



Draft for Consultation

Homelessness Prevention High Support Services

Summary Version

Date: October 2011

1 General Background

The Preventing Homelessness Board, one of four commissioning groups reporting to the Strategic Management Board, has responsibility for Preventing Homelessness Grant funded services and relevant services previously funded through the Supporting People (SP) programme. These include short-term accommodation-based services and floating support services allocated through the Housing Support Register. Funded services are mainly 'inherited' (not originally directly funded or commissioned by the city council) from before the SP programme began. The overall value of contracts covered by the Preventing Homelessness Board is currently £10.7 million. A reduction in funding over the next 3 years is anticipated, this will need to be ratified prior to Cabinet approval in March 2012.

The review and commissioning process is split into two distinct parts: High support and Lower level support / Floating support. The initial focus is on hostel/high support accommodation due to the high levels of funding tied up in this form of accommodation and the ability to tackle these services alongside, but separately from, floating support services.

2 High Support Review

The contracts included in this High Support Review cover 19 different high support contracts across a range of generic and specialist provision with a total contract value of £5.26 million (in 2011/12). The majority are level one /emergency services but also included are some services currently classified as level two (move-on/medium support). These have been included in the review if they provide:

- hostel-type accommodation; or
- have 'high' costs i.e. over five support hours (gross) per service user per week.

	Total No of Beds	%
Mental Health	85	20
General	204	47
Young People	76	17
Women Only	42	10
Offenders	10	2
Rough Sleepers (RSI)	19	4
TOTAL	436	100

3 Summary of Results

Needs Analysis

The review has utilised a wide range of data sources and stakeholder consultation to ensure a full overview of current clients needs were captured, and to determine what service provision should look like in the future. Over one third of current service users completed user questionnaires and specific focus groups were set up to provide feedback on current service provision. All current support providers actively contributed to the review

process and 78 front-line staff also provided individual feedback. Feedback from a range of key referral agencies, professionals and operational staff is also included within this review.

Meeting demand

Housing Support Register (HSR) data indicates that the existing need for high support / hostel services is around 1300 placements per year:

- Existing level of high support and hostel provision: 436 bed spaces
- Number of placements last year: 1295 placements

Whilst there are some extra demand pressures on a few services and incidences of longer void times at certain schemes, overall demand and supply are fairly evenly matched. The outcome of the review and feedback from service users also reinforces the position that existing service users do need these levels of support.

Housing Support Register Data			
As a measure of hostel 'usage' the table below shows the number of people resident in High Support services during 1/4/2010 - 31/3/2011.			
Service	Beds	Actual Usage (days)	Actual placements in year
1 Hillside Street	6	1729	10
Egerton Road	12	3989	17
Molitor House	9	3031	26
The Vale Move-On	6	1997	1
Toll House Court	20	6678	36
Kensington House	10	2979	19
27a Stonebridge Park	22	7321	73
MENTAL HEALTH	85	27724	182
Jamaica Street	56	17740	160
Logos House	69	21943	311
Redwood House	38	13385	167
Shaftesbury House	15	2614	16
Longhills	26	8110	68
GENERIC HOSTEL	204	63792	722
Bristol Foyer	51	16779	77
St George	25	8426	108
YOUNG PEOPLE	76	25205	185
Dean Crescent	21	6470	78
Spring House	16	5652	62
The Well	5	1642	20
WOMEN ONLY	42	13764	160
Lazarus House	10	3052	36
OFFENDER SERVICE	10	3052	36
2nd Step RSI	19	6724	10
ROUGH SLEEPERS INITIATIVE	19	6724	10
TOTALS	436	140261	1295

HSR data are also used within the review to identify referral patterns for each client group (across the range of high support accommodation) and the associated outcomes in terms of planned and unplanned departures.

Summary of Key Issues

The needs analysis and consultation process highlighted a range of issues across the services including:

- The need to improve outcomes (level of unplanned departures is currently around 50%);
- The need to reduce revolving door issues (58% of those responding to the questionnaire had stayed in a hostel before, 27% had stayed in that same hostel before);
- The need to improve quality and consistency of the assessment process;
- Numbers of service users with drug and/or alcohol use and mental health issues are very high across the range of provision;
- Clients complained that move through is slow – but also that expectations are often unrealistic;
- Inappropriate placements of people with low support needs;
- Some of the clients with really complex needs are not being picked up by specialist services;
- There is limited current use of peer support / mentoring;
- Education, training and employment needs are seen as low priority (except by young people);
- There is a range of staff training needs.

Key issues for specific client groups were also identified. These feed into commissioning proposals, and include some separate provision for women, for young people and for those with a range of complex needs.

4 Draft Commissioning Plan and Recommendations

The goal is to procure a range of high support short term accommodation which will enable vulnerable people to make sustainable progress towards achieving independent living.

The review outlines a Commissioning Plan (aligned with a funding envelope reduced to £4.05 million) for the future provision of High Support services. Key recommendations are set out below.

4.1 To utilise a competitive tendering process for support contracts:

- with a smaller number of overall housing management and support contracts (three year contracts from October 2012);
- with the option for landlords to apply for a waiver in exceptional circumstances where existing landlords can provide a robust business case showing strategic relevance and evidencing significant and sustainable added value (that could not be achieved through a tender process). Deadline for requests for exemption/waiver consideration – end November 2011.

4.2 Do not commission high support services at one of the large hostels and up to four of the existing smaller schemes

- Meaning a reduction in overall bed spaces to 349-353 (a reduction of approximately 20%).

Client groups:	Proposed number of bed spaces	Current number of bed spaces
Generic services	125	178 (excludes Longhills – see below)
Women's	37	42
Offender's	0	10
Complex needs	111 - 115 (includes 19 RSI)	111 (includes mental health provision and Longhills)
Young People	76	76
Rough Sleeper's (RSI)	0	19
Total	349-353	436

4.3 To improve services and efficiency savings:

- Ensure services are targeted to those in need of high support services
- Focussed on achieving timely move-on to lower support accommodation (reducing average length of stay to 90 days)
- Contract have more outcome focused targets;
- Void times improved; (to 2 day average – already being achieved in some of the hostels);
- Targets agreed around reducing the level of repeat homelessness (help people move towards social inclusion so that they are able to maintain independence once it is achieved);
- Take a positive attitude towards risk, aiming to risk assess people 'in' rather than 'out' wherever possible.

Full commissioning proposals set out at end of this paper

5 Summary of System/Process Improvements

The review identifies key improvements integral to the successful implementation of the commissioning proposals. These will now form the key priorities for the Preventing Homelessness Board. Although these are not procurement issues, many will directly influence the outcome and target requirements for the services to be tendered.

They focus on the following areas:

5.1 Improving Outcomes:

- Have support structures, partnership agreements and robust referral processes in place to ensure that people are supported to manage any physical health, mental wellbeing, substance misuse and offending needs;
- Put in place a range of measures to improve access to longer term housing options;
- Ensure clients have realistic expectations (to include providing staff training and use of peer support workers).

5.2 Accessibility and assessment

- Clarify eligibility criteria, definitions and referral processes;
- Improve of the quality and consistency of the initial assessment process;
- Improved liaison with mental health commissioners and access to mental health services.

5.3 Flexibility

- Ensure there is adequate provision for those with low support needs;
- Ability to make emergency placements if needed.

5.4 Meeting longer-term needs

- Look at how we deal with those with longer term (care) needs and entrenched rough sleepers and establish where the commissioning responsibility for these people lies

5.4 Staff Training

- Establishing and promoting a core set of staff training requirements would be useful and a system-wide induction training session for staff to be implemented.

6 Timescale / deadline:

- Draft Commissioning Plan published by end October 2011;
- 12 week consultation period
- Approval for commissioning proposals – March 2012 Cabinet;
- Agreed procurement process undertaken and new 3 year contracts in place (and reduced total contract costs) - October 2012.

Current contracts end in March 2012 – a six month extension will be required to meet timescales for this commissioning process. This has been highlighted to the relevant Boards within the BCC governance structure.

7 Risks / Issues

There is an overarching risk around reducing overall service provision when demand for services may increase significantly if government changes in housing benefit entitlement and other socio-economic changes lead to greater homelessness.

The proposals critically rely on effective move-on provision and improved processes.

The current commissioning proposals aim to minimise the impact of a proposed reduction in overall bed spaces by:

- having tighter eligibility criteria and more outcome focused targets;
- improving void times (to 2 day average – already being achieved in some of the hostels);
- reducing average length of stay to 90 days in all but the specialist complex needs services (where a higher average stay may be required);
- focusing on reducing repeat demand by at least 30%.

Our model indicates that current demand can be met with the new commissioning proposals but only if the anticipated service improvements can be achieved.

The ability to retain the proposed number of bed spaces relies on:

- Remodelled provision of nightcover in some of the schemes;
- The potential to attract some alternative funding/ sponsorship in certain areas (e.g. for training/educational support at the Foyer, emergency access accommodation for vulnerable women)

A detailed risk assessment has been undertaken and, as far as possible, mitigations identified to deal with them. This is included within the draft consultation documents and will be presented again when approval to the final commissioning plan is sought.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

A Equality Impact Assessment is included within the draft consultation documentation. This will particularly address any potential impact on equalities groups of the decommissioning options.

9 Full Recommendations

Set out below is the full list of commissioning proposals from the review:

9.1 Recommendations to be adopted throughout the High Support commissioning process

ID	Recommendations for Commissioning	Benefits of Change
T1	Competitively re-tender all the remaining support contracts. Contracts will be for three years from September 2012, with an option to extend contracts for a further two.	Potentially opening the market to new providers. Increased competition leading to improved quality and value for money.
T2	Design contracts for the high support services which are based on achieving outcomes and a strategic view of meeting local need. Contracts will be outcome focused as far as possible, but will contain some specific service requirements. Increased efficiencies will be achieved through reduced void times and length of stay.	Successful providers are clearer around what they should be delivering, and services are more focused on local needs. Better outcomes for people accessing high-support services Reduced bed and breakfast use.
T3	The scoring criteria would reflect a commitment to some emergency access options, an emphasis on engagement, education, employment and training and	Better outcomes for people accessing high-support services. Re-presentations are reduced.

	peer mentoring. There will be better dovetailing with Preventing Homelessness Grant funded services.	
T4	Ensure that there is a psychological approach embedded throughout the high support services based on local and national best practice.	Re-presentations to high support services are reduced. Positive move-on rates are improved.

9.2 Recommendations for General/Generic Services

As detailed in the analysis section, large hostel provision is seen as a model with significant drawbacks. A high proportion of the bed spaces in Bristol's high support accommodation are within large hostels, so it would not be practical to close all of these, but it would be preferable to reduce the numbers of people in large hostels.

Proposed total bed spaces in generic services – 125 (a reduction from 178)

ID	Recommendations for Commissioning	Benefits of Change
G1	Commission support services at Logos House and Jamaica Street, promoting cluster style models. Do not commission services at Redwood House. Selection of hostel for closure based on quality of accommodation, proximity of other high support accommodation, limiting risk to linked services and limiting the overall loss of bed spaces.	Release funds to achieve the range of improvements highlighted within this review on a reduced overall budget. The proposal aligns with the feedback received and national guidance on the limitations of large hostels in delivering good outcomes.
G2	Do not commission support services at one hostel not aligned with referral priorities and the HSR (Shaftesbury House).	Maximises funding available to services directly aligned to delivering agreed outcomes for high support service users.
G3	The hostels ensure that the support they provide fully addresses the needs of offenders.	Improved outcomes for offenders despite the loss of specialist provision.

9.3 Recommendations for Women's Services

It is clear that there needs to be separate provision for women as it is not always appropriate for them to go into mixed accommodation. At present there are three separate women's units in the review. The recommendation is to reduce this to two accommodation services provided under one contract.

Proposed total bed spaces specifically for women – 37 (a reduction from 42)

ID	Recommendations for Commissioning	Benefits of Change
W1	Do not commission support services at the smallest service (the Well). The provision to be incorporated into the two remaining women's services.	The smaller service is currently very expensive (with limited evidence of enhanced outcomes for the client group). This approach makes significant savings

W2	Tender the support services for the two remaining services under one contract, with some savings achieved (e.g. through the remodelling of night provision).	Would offer a more holistic service. Could improve efficiency and value for money. Reduced contract management requirements.
W3	Three bed spaces in the women's services could remain open so that they can be accessed directly by women in an emergency on a night by night basis. Revenue lost from HB would be found through Preventing Homelessness Grant.	Some provision for women who are not able to engage with more structured forms of support.

9.4 Recommendations for Offender's Services

At present there is one provider offering offender-specific accommodation (ten beds split over two houses). This means that the majority of offenders go into other accommodation services. The service user consultation suggested that few of those living in the offender-specific accommodation regarded offending as their main need.

Proposed total bed spaces specifically for offenders – 0 (a reduction from 10)

ID	Recommendations for Commissioning	Benefits of Change
O1	Incorporate offender accommodation into the wider generic service and do not commission specific accommodation for this group (see recommendation G3). No support contract commissioned at Lazarus House.	Could improve the services to offenders who currently mainly access other accommodation. Savings made.

9.5 Recommendations for Mental Health / Complex Needs Services

A key recommendation in this area is to reconfigure the mental health services so that they are more focused on the complex needs of homeless people, rather than solely mental health.

The Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust intend to take back Molitor House for other usage or sale. The current level of hospital move-on provision needs to be retained, but this review recommends that it be provided across the multiple exclusion homelessness provision.

Proposed total bed spaces for Complex Needs – 111-115, the actual figure depends on the outcome of M3 (from 111) – this takes into account reductions in this service group alongside units transferred from RSI.

ID	Recommendations for Commissioning	Benefits of Change
M1	Reconfigure service requirements for these services so that they become increasingly equipped to deal with the range of factors of exclusion rather than solely mental health. Tender the contracts under the heading 'complex needs'.	Services are more aligned with local demand. Fewer exclusions from services because of criteria around mental health.
M2	Look to deliver the current hospital discharge service (9 beds) across/within existing supply of complex needs accommodation. No specific hospital discharge accommodation (currently Molitor House).	Savings made. The principles for successful work with this client group are embedded across the services.
M3	Not commission the support contract at one of the smaller schemes, but consider its longer term future as part of the planning process for future services within the wider lower level/floating support review (due to be published by spring 2012). Judgement to be made based on the quality of accommodation, location, ability to deliver effective high support services and any issues around the landlord/linked services.	Increased emphasis on the short term preventing homelessness aspect of commissioned services. Provides possibility that any scheme not commissioned for high support may be included within the lower support provision.
M4	Tender the support contract at Toll House Court (20 bed unit) at a lower value than the current contract.	Savings made More consistency with regard to contract value across services.
M5	Tender the services in this group under two/three contracts.	Efficiency savings through shared management. Best practice followed in outcomes for residents, void times, average length of stay etc.
M6	Include support contracts at Wayland Court and Homefield Court within this group (see R1), with some savings made on current contract values.	Increase of supply and variety of accommodation for this client group.

9.6 Recommendations for Young People's Services

The analysis shows that young people have significantly different needs from those elsewhere in the high support system. It is clear that services for young people should remain distinct from the rest of the high support provision. Data from the Housing Support Register demonstrates that there has been a consistent flow of referrals over the last three years into supported accommodation.

The Preventing Youth Homelessness Group has commenced a piece of joint work with Children and Young People's Services to analyse need. This is with a view to developing an integrated commissioning plan that will ensure services are in place to more effectively meet the needs of young people.

Proposed total bed spaces specifically for Young People – 76 (no reduction)

ID	Recommendations for Commissioning	Benefits of Change
Y1	Maintain the total number of bed spaces for young people, and ensure that there is sufficient accommodation specifically for young women (at least 30%, or 23 bed spaces).	Acknowledges the significantly different needs of young homeless people.
Y2	Tender the support services at the Foyer and St George's House under one contract rather than two, with savings made. Look for a greater focus on attracting external additional funding or sponsorship from education/ training providers or businesses in the Foyer – an increased emphasis on education, training and employment.	Would improve value for money and increase efficiency Reduced contract management requirements. Could improve young people's outcomes relating to education, employment and training. More consistent and standardised model of support for young people.
Y3	Potential to include within the contract provision of up to 5 dispersed units of accommodation to which high support can be provided flexibly (for children in care/care leavers with high support needs – which cannot be met within shared accommodation).	Creates an accommodation model that offers greater flexibility and maintains young people within recognised accommodation pathways.
Y4	Restrict the upper age limit for access to young people's services to 21.	Increased bed spaces for those aged 16-21, including people owed a homelessness or leaving care duty by BCC. Focuses specialisation on the younger age group.
Y5	Focus on mediation and support for young people to return home (where appropriate) by embedding the principle in contracts. Continue with a commitment to the assessment centre pilot.	Reconnection with family and support networks for young people. Increased access to bed spaces in high support accommodation. Reduced bed and breakfast usage.

9.7 Recommendations for RSI services

The only two Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) services included in the scope of this review were Wayland Court and Homefield Court. The remaining provision was not considered appropriate for high support accommodation and will be reviewed in the forthcoming medium/low and floating support review process.

Proposed total bed spaces specifically for RSI – 0 (these are being transferred across to Mental Health/Complex Needs)

ID	Recommendations for Commissioning	Benefits of Change
R1	Incorporate the RSI provision in the scope of this review into the complex needs high support provision (see M6).	Allows more flexible and cost effective use of a wider range of accommodation suitable for meeting high support needs. Includes some self-contained accommodation within high support services.