

Cardiff Council Scrutiny Committee January 21st, 2019

Submission from United Welsh for the agenda item on homelessness

- *An update on winter provision (particularly over the Christmas period).*
- *Are services fit for purpose?*
- *How the hostels work together – is it effective?*
- *Supported accommodation – how effective is it? What kinds of support is on offer?*
- *Do people coming through the gateway get the support they need?*
- *For Members to understand the complexities of the service and the people that use it.*

United Welsh provides accommodation for homeless families (Adams Court), homeless individuals and couples (Oak House), second stage accommodation for individuals and couples (Prep Projects - which provide support on a less intensive level for people not quite ready for independent move on) and floating support in partnership with the Salvation Army.

We no longer have the capacity to provide emergency cold weather provision as we have converted the spaces we used into additional units: therefore, increasing year-round capacity. United Welsh however are willing to discuss how we can support any cold weather provision in the future.

Oak House works closely with other frontline hostels and CCC to accommodate individuals (in a focused environment and on a short-term basis), who feel ready to move on to their own accommodation and seek employment. Close working with CCC also enabled us to receive a Welsh Government grant to employ a temporary worker at Oak House and Prep to develop links with the private rented sector. This pilot was so successful that United Welsh made this post permanent, this has enabled us to provide a more efficient move on from busy frontline hostels, via Oak House, to independent accommodation often in the private rented sector.

Close working with CCC and frontline hostels also gave us the understanding of changing needs locally and our need to be flexible in our service delivery. With more couples in frontline hostels, and barriers for those with dogs, we changed our policy so that we now accommodate couples and those who have dogs at both Oak House and Prep. We have also added to the number of units (from 20 to 27) at Oak House and we now have accessible self-contained ground floor units, which are also useful to accommodate individuals with dogs, keeping them away from those who may not wish to have contact with animals.

We are willing to respond quickly to requests from the council thanks to our strong partnership working, even where these may be outside of our normal practices. For example, we recently agreed an appropriate plan and accepted an individual referral (rather than family) to Adams Court. (Case study attached). Adams Court evidences the close working relationship of CCC's support team with United Welsh and the relatively smooth running of 73 family flats. United Welsh are currently

building a community hall, adjacent to Adams Court, which will be used by the families, health professionals, community groups etc

United Welsh staff participate in the homeless service providers forums which are useful for exchanging information with other providers as well as CCC. Generally, there is a good feeling of partnership working. Gateway also works well, although staff have asked if there is the need to go through Gateway frontline hostels if we are happy to directly accept appropriate service users with low needs when we have vacancies? Could there be a fast track option? Partnership work with other statutory agencies could also be improved, especially for those with complex needs using our services. It is important to recognise that our tenants can vary in how they feel and present in a short space of time, so we need to maintain and develop strong links with partner agencies and be responsive to one another. CCC are however proactive in trialling new initiatives to manage complex service users whilst recognising that people can also decline services.

Janice Bell – Head of Specialist Housing and Supporting People

Melanie Arnold – Team Leader Adams Court

Falling Through the Net Case Study – Client X
The Housing Options Centre – Cardiff Council
Jonathan Stephens, Interventions Coordinator
15/11/2018

Introduction

In recent years the Welsh Assembly Government has urged agencies and service providers to be proactive in providing effective and seamless services to those in housing need. One of the aims of the Ten Year Homelessness Plan for Wales 2009-2019 is to 'ensure that the support and other needs of homeless people are identified and provided for and that agencies work together to aid their sustainable resettlement'.

In line with this Cardiff County Council has created a specific Intervention Service to coordinate the delivery of services to Homeless Vulnerable Adults and Rough Sleepers in Cardiff. The Homeless Intervention Service will also monitor homeless individuals referred to the team who are falling through the net of services.

History

Client X is a 38 year old male, with a learning difficulty, who has been accessing our services here in the Housing Options Centre since approximately 2009. Client X has also spent time in prison and will go back to his mother's home if he is not being supported by a frontline hostel. He first came to my attention in 2017 after losing his accommodation of 5 years due to an altercation with another tenant in the same apartment block. He lasted such a positive length of time in part, due to an elderly gentleman who used to live in the block of flats that would be of support to Client X, and also due to the fact he had his own front door, and didn't necessarily have to associate with other people in the block. He then moved in with his mother, but displayed anti-social behaviour and made threats of violence towards her. This put his mother's home and health at risk. Client X does not cope well in close proximity to others, therefore our options were extremely limited. From this Client X moved into one of the frontline hostels and for a few months this was positive. However, issues around paying rent, ASB and engagement started to emerge. In an 8 month period client X was evicted 5 times for displaying aggressive and violent behaviour. Client X was refused accommodation from all support providers and so a second meeting was called.

Outcome

A Falling through the Net meeting was called for Client X, where all services currently and historically involved could get together and work towards an appropriate outcome. It was determined that Adams Court would be the most suitable accommodation for Client X, and we put together a list of actions to work towards this outcome.

Actions included;

- Clients X's mother to be involved with support and take the lead on managing finances such as paying rent and bills.
- Social Services and Montana Health Care to put together a care package suitable for Client X.
- To keep Client X in the loop in relation to his accommodation and support.
- To simplify all processes/rules for client X
- To provide Adams Court with a list of all contact numbers relevant to Client X.
- To look into volunteer litter picking scheme with Keep Wales Tidy for Client X.

Client X now maintains his own self-contained flat in Adams Court, and has done for some time due to the fact that his needs and issues were addressed appropriately and a positive step forward could take place for all involved.