

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**21<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2019**

**TEMPORARY AND SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION – THE SINGLE PERSON'S  
GATEWAY**

## **Background**

1. At a meeting of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee (CASSC) on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018<sup>1</sup>, Members received the “Homelessness and Housing Review Strategy 2018-22”. At this meeting, Members agreed that they wished to hold an additional meeting dedicated to looking at temporary and supported accommodation via the Single Persons Gateway.
  
2. The aim of the meeting would be to obtain views from a range of sources, to explore views around the following issues:
  - An update on winter arrangements for 2018/19.
  - Are services fit for purpose?
  - How the hostels work together – is it effective?
  - Supported accommodation – how effective is it? What kind of support is on offer?
  - Do people coming through the gateway get the support they need?
  - The complexities of the service and the people that use it.
  
3. A CASSC meeting was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019. The meeting heard from a range of witnesses, with focus on the bullet points in paragraph 2 above. At this meeting, Members heard from a range of witnesses, including:
  - Cabinet and Senior Officers in Cardiff Council

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<sup>1</sup> <http://cardiff.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g3438/Printed%20minutes%2005th-Dec-2018%2016.30%20Community%20Adult%20Services%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1&LLL=0>

- The Huggard Centre
  - The Wallich
  - Salvation Army
  - Ty Tresillian and the Outreach Team
  - Tamsin Stirling, Independent Housing Consultant
4. Prior to the meeting, Members also received a copy of Shelter Cymru's report entitled "*Trapped on the Streets Understanding Rough Sleeping in Wales*"; as well as a written submission from United Welsh Housing. Both are attached at **Appendices A and B** respectively.

## Issues

5. The Single Persons Gateway was created in 2015 to ensure that supported accommodation provision would only be accessed by those that are most in need, and to control the numbers being placed in accommodation without a local connection.
6. Provision:
- Emergency Accommodation - 71 Units
  - Hostels - 232 Units
  - Supported Accommodation - 256 Units
  - Cold Weather Provision provides an additional 90+ Units.
7. The Single Persons Gateway provides a single point of access pathway into a range of supported accommodation for single people and couples.
8. Single homeless people can access the Single Persons Gateway without a priority need, and the level of accommodation provided will be dependent on the client's vulnerability.

9. The majority of Gateway accommodation is used as temporary housing for homeless clients until suitable permanent accommodation is sourced. Some clients will remain in the Single Persons Gateway for a longer time while their support needs are addressed, and a small number of clients may remain in certain projects on a more permanent basis due to their needs.
10. There are various specialist pathways into the Single Persons Gateway to ensure ease of access for vulnerable groups such as rough sleepers or those leaving prison.
11. Single Persons Gateway data is continually monitored. In 2017/18 1,409 people used the service, however 3,208 placements were made, demonstrating that many individuals are placed within the service more than once in a year. This may be due in part to moving between different types of accommodation within the Gateway, however, improved monitoring has shown that a high number of clients are abandoning or being evicted from accommodation and re-entering at a later date. 51 clients have been housed more than 20 times since the Gateway was launched in 2015 and the number of negative moves out of the Gateway far exceeds positive move on. There has been some improvement in the number of positive moves during 2017/18 however negative moves out of single persons accommodation remains an issue of concern.
12. There is a range of support in place to help people move on from the Single Persons Gateway once they are ready. The traditional pathway is to progress people from placements in emergency accommodation, through to frontline hostels and if needed into secondary supported accommodation, and finally into independent living in permanent accommodation.
13. As part of the planned changes to the Cardiff Housing Allocation Scheme, a more robust strategy for clients ready to move on from hostel or supported accommodation will be developed. Clients will be required to pick at least four

higher availability areas to increase the chance of an appropriate social housing offer becoming available within a reasonable time.

### **The Meeting**

14. As already stated, the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> heard from a number of witnesses (see paragraph 3 above) and the draft minutes from this meeting are attached at **Appendix C**.

15. At the meeting, Members received presentations and case studies and these are attached as follows:

- **Appendix D** – Overview of the Single Persons Gateway by Cllr Thorne, Sarah McGill and Jane Thomas
- **Appendix E** – Presentation by the Salvation Army, plus case studies
- **Appendix F** – Presentation about the Multi-Agency Task Group by Ian Ephraim
- Attached at **Appendix G** is a list of studies in relation to this topic, as referenced by Tamsin Stirling in her presentation.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Current Provisions & Safety

- KF1. There are a range of varying accommodation provisions available in Cardiff with an additional 3 Housing First Units currently being developed. Accommodation provision is assigned in line with the individuals need and vulnerability.
- KF2. There is a need for a greater understanding of the complexities of the individuals requiring immediate accommodation assistance. Such knowledge would aid services in ensuring an individual's accommodation is maintained, whilst avoiding the likelihood of negative moves and an individual re-entering the system on a continued basis.
- KF3. There are a number of specialist projects in place for homeless women, with an additional precautionary measure of women within hostels being segregated.
- KF4. Prevalent across all partners is the difficulty of moving people on into secure, sustainable, long-term accommodation. Reasoning for this is due to difficulties in identifying complex needs.
- KF5. There appears to be a lack of national priority for investment in alternative accommodation provisions.
- KF6. Within Cardiff, there is a lack of available social housing and private rented sector housing engaged in the system.

## **Engagement**

- KF7. Additional, positive and innovative advertising regarding provisions for the homeless is needed.
- KF8. Reasoning for some individuals not engaging with, and using, the provisions available are due to the perceived restrictive rules in place surrounding substance use.
- KF9. There is a need to challenge the mind-set around rough sleepers and shape public perceptions of rough sleepers with a move towards a “kinder Cardiff”.

## **Service Users' Needs**

- K10. There has been a significant change in the needs and complexities of clients – many are younger and have a range of issues such as mental health and substance misuse.
- K11. Current drugs laws prevent organisations from fully exploring alternative ways of working with homeless individuals who may be alcohol or drug dependant.
- K12. The vast majority of rough sleepers have either a mental health problem or a substance misuse problem and most of them have both.

## **Partnership Working**

- K13. There is a frontline hostel network that meets monthly where data is fed in and collaborative working is developed.
- K14. Short-term funding is not conducive to planning and developing services and places smaller organisations at a disadvantage.

K15. Key to the long term picture is the inclusion, and collaboration with, health and this is a key objective of Cardiff's multi-disciplinary team. Certain organisations are involved in the homelessness agenda such as the Public Services Board, however collaborative working is an area that needs to be improved.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The task group has identified opportunities for placing the service user at the heart of service provision which will require raising the profile of homeless provisions both politically and operationally. Members consider these step changes are well within the organisations reach.

### **The Cabinet is recommended to:**

R1. XXXXX