

## **Housing Related Support Consultation - Stakeholder Feedback**

Housing Related Support (HRS) services enable vulnerable people to attain and sustain accommodation and/or independent living. HRS delivers and/or brings together, time limited interventions appropriate to the needs of an individual.

A formal 12 week consultation period took place between Friday 1 May 2015 and Friday 24 July 2015. The purpose of the consultation was to ask stakeholders what they valued most about the services and what they might like to see in the future.

A wide range of stakeholders responded to a series of questions about HRS and a summary of the common themes from their responses is below:

Q1. Where are the gaps for you?

### **Communication between agencies**

Stakeholders responded;

- There needs to be a better link between customers getting a medical diagnosis and receiving floating support at an early stage for people whose medical condition could increase when hitting crisis
- HRS services need to develop better links with mental health commissioners – An example of this is a service for offenders with mental health issues. This works across Norfolk and Suffolk
- There is a need for services to work more closely together to avoid people failing when they move from one provider to another.
- There needs to be better links between HRS and the Youth Offending Service

### **People falling through the gaps**

Stakeholders responded;

- There is a need for services for people with high level needs that don't meet eligibility criteria and for which HRS services are not suitable for.
- Adults between 25 and 65 with low level needs can be at risk of homelessness and not eligible for statutory services. There is no other funding for preventative work.
- There are not enough accommodation based services that will support customers with drug and alcohol problems.

### **Joint Funding**

- Stakeholders felt that there was a need to meet to discuss further joint funding options.

## **Mental Health Services**

Stakeholders responded;

- There is a clear gap in mental health services in that they often won't work with people who have a dual diagnosis or drugs and alcohol abuse
- There are a large number of people with mental health needs that do not meet the eligibility criteria for ongoing care and support from Adult Services but still need support. Some of these people need support on a daily basis to maintain their tenancy otherwise they will be evicted and will come back through the system
- HRS needs to work more closely with Mental Health Trusts, CCGs and GPs. If there was more provision for people with complex mental health problems, the Trusts would save millions by not placing people out of county

## **Gaps in Provision**

Stakeholders responded;

- There are not enough assessment beds within current provision
- Units specifically for customers with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) need to promote independent living skills to reduce the likelihood of customers falling into offending
- We need to have a more intensive floating support service that can support more chaotic people to remain in their homes.
- Young people's accommodation stopping at 18 and moving to Bed and Breakfast accommodation – this can give young people a bad name as people are normally in this situation when they are in arrears or debt with their rent.
- An ideal solution would be a short, sharp assessment stage followed by a step down with the right amount of support or moving into own property
- Stakeholders all agree that there is a need for more services for people who present high level needs. People move on quicker and settle better if we invest more at the top end
- Teenage mothers need floating support when moving on to general needs accommodation after giving birth. They are no longer able to stay in their hostel

## **Early Intervention**

- A need for more funding to early preventative work and community inclusions to reduce the need for HRS services.
- There is a concern that if there are further cuts, the preventative aspect of floating support will be lost – we need to retain the preventative nature of HRS services

Q2. Are there some areas of provision where there is too much?

Stakeholders responded;

- There may be too many young person beds and not enough for over 25's in some areas.
- There are a large amount of unused beds in rural sheltered housing schemes.

Q3. What works well?

Stakeholders responded;

- Having physical accommodation with support attached to it works well
- Homeless families' accommodation and the staged pathway within this provide a brilliant service.
- The Lowestoft rising approach works well in Lowestoft to integrate public services to address a range of social issues.
- The function of a Housing Forum to discuss hard to place individuals works well (however these are not always attended by all agencies)
- Short stay emergency beds are a positive service across the county
- Accommodation based support services continue to provide floating support for individuals that have moved on. This is much needed.

Q4. Are there any other future considerations?

### **Communication between agencies**

Stakeholders responded;

- There needs to be more integration between HRS services and other health and social care interventions. E.g. Oxfordshire operate similar schemes incorporating basic healthcare needs like chiropody – so professionals can engage with people whilst having their feet done

### **Joint funding**

Stakeholders responded;

- Statutory provision should contribute to HRS services as they increasingly provide high level support.
- Pre-payment cards to support young people to manage their finances safely should be provided by agencies

### **Gaps in provision**

Stakeholders responded;

- Customers' with mental health issues need to be supported to tackle these difficulties to increase likelihood of a successful move on from HRS services.
- HRS services provide a great transition for young people into independence but 16-18 year olds may need 24/7 support.
- Suffolk could benefit from a generic floating support service to support customers with high level needs across all HRS services.
- There is too much cherry picking by providers of services. Examples of this are that one woman was refused access to a refuge because of bad behaviour that happened 2 years ago and another for bad behaviour 10 years ago.
- There needs to be more housing that is grouped together as this makes it easier for partner agencies as they could visit a number of people in one setting.
- There is a shortage of high needs provision including assessment beds
- There needs to be more floating support in more rural areas.
- Slightly higher support is needed for some young people who currently get 7 hours of support a week and would benefit from 10.
- Many providers are too risk adverse therefore it is difficult to for customers with offending backgrounds e.g. arson to find accommodation based support services.

#### **Other Ideas;**

- Waveney Council are trying to adapt a tenancy passport for their bond scheme. Could this link in with the Passport to Independence?
- Waveney Council have funding from central government for an intensive domestic abuse worker to be appointed soon. Other localities would benefit from this.
- The concept of a 'basket of hours' for floating support would work well. This would provide flexibility for providers in how they support customers e.g. stepping up support when customer moves on.

#### **Further Comments**

#### **Stakeholders responded;**

- Providers could be more lenient with their eviction policies. Sometimes customers are evicted too quickly and hit crisis sending them back in their journey
- Young people should be at the centre of all planning that is carried out.
- Some providers receive funding but do not deliver the required service. This needs to be addressed through performance management.
- There needs to be more early interventions with families to keep young people living at home and not becoming homeless.

- Sometimes customers are being housed inappropriately and therefore there needs to be a period of assessment before deciding on level of support
- There needs to be better communication between agencies to join up support plans and assessments for individuals.
- HRS services need to link in with community groups to ensure customers can access meaningful activities outside of housing provision.
- Example of good practice. Drop in centre in Bury St Edmunds where people can link with community based projects and receive information about housing options.