



Crisis Local Authority Practice Network

Practice Exchange Session 05/11/2020
Winter Planning/CV19 Second Wave

Notes from Practice Exchange 05/11/2020

Theme: Second wave/winter planning

Topics

1. Everyone In numbers and what next?
2. Discretionary payments.
3. PRS evictions and LHA rates
4. Final comments.

Actions:

Share Scotland's Rapid Rehousing Hub documents : [Available here](#)

Follow up on Discretionary Placements discussions : What numbers can be collated between the group and how they can be used strategically?

Share link to Francesca Albanese's Blog: [Available here](#)

Update the group if/when Crisis undertake the best practice work on PRS.

Circulate notes and send invitation for future meetings

Local Authorities in attendance:

- Leeds
- Manchester
- Central Bedfordshire
- Norwich
- Hillingdon
- Durham
- Gravesham

1. Everyone In (numbers, and what's next?)

- Group discussion around how to deal with "lockdown 2". Numbers have now reduced from the original figures for Everyone In because there has been a lot of momentum to move people out. There are still high numbers of people waiting to be accommodated and some local authorities are now fielding referrals from support services and individuals who think lockdown two will create the same opportunity to put in hotels.
- Many areas reported that their rough sleeper numbers had increased significantly in Everyone In.
- There has been no steer yet or sense of much appetite for another 'Everyone In' at a strategic level. Some North East local authorities have seen four or five times the number of people they knew to be rough sleeping accommodated through Everyone In. This created too much pressure on local authorities and worries around more pressure expressed. Group agrees that second Everyone In is unlikely given the numbers of people accommodated in phase one.
- It was discussed that no resources/finance available at the present time to repeat phase one. There is a huge financial whole already and the reality of a second wave is a great cause for concern. People are stacking up and expectations and pressure building to repeat Everyone In. One local authority confirmed that they were filling small numbers of beds as they became available – providing a soft continuation of Everyone In. National guidance on how to collate figures would be welcomed.
- Group discussed another pressure was to provide food for some local authorities this had caused additional significant expense.

- Discussion around plans for the next phase. With numbers of people accommodated far higher than numbers of people sleeping on street (six times in one area). Current rough sleeping figures still lower than previous years. Plans are being made to house people through SWEP and supported housing.
- One area had a robust SWEP/night shelter system that helped people to engage with services, concern now that won't be able to achieve same results with people in hotels.
- Scotland's provision was discussed: Night shelters are being replaced with multi-agency Rapid Rehousing hubs. There is a difference in amount of resource and investment in Scotland but the model could be useful to view when looking at plans for winter without the traditional night shelter system.
- Advice was sought on how to house people in hotels and TA without ID. Group confirmed often no need for ID as the LA is the name on the room. One LA have an agreement with registrar's office to provide ID for people sleeping rough as free service. Other suggestions included sending visual description of person to the hotel
- One local authority shared that they have contingency plans for each person with a named plan for each – this helps when getting ID and information together about individuals in terms of risk etc.

Action:

Lisa to share Scotland's Rapid Rehousing Hub documents : [Available here](#)

2. Discretionary placements

Discussion:

- In one urban area where typically they see a significant level of applications and low priority need decisions even with the HRA, they are continuing to accommodate people outside of statutory framework and have a hotel until end of March. Decision taken due to the winter period and keeping people safe however, this cannot continue indefinitely due to resources, there will come to a point soon where have to halt. Although the LA believe this is the right decision, a more permanent solutions has to be sought for these people.
- One smaller rural authority, in a different situation is currently trying to do what is morally right at expense. They switched Everyone In back on a few weeks ago but with a strong conditionality on people to engage with services.
- Real problem is that there is insufficient guidance and the narrative of 'that's for local authorities to decide' is very vague. It was discussed that any new guidance must be linked back to HRA and intelligence. There is a general push back from the CLG - authorities have been over-generous in the first phase. Most feel they do not know strategically what is going to happen and that they need to be told clearly by the government .
- With no news yet on whether Everyone In two being repeated one LA asked if there's strategic action that the group can take and can Crisis lead this. Chris and Lisa agreed that this feedback can inform Crisis' campaigning work – important to note that the problem is bigger than rough sleeping figures and should be an emphasis on prevention.

Actions :

Lisa to follow up on Discretionary Placements discussions :

What numbers can be collated between the group and how they can be used strategically?

Share link to Francesca Albanese's Blog [available here](#)

3. PRS evictions LHA rates

Discussion

- Although worries around influx of PRS evictions in time, some of the local authorities feel that they will be able to weather this storm. It was discussed that not actually sure there will be a major increase in PRS evictions. They are getting in touch already with all those they know of who are in difficulty and landlords. They are finding more engagement with private landlords and this is helping to keep people in houses. Tentatively hoping that people with welfare support may be in stronger position to keep homes.
- Good relationships with local job centre and DHB were highlighted as useful, with a significant drop in number of claimants. Working to intervene as early as possible to prevent homelessness – solutions include drop in centres and early referrals.
- One large urban authority who struggles with LHA rates and affordable lets in PRS not sure if DWP duty to refer has been working effectively. Stronger local networks could help with this.
- Another rural authority is starting to see evictions in small numbers but has had over 50% increase in domestic abuse approaches, PRS has gone down the list of causes of homelessness. They shared that they are working with a media organisation to develop campaigns on early intervention.
- Crisis services have seen that markets in London, Oxford, Edinburgh, landlords are being forced to be more patient and making efforts to make tenancy work. Chris suggested a piece of best practice work on this in the future.

Action:

Lisa to update the group if/when Crisis undertake the best practice work on PRS.

4. Final comments

- Suggested meeting frequency be once a month or so, given how quickly things are changing.
- Crisis would like feedback/in from the group on NRPF issues and the deportation announcement
- Crisis asked for feedback on how Crisis messaging can encourage a more pragmatic ask of local authorities from homelessness sector and grassroots campaigning organisations.
- Crisis confirmed that MHCLG had announced this week that some information on additional funding would be available in next few days but that full clarity would not be available, regarding continuing funding until the beginning of December.

Actions

Lisa to circulate notes and send invitation for future meetings

Thank you



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