

Cabinet

Wednesday, 11 July 2018

Additional Information

Appendix to Agenda Item No. 9 – Temporary Winter Housing
Provision

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Appendix 1

Review of Temporary Winter Housing Project Swindon (Jan-March 2018)

1. Introduction

The Temporary Winter Housing Project in Swindon was set up as a 12 week pilot by Housing Organisations Standing Together in Swindon (HOSTS) and Swindon Borough Council.

HOSTS is an umbrella organisation for all voluntary and statutory organisations working with homelessness in Swindon.

This report is the evaluation of the project and includes the setting up and management of the project, the aims and outcomes of the project and identifies lessons learned.

2. Background - Homelessness in Swindon

Traditionally homelessness services in England have taken a “staircase” or linear approach to housing people experiencing homelessness, where people progress through a series of accommodation and treatment services until they are “housing ready”. After this point they are deemed ready for independent housing.

However, UK research conducted initially by Homeless Link in 2015 and followed up in more detail by the Centre for Social Justice in 2017, established clear evidence that a “Housing First” approach, which makes no conditions and provides an immediate housing solution with wrap around support to an individual, can help maintain longer term tenancies.

In line with the national trend, Swindon has seen a significant increase in rough sleeping over the last 3 years. The rough sleeping census in Swindon in 2014/15 identified 6 rough sleepers, by the summer of 2016 this had climbed to 31, during 2017 numbers have fluctuated between 20 and 30.

Approximately 80% are male and 30% under the age of 25.

Many people who end up homeless will be at risk of mental and physical ill health, violence, drug and alcohol use. Homeless Link in its study established that 33% had complex multiple needs, 31% had a drug problem, 23% an alcohol addiction, 6% a learning disability and 32% a mental health problem. These are strong similarities with those currently sleeping rough in Swindon.

Swindon spends just under £1.4m every year on supported housing schemes for the single homeless. This is mainly in the form of Direct Access hostels but also other ‘move on’ accommodation. The hostels in Swindon are well established, but find it difficult to engage with individuals with complex needs due to the level of support they are able to offer and also the regime required to run a busy hostel in a safe and supportive way for the majority of residents.

Many rough sleepers will also choose not to be housed in such a way due to the management structure of the facility and also, importantly, to keep a distance from former associates that have caused their condition to deteriorate on previous occasions.

Under the Council's statutory duty to accommodate, often the only option available is specialist Bed and Breakfast accommodation at a cost of £60 per night.

The Council and its partners recognised this gap in provision following the consultation on the Draft Homelessness Strategy in 2017.

The main drivers behind this seasonal provision were opportunities:-

- An opportunity in the cold and wet winter months to engage with a hard to reach group who otherwise would choose to exist as best they could by sleeping rough.
- An opportunity to access a recently decanted former Health Centre (at Carfax Street) in the town centre which was available and ready to use with minimum work required. The building is awaiting demolition pending a regeneration scheme for the town centre.

Funding was also potentially available from monies set aside from the increase in the town centre car parking charges

The Swindon multi-agency Rough Sleeper Panel had identified a cohort of between 12-14 individuals who would benefit from a temporary winter supported housing provision.

It was also important at an early stage to point out what the TWHP was not.

The Council and its partners made a clear statement that this was not to be either a Direct Access Hostel or a Night Shelter. The emphasis here was for this to be an opportunity for a group of individuals coming together as a community, living together and supporting one another. They would share their challenges, share support services and develop positive relationships with support professionals, shift leaders and volunteers. This was not a project that individuals could directly access by turning up one night and then disappearing.

This was a planned approach, a programme of engagement and support over a 12 week period.

The Cabinet Member for Housing gave approval for the project in November 2017 to commence mid December. However, this timescale was too ambitious due to the resource required to set up this type of provision, specifically around the recruitment and training of volunteers and the project opened its doors to the first guests on 3rd Jan 18.

3. Aims of the Project

The primary aim of the Temporary Winter Housing Provision (TWHP) was to provide accommodation for an identified group of street homeless, who due to their needs, found it difficult to engage with outreach services. In addition, the TWHP would give them an opportunity to engage in a programme of activity to support their multiple needs.

The TWHP would offer a safe and comfortable environment to enable agencies to work with those currently living on the streets of Swindon. The facility and programme of support would enable individuals to receive a housing offer and break the repeated cycle of homelessness.

At the end of the 12 week period all individuals on the programme to be made a suitable housing offer before the winter provision closed and if necessary directly matched to a specific property suitable for their needs. Housing offered could include supported housing, with no assumption that the individual will move directly into independent self-contained accommodation.

4. Management of TWHP

4.1. Partnership

The setting up and running of the Temporary Winter Housing Provision was a collaborative exercise with a number of local agencies and charities working together to ensure the successful outcomes referred to above. It was a decision of the wider partnership to reform a previous partnership group known as “HOSTS”, albeit with a small name change to Housing Organisations Standing Together in Swindon. The initial steering group was made up of the following members:

- Swindon Borough Council
- Swindon Night Shelter
- Swindon Foodbank
- Salvation Army
- Big Breakfast Plus
- Wiltshire Police
- Christmas Care
- Threshold Housing Link

From the original conception of the project in September/October 17, through the Cabinet member approval process and on to the opening and running of the project regular steering group meetings were held.

4.2. Volunteers and Staffing

To safely manage the TWHP a mix of volunteers and paid staff were recruited to fulfil the various roles.

Staffing

The Council provided staff resources to co-ordinate and manage the project. This was in effect the Housing Projects officer and the Housing Business Development Manager.

Paid staff - To manage the volunteers 2 part time Volunteer Coordinators were recruited and to ensure there was a level of experience and responsibility each shift had a Shift Lead (Supported Housing officers).

The Volunteer Coordinators have been instrumental in recruiting the volunteers and managing the volunteer shifts on the rota.

The Shift Leads (6 were recruited) have managed and taken responsibility for each shift. They are in effect the responsible officer ensuring that health and safety requirements are being adhered to, the provision is clean and tidy and activities including dinner is provided for the guests each evening.

The salary costs for the paid staff amount to approx. £20k.

Volunteers

A widespread recruitment campaign was launched through social media, partner agencies and local media. An open day was also held at Carfax Street which attracted a good number of potential volunteers. Application forms were distributed and on receipt of the forms references were followed up and training offered.

Over 80 forms were received, references checked and 37 volunteers (who requested training) were trained over 10 training sessions. The training was delivered by SBC's Housing Tenant Academy.

Over 50 volunteers undertook shifts, some as much as 3 or 4 regular shifts each week, others done ad hoc shifts as personal and work commitments allow.

3 shifts were set up for volunteers to do, evening, overnight and morning. The overnight shift was particularly difficult to attract volunteers and good will was often stretched to the limit.

The total number of volunteer hours amounted to approx. 1850 hours by the end of the project, 185 hours every week. The volunteers have made a significant contribution to this project the TWHP could not have run without the hours they have given.

If a financial sum is to be attributed to the volunteer hours then it would amount to £17,575. (An hourly rate of £9.50 excluding associated additional costs for a comparable post within the Local Authority x 1850 hours).

Many volunteers wanted to continue volunteering and were signposted to other voluntary groups. They all received a thank you letter and a top 10 tips on how to best continue helping the homeless in Swindon.

5. Funding

Within the Cabinet Member report a breakdown of anticipated costs was provided as set out in the table below:-

Key Costs	£
Compliance testing and repairs	8,000
Building works	15,000
Non Domestic Rates	3,000
Co-ordinator/professional support	10,000
Contingency	2,000
Food (Donation from Swindon Foodbank)	0
Total	38,000

The actual spend on the project is shown in the table below: -

Key Costs (actual)	£
Compliance testing, repairs and building works	11400
Co-ordinator/professional support	28900 paid staff costs
Contingency	1630 materials
Food (Donation from Swindon Foodbank)	70 petty cash
Total	42000

From research undertaken in 2012 *Evidence Review of the Costs of Homelessness* in which it estimated that the gross cost of homelessness is between £24,000 and £30,000 per person. This comprises benefit payments, health costs in supporting homeless persons with mental health, substance abuse or alcohol dependency problems, and costs to the criminal justice system from crimes committed by the homeless. Most of the identified costs relate to non-statutory homeless single rough sleepers and hostel residents.

If only a handful of rough sleepers were moved on from the streets each winter and changed their lifestyles then the TWHF demonstrates value for money.

6. Venue, facilities and activities

To ensure the building was fit for purpose a number of safety measures were required and some additional building works required.

The first issue was in relation to Building control, the building wasn't designed as sleeping accommodation and a change of use required, including its safety systems, which had to be agreed with both Building control and Dorset, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service.

To gain this approval, areas had to be locked down, formation of fire exit routes, additional smoke detectors installed and additional emergency lighting added.

The building had been moth balled, but the services were still connected although there were no certificates so certification had to be completed for the following:-

Water – Complete disinfection of the water system and weekly flushing of the taps whilst in use

Fire alarms – Re-commission of the system and on-going weekly testing whilst in use

Electrical – Testing of Ground floor only, as other areas not in use

Boiler – Re-commission of the system and Gas safety inspection report completed, fortunately 2 out of the 3 boilers were safe to use.

Fire extinguishers – Testing of existing items

PATS – Testing of donated electrical items

Roller shutter – Re-commissioning of existing front door roller

CCTV – Testing of existing system and relocation of cameras to protect the volunteers and building users.

Asbestos – Completion of Full refurbishment survey on areas worked in and management of other areas

Building works undertaken to open the building, this included, removing the old pharmacy, forming a kitchen, additional power and lighting, installing a shower room, sealing off areas with partitions and forming fire escapes.

The Community Payback scheme provided up to 8 people on 6 days to help paint and remove unwanted items that had been left behind from when in use as a medical centre.

Donations to help furnish the provision were received from Swindon Night Shelter, Salvation Army, Christmas Care, Big Breakfast Plus, Swindon Foodbank, WHSmiths, Intel, Crown Decorating Centre, Gateway Furniture and Hills Waste Solutions.

Considerable amounts of clothing items, towels, bedding, toiletries and food were donated by members of the public.

Beds were set up in a dorm style arrangement in 2 rooms (male and female rooms) and each guest had their chair, bedside cabinet and own locker.

There were shower and toilet facilities.

The kitchen was fully kitted out and there was a laundry facility. It was decided that guests would not have access to this area due to food safety and potential issue with knives.

Guests had access to refreshments, fruit and snacks throughout the opening hours and a hot dinner was prepared each evening by the volunteers.

Generally all the food was donated although a small amount of petty cash (£70) was provided for additional food supplies. The local Hindu community provided a hot meal once a week.

A communal lounge area was set up with armchairs, tables and chairs for guests to eat together.

Games, jigsaw puzzles, books were donated and used by the guests.

Avon Wilts Mental Health Partnership attended the provision two evenings per week and the guests found this hugely beneficial to them, not only with receiving the support, but in building up trust and relationships through the workers coming in and joining in with the making of meals and general befriending opportunities in the evenings.

Representatives of MTC Adult Learning and the Community Health and Wellbeing Team at Swindon Borough Council attended to provide information on courses and services that were on offer.

The spaciousness of the facility helped the guests to relax and when they were having an off day they could find space to be by themselves. This encouraged a more relaxed facility with a homely environment.

7. Health and Safety considerations

Prior to the project opening a full health and safety check was undertaken, including compliance checks on fire safety, electrical checks, asbestos and legionella checks.

A comprehensive Health and Safety manual was available with leaflets and guidance at the centre. First Aid Kits and cleaning supplies were provided.

Shift Leads were responsible for shift handovers and updating the information on each shift.

Risk assessments were undertaken and reviewed following any incidents. Incidents reports were completed and sent to Housing Business Manager for review and action and also referred on to SBC's Health and Safety team.

Conflict management training was included as part of the volunteer training.

A sign in and out book and a 2 person door policy was set up.

There were two incidents of violence and aggression at the project and a number of slips and trips.

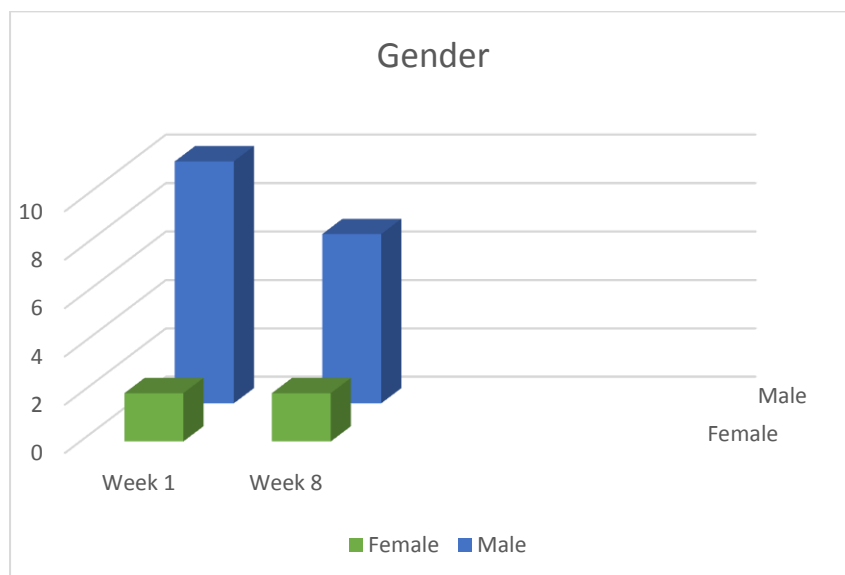
8. Guests

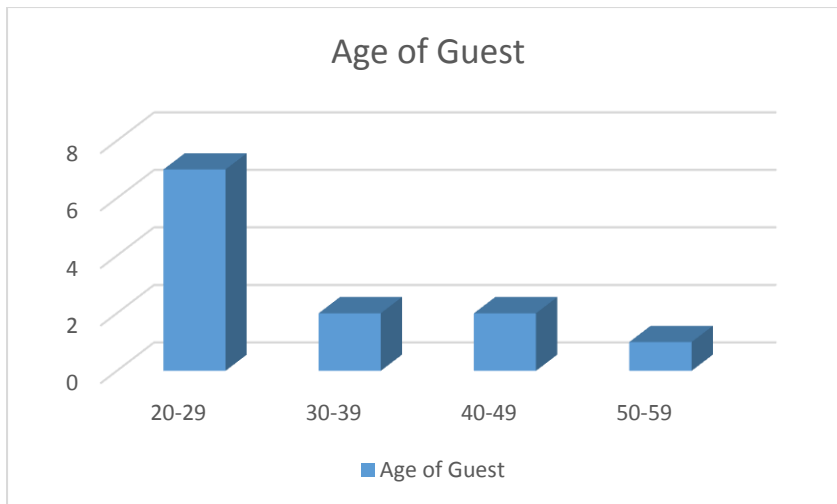
Potential guests were identified through the Rough Sleepers Panel, a multi-agency panel that meets monthly to discuss rough sleepers within Swindon. Any agency on the Rough Sleeper Panel was able to make a referral for a space into the Provision and these were sent to the Project Co-ordinator. The guests were then selected based upon their individual risk assessments, their willingness to work with agencies to change their lifestyle, group dynamics and whether they had any alternative housing options. The guests were moved in over a period of two weeks, which gave guests time to settle in and for volunteers and shift leads to implement the rules and address any teething problems in a safe manner.

The Provision was able to accept twelve guests, a higher number was not possible on this occasion due to management capacity, safeguarding risks, as well as broader health and safety reasons. However, a total of 34 referral forms were received along with a number of informal enquiries. This does highlight a current and continued need.

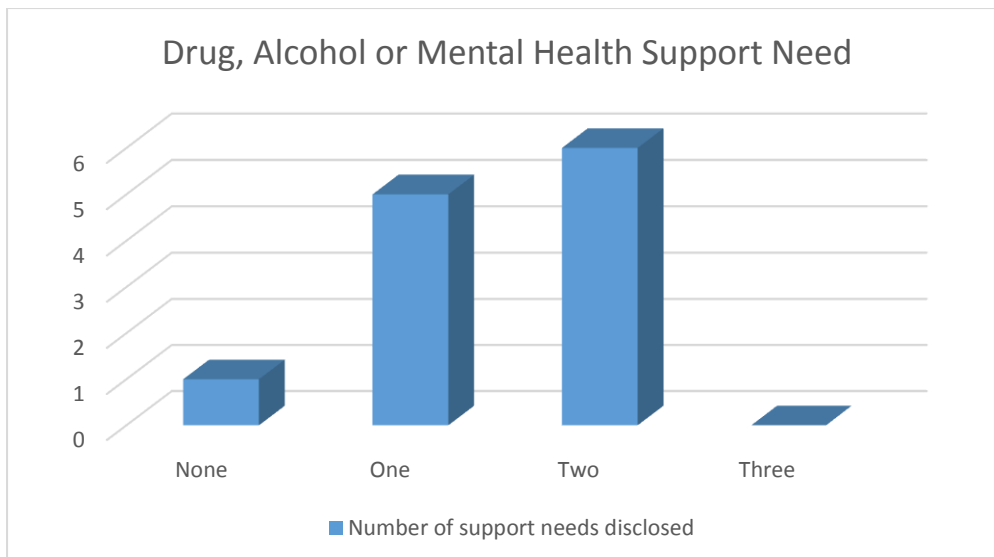
Of the twelve guests by the end of week 8 one had chosen to leave, one had to be asked to leave due to behaviour and one received an 8 week prison sentence.

At the end of week 8 the provision had been used for 73% of the time, which equates to 320 nights that the guests had accommodation and did not have to sleep rough.





The majority of the guests (92%) had self-disclosed on their referral form that they had at least one support need around either drugs, alcohol or mental health problems.



9. TWHP Outcomes

9.1 Guests

A short term review was undertaken at the end of week 8 and the outcomes from this review and as at the end of May 18 are recorded below.

Outcomes can be split into softer, more difficult to measure aspects as well as harder measurable outcomes.

i) Housing

At week 8 - end Feb 18

In terms of harder outcomes at this stage two guests were offered and accepted one bedroom self-contained properties. Two guests were awaiting a formal offer of

accommodation and a further guest accepted an offer of a room when the provision closes. Another two guests had housing interviews lined up during week 9.

At end of May 18

1 is doing well in tenancy, there are no issues, although still waiting on 1st payment of Universal Credit

2 are looking after their property well and engaging with other services and still waiting on 1st payment of Universal Credit.

1 is doing well in tenancy and meeting rent payments.

1 is doing well in tenancy, rent arrears was an issue but rent payments increased in frequency and amount so arrears are reducing slightly.

1 is still in supported housing and work has begun to identify a move on property.

1 is doing well in tenancy, has begun to make rent payments and is now in credit.

1 holding on to his accommodation, challenges around a breach of rules. Has support around to encourage sustainment of accommodation.

ii) Employment, Volunteering and Training

At week 8 – end Feb 18

One guest in employment whilst one guest is actively seeking work. A further two guests begun volunteering opportunities.

At end of May 18

One guest remains in employment.

iii) Behaviour and attitude change (soft outcomes)

At week 8 – end Feb 18

This was collected in conversations and captured by the Shift Leaders who were assigned guests for one to one support, all guests engaged with their designated lead. Their ability to communicate effectively and constructively with both volunteers and fellow guests were monitored. Apart from the guests who left the project all of the remainder demonstrated significant improvements to their behaviour and self-esteem and respect for others. This was evident at shared meals, compliance with house rules and the overall comradery within the project. This was not to say that there have not been tensions, indeed it has been pleasing to see how these were overcome. Interestingly tensions have been higher in the early days of settling in and towards the end of the project as they prepare to move on.

At end of May 18

Very few of the guests continue to be engaged with the support services.

iv) Health

At week 8 – end Feb 18

Drug and alcohol dependencies of the guests stabilised with the engagement of Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and Turning Point who attended the

project. All guests were registered with a GP practice and offered a dentist. Sadly, the 2 guests who left the project early did not take up these services.

Each evening a hot dinner was provided and breakfast was available to the guests 7 days a week at the Big Breakfast Plus project.

At end of May

No information available

9.2 Volunteers

Volunteer feedback on the project has been sought through either one to one contact or at focus groups set up by the Volunteer Coordinators. A summary of the feedback is as below:-

52 volunteers were canvassed of whom 19 responded either by participation in a Focus Group; by telephone interview or via email response and 5 questions were used.

The Volunteer response was overwhelmingly positive when asked if they would volunteer again in a similar scheme. There was a genuine strength of feeling about making a contribution to improve the lot of local homeless people and an appreciation of the efforts made by those involved to make the Project a success.

The Volunteers experienced a wealth of personal (often unexpected) wellbeing benefits.

Clear themes became apparent from the responses as well as valuable general observations which are summarised below. As with any Feedback from multiple sources there are diverse and sometimes contradictory opinions cited.

1) Why did you volunteer? What attracted you to the TWHP?

- Strength of feeling about homelessness as a significant issue
- Desire to participate in a community project where participant felt they could have a tangible impact
- Previous experience working with homeless and rough sleepers
- Opportunity to take a personal interest in guests
-

2) Was it what you expected?

- More well-run; calm and homely
- Didn't have any expectations
- Fewer guests – sometimes felt mob-handed with volunteers
- Expected clearer, more consistent communications
- Catering was not as organised as I had hoped
- Thought it would be open all day
- Expected Guests to develop more self-help skills

3) What did you get out of it?

- Relationship-building
- Opportunity for Coaching/education/general Guest development
- Personal development – humility; meeting people I would never normally meet; learning about myself; to value small things; considering what else can I do to have an impact?
- Self-fulfilment and happiness
- Analysis of the issues around homelessness

4) What worked well?

- High quality of Team Leadership
- Team spirit – enthusiasm and motivation
- Opportunities for Guests
- Enabling Guest access to ordinary practicalities of life
- Analysis of the issues around homelessness
- Opportunities for Agencies to access Guests
- Plenty of clothes, supplies etc.

5) What would you change? What needed improvement?

- Communications and consistency of rules
- Team Leaders need to give clear and consistent brief
- More white goods and a TV
- Further training on drug and alcohol issues and mental health
- Pay the night shift
- Information on the progress of the scheme and the Guests
- Availability of sufficient volunteers
- Catering should be more organised – a weekly menu
- More clarity around what is expected of volunteers (i.e. should I bring my own food/bedding/can I sleep on overnight shift? / how do I react when the rules are broken?)
- Training on how to react to inflammatory comments between guests and foul language

General remarks from volunteers

“training prepared me for the worst-case scenario”

“homely, calm, structured – consistency of teams helped build relationships”

“personal introduction spurred me on to sign up”

“volunteers could fundraise for treats (meals out/fish and chips) and network to get freebies”.

9.3. Partners

Partners were asked for their evaluation on the project using the 3 questions below. These were sent to all HOST partners and other players in the town centre such as InSwindon, Thamesdown Transport, SBC car parks. The responses are set out

- 1. Did the Temporary Winter Housing Provision help your organisation achieve its aims and objectives? (please explain)**
- 2. What specific organisational outcomes were achieved?**
- 3. What comments would you like to make about a future provision of a TWHP in Swindon?**

Xmas Care - In response to your questions regarding the winter provision, as a volunteer group we were very much on the periphery. We supported with donations and a number of our volunteers also worked with the shelter, which we would be more than happy to continue.

The achievements were remarkable, and must be a good foundation for the future.

Threshold Housing Link - Before discussing future provision, we first need to address the disconnect between what was said by the local authority and what happened in reality this winter. Much was said about the provision following a “housing first” model which it clearly wasn’t nor could ever be. It was also promoted through the media as a service for people who couldn’t or wouldn’t use the existing services at Culvery Court and Booth House due to the high level nature of their support needs. This was equally untrue. Over 30 referrals were made but a target group was selected with generally lower support needs due to the lack of skilled support staff and the reliance on inexperienced volunteers.

The promised support from CGL and AWP did not materialise to any real degree and it has been reported that communication between volunteers, workers and visiting staff was not effective. Some concerns have been raised as to the effectiveness of ongoing support to those who were accommodated

That said, the provision did succeed in providing temporary accommodation to most of those that it accepted and move on accommodation of varying types was facilitated. A huge effort was undertaken by both members of SBC, housing and support organisations and volunteers which laid the foundation for future work. It is worth noting however that this did have an impact on the resources of some of the contributing organisations.

We need to ask - what is the real purpose of the shelter and could the outcomes be achieved in other ways?

Should a winter provision be determined as a priority for the coming winter, planning needs to start now.

There needs to be clarity about what type of accommodation will be provided at the end of the process and why.

There needs to be a defined referral criteria, Follow on support and a record of outcomes over a 12 month period.

Day time access needs to be an essential component of the provision to enable effectively key working and support to be undertaken.

Volunteers and shift leaders require training to enable them to complete online claims for UC with residents.

Budgets and financial liabilities need to be transparent Will Housing Benefit consent to making payments? If so potential for paid staff.

What buildings are available? Carfax hasn't been demolished.

Clarity over sanctions for drug and alcohol use on the premises and procedures for searching individuals and the building.

Big Breakfast Plus –

1. Did the Temporary Winter Housing Provision help your organisation achieve its aims and objectives? (please explain)

It would have been inappropriate for us to change our fundamental aims and objectives and we didn't (and don't) have the resources to run a parallel service so the central location of TWHP was key to our participation, which helped raise awareness of BB Plus. We demonstrated our flexibility in supporting new schemes and willingness to work in partnership.

2. What specific organisational outcomes were achieved?

We continued to offer a cooked breakfast to all who needed our services but noticed the usage by the project participants declined over the weeks, although it did lead to one new user of BB who has used the service since the project completed.

We were able to demonstrate to the church that a Sunday morning breakfast service would not have an adverse impact on their activities are now continuing to provide a 7 day a week service. The donation from SBC for the duration of the project will help in making funding applications to assist sustainability.

3. What comments would you like to make about a future provision of a TWHP in Swindon?

There needs to be a plan for longer term solutions to entrenched rough sleeping all year round, not just a winter provision, including looking at barriers to using existing provision in a different way.

Planning, including involvement of the voluntary sector, needs to start much earlier – it's a pity that the May local elections combined with the re-commissioning process will inevitably delay the evaluation of the recent project. We can't afford to wait until the autumn to look at provision for winter 2018/19.

There is a need for a **year** round, open to all, day centre for which BBP could provide the breakfasts, in addition to targeted and appropriately resourced individual support and intervention.

Swindon BC Homeless team -

1. Did the Temporary Winter Housing Provision help your organisation achieve its aims and objectives? (please explain)

It assisted with a reduction in the level of rough sleeping in Swindon. Central government has pledged to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

2. What specific organisational outcomes were achieved?

The project linked into SBC's vision for Swindon, specifically priority 3 (ensure clean and safe streets) and priority 4 (help people to help themselves)

3. *What comments would you like to make about a future provision of a TWHP in Swindon?*

I would fully support a further TWHP. A holistic approach to finding a solution to those rough sleeping is crucial and there is nowhere currently where this can take place.

Salvation Army Booth House -

Did the Temporary Winter Housing Provision help your organisation achieve its aims and objectives? (please explain)

One of our main aims is to work with other agencies to meet the immediate and longer term housing needs of homeless people in Swindon.

What specific organisational outcomes were achieved?

Additional bed spaces during a winter with several spells of severe weather has to be a positive outcome. Further support that encourages rough sleepers to access services throughout the year is vital whether through Outreach provision, TWHP or other initiatives.

What comments would you like to make about a future provision of a TWHP in Swindon?

The experience of TWHP raises important questions when considering future investment in resources:

- What are the barriers to accessing existing services which were identified by those involved?
- In what way was the TWHP experience different?
- What was the motivation to engage with TWHP and how much did the guarantee of housing after 3 months influence engagement?

Understanding how rough sleepers perceive existing services will inform future provision and identify changes which can be made around existing services. The aim being to provide longer term provision which is not just accessible to all but which is perceived as accessible to all.

I wonder if Carfax Street felt more accessible because there wasn't an existing client base and organisational structure to navigate i.e. "in from the start" guests are part of the development. The offer of accommodation at the end of three months was also an attractive incentive.

Key to future success would seem to be:

- Involvement of guests who have experienced TWHP at Carfax Street
- Early engagement with providers and agencies for maximum planning and resource management
- Assessment of how existing providers can adapt or offer flexible alternatives if an alternative building is not available.
- Application for funding from Rough Sleepers Initiatives
- Consideration of resettlement options from existing services to free up bed space for rough sleepers
- An evaluation of the longer term impact of TWHP i.e. 3/6/12 months on.

The success of this project in engaging with entrenched rough sleepers is exciting and underlines the need to continue to look at how we engage with those who are disengaging with services.

SBC Car parking -

1. Did the Temporary Winter Housing Provision help your organisation achieve its aims and objectives?

There was a definite improvement in the amount of rough sleepers overnight and the amount of rubbish left. Also there was an improvement in the customer experience and safety in our Car Parks which in turn is ultimately our aim.

2. What specific organisational outcomes were achieved?

The benefits from having the temp housing provision in place was that our Car Parks were used for the sole purpose for parking vehicles, it also meant that all organisation worked collaboratively over this 3 month period.

3. What comments would you like to make about a future provision of a TWH in Swindon?

Future provision for the project to be put in place again would be an asset to the town keeping the homeless safe and helping to support back into longer term accommodation.

SBC Community Programme Lead – Town Centre-

1. Did the Temporary Winter Housing Provision help your organisation achieve its aims and objectives? (please explain)

Yes – help reduce the number of rough sleepers within the town centre. Help reduce the number of complaints received about condition of the car parks, perception of car parks in particular and allowed colleagues to focus on engaging with a smaller number of rough sleepers to provide information and guidance to them.

2. What specific organisational outcomes were achieved?

Improved perception of the car parks, town centre and contributed to a cleaner safer environment in the town centre area.

3. What comments would you like to make about a future provision of a TWH in Swindon?

Good evening / night time provision for vulnerable people. Be great to have day time provision to help address addictions and a place to engage – create a one stop shop for vulnerable people to compliment other provision in the town centre

Wilts Police -

1. In terms of aims and objectives some of the residents continued to commit crime and ASB within the Town Centre. There was definitely a reduction in the number of people rough sleeping in the car parks and reports linked to this although I can't provide stats to re-enforce this. However anecdotally I know at our fortnightly multi-agency meetings there were less discussions around this area of business.
2. The main outcome here would be protection of people who are vulnerable to crime and exploitation.
3. I would like to see a similar provision provided again as a number of individuals previously homeless have been housed. Further, work was undertaken with several persons who are

well known to our organisation and who were having an impact on the Town Centre Community. Although not all of these people have moved into accommodation the project has shown it is possible. From our perspective there were very few incidents reported to us associated with the project and it was certainly very clear to me that the team working there were passionate and enthusiastic about their work and it has made a lasting difference to several of the residents.

10. Summary/Conclusion

8 rough sleepers who were difficult to engage have made significant changes to their lives and moved on to stable housing, employment and or training or volunteering.

HOSTS partnership renewed and demonstrated good local collaborative working with the commitment and passion to develop new projects and or sustain established initiatives around rough sleeping in Swindon.

Over 50 committed volunteers who gave up their time, many will continue to be engaged in volunteering activities around homelessness.

11. Lessons learned: -

- i) Time was limited to set up the Provision – minimum of 4 months is recommended.
- ii) A number of paid staff are essential to ensure there is a responsible and professional lead.
- iii) The spaciousness of the facility meant that when guests needed some down time they had somewhere to go, they were not living on top of each other, this helped to diffuse tensions and increase engagement.
- iv) Partnership working with agencies is key, this can be improved by reviewing protocols or memorandum of understanding ahead of future projects.
- v) Dedicated and one stop service for volunteers to improve communications, coordination and feedback from volunteers. The management of volunteers is intense and not to be underestimated.
- vi) Guests supported and befriended each other which helped the running of the project. The small numbers of guests helped this and the strong bonds between the guests were akin to a family group.
- vii) Consider recruiting paid staff for overnight shifts.

12. Next steps/future provision.

- i) In July 18 this evaluation will be presented to Swindon BC's Cabinet and a decision will be made regarding a future winter housing provision in Swindon.
- ii) There will be a new Rough Sleeper Strategy and a Homelessness Strategy for Swindon, both are currently being drafted. These will ensure a focus around single homeless and rough sleeping.
- iii) Swindon BC has been asked to bid for Ministry of Housing and Communities Local Government funding which will enable a Housing First

model to be established in the town. If successful the Housing First project will complement any future Winter Housing Provision and will enable clients of the Winter Provision to be moved on to the Housing First project.

Arlene Griffin

May 2018