on what support is available, and where and how this can be accessed.
- Partner concerns around lack of a named contact at SBC.
- SBC could do more to raise awareness of the good work carried out by SBC teams.

Recommendations

- Action plan to review and enhance communications.
- Updated directory of services, and names SBC contacts for partners.





COMMISSIONING & COMPLEX NEEDS

Findings

- More targeted support is needed for clients with complex needs.
- Particular challenge with the provision of accommodation for those aged 16-17
- Current 'floating service' contract does not incentivise provider to focus on complex cases
- Need for improved collaboration between housing and commissioning teams.

Recommendations

- Task group of housing, benefits and commissioning teams to review the commissioning of accommodation for client groups with complex needs.
- Creative solutions for acquiring accommodation for this group – e.g. compulsory purchase, void stock





HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH

Findings

- Clients experiencing challenges accessing mental health support, with high waiting times
- Referral processes flagged as an issue.
- Lack of effective collaboration between Community Mental Health Team and housing
- Opportunity to learn from Health Outreach Liaison Team model from West Berks CCG

Recommendations

- Collaboration between the Community Mental Health team and the Housing Team needs to be improved and an action plan established to reduce waiting times and improve referral processes.
- Work with East Berks CCG to explore viability of piloting the HOLT model in Slough





SKILLS & STRENGTHS

Findings

- The group heard about the challenges former rough sleepers can face in rebuilding their lives and accessing work. Most were not ready to enter the labour market.
- Most people the group spoke to had hobbies and interests that they would like to build on, which would help build their confidence and involve them in positive activity

Recommendations

- SBC and partners should consider how a strength-based model for supporting homeless people and rough sleepers might be developed, to help them lead their own recovery, gain confidence and improve their networks.
- There may be chances to work with One Slough to identify volunteering placements for clients or generate opportunities through Social Return on Investment.



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LOCALITIES & CUSTOMER SERVICES

Findings

- Partners have concerns around the closure of Landmark Place.
- Opening hours / out of hours services need to be designed with chaotic lives in mind
- Too early to judge impact of new localities model, but important that staff are able to recognise those in need of support and guide them to appropriate action.

Recommendations

- Once the new localities strategy has had an opportunity to bed in, SBC should evaluate how effective it has been in:
 - enabling homeless residents and rough sleepers to access support
 - helping customer services staff rapidly identify those at risk of homelessness and guide them to necessary support or action





SAFETY

Findings

- Recent assault of a young female rough sleeper.
- Partner concerns regarding potentially-vulnerable single women were not provided with same-day accommodation by the council.

Recommendations

- Review the recent incident of violence against a female rough sleeper and consider whether further action, either by SBC or by partners, can be taken in future to protect vulnerable rough sleepers.