



BRIEFING FOR KENT COUNTY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

SUBJECT: Charter for Homeless Health – Progress Report

CLASSIFICATION: Unrestricted

1. Background

1.1 Kent Health and Wellbeing Board signed up to a Charter for Homeless Health, by St Mungo's Broadway on the 5th January 2016.

1.2 Signing up to the charter has the following expected actions and implications:

- Identify need: include single homelessness in their Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
 - Provide leadership to improve homeless health
 - Commission for inclusion to ensure that people who are homeless can easily access the health related services they need.
- 1.3 It was agreed that the JPPB would give regular reports to the County Health and Wellbeing Board on progress towards these aims.

2. Progress

2.1 As reported previously, Maidstone Borough Council housing and community safety departments undertook an outreach pilot together with health services in order to reduce and prevent homelessness and to reduce health inequalities using existing resources. This outreach service is still ongoing.

2.2 In 2015, a successful bid for funding from the Help for Single Homelessness Fund from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was made by the three local housing authorities in the districts who have the highest number of rough sleepers: Canterbury, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells.

3. Report on DCLG fundingⁱ

2.3 Canterbury has operated for 6 months and has identified 40 rough sleepers who are hard to engage. The project aim was to make small differences in peoples lives that will be the first steps to engaging with services with the aim of working intensively with each individual to assist them in moving through a process that will lead to solutions to the issues preventing leaving a street homeless lifestyle. They have levered in existing resources such as access to the deposit scheme, separate funding to assist rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds to pay for travel to gain identity documents to allow access to work, language classes and also offer reconnection services. They also contributed to and utilised the Winter Shelter.

2.4 Tunbridge Wells have delayed formal start of their project pending recruitment of appropriately experienced outreach staff although they have diverted their existing resources to participate in the

initial phase and have contributed outcomes which are included in this report. Their main project will commence in April 2016.

2.5 Maidstone has been operating for a 12 month period and has focused on accommodation first, with support put in place to maintain accommodation. They have also targeted the funding, along with their existing resources at the new entrant rough sleepers focusing more on prevention. Alongside this they have produced results showing increased inter agency cooperation, accommodation found, referrals for assistance by other agencies and better relations with all agencies in a position to assist.

3. Outcomes

3.1 Canterbury

- 30% of those with drug and/or alcohol problems were referred to voluntary sector services providing ongoing treatment
- 8% of the cohort gained employment
- 26% were referred to supported housing providers
- 25% secured accommodation, either assessment places or longer term accommodation
- 9% were reconnected to home areas with either family or where support networks exist
- 18% resumed or increased contact with Family
- 18% entered longer term interactions with Drug and Alcohol services

Total number of people helped: 39

3.2 Maidstone

- 42% secured accommodation in supported, private rented or social housing
- 15% were reconnected to other areas with family or other appropriate accommodation and support networks
- 8% were referred for floating support while in accommodation as a prevention measure
- 41% were referred for supported accommodation
- 16% gained full time, part time or temporary employment

Total number of people helped: 148

3.3 Tunbridge Wells

- 80% of those housed had drug or alcohol issues along with their housing need
- 100% of those referred to appropriate services
- 50% of those assisted had mental health issues
- 10% of those assisted gained employment, full time or part time, temporary employment

Total number of people helped: 20

ⁱ Report collated by Damien Olley of Canterbury City Council housing department

4. Further outcomes from Maidstone

4.1 Outreach services have been ongoing in Maidstone since 2014 and this has resulted in an improved public perception and reduced action time for public reporting of issues. There has also been positive coverage in the local press relating to the outreach services.

4.2 Newcomers are quickly put on the radar of all concerned bodies and signposted to initial support structures. There are increased opportunities for potential client engagement prior to enforcement action and a new approach to support and encourage client engagement using individual personal approach.

4.3 Last year (2015) there was a focus on encouraging and enabling GP registration as a preventative health initiative. The following were also new initiatives:

- Boot Bank – New initiative to support client back to work efforts by providing work boots. The public have also made donations
- Bed Bank – Stock of 5 beds held by local charity to be accessed /replenished by partners
- Joint West Kent Interviews – Porchlight & Maidstone Borough Council
- ‘Your Kindness Kills’ – encourages responsible giving to organisations rather than the individual and highlighted the concept of enabling a negative lifestyle/choice.

4.4 For 2016 there is a focus on landlords with new landlords encouraged to give access to more client groups with required support. Other initiatives are:

- A multi-agency Health Focus Group – Proposed Health focused support group to assess current provision and client group needs and gaps
- New lines of communication established to support clients to satisfy social housing provider requirements; especially those who would otherwise fail to complete overlapping/continuation of support into new tenancy reducing stress to clients and negating the issues usually common to this client group with regard to isolation and failure
- Maidstone Central Referral Group (Core Group) Supported Housing Providers brings a closer more efficient referral checking and status progressing across multiple providers
- Extremely accurate/realistic Street Count based on current multi-agency intelligence
- Support and closer working with new charities, organisations and agencies – New organisations supported, encouraged and included in supporting common client group
- Eyes & Ears – closer cooperation with other council departments, agencies, charities, local businesses, DWP, Police, accommodation providers, housing officers, enforcement departments and the public for reporting of issues, new comers, new camps, Anti-Social Behaviour, public health issues such as needle ‘hot spots’ – now reported to multi-agency groupings.

New comers are quickly put on the radar of all concerned bodies and signposted to initial support structures and Housing Options. The client is at the centre of a web of co-ordinated experience being directed at them and their individual issues and needs.

5. JSNA

5.1 The JPPB was invited to write a housing chapter for the JSNA, which included some information on single homeless. A working group from housing will be starting on the next update of the JSNA and this will include more robust statistics with regard to rough sleepers and single homeless in Kent.