

## **Report to WSCC Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee 12 June 2019**

### **West Sussex Supported Housing and Homelessness Task and Finish Group**

#### **1.0 Executive Summary**

1.1 This report outlines the work of the West Sussex Supported Housing and Homelessness Task and Finish Group between January and May 2019. The report provides an update on the work to review existing service provision and support West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to achieve its budget objectives, as well as a wider piece of service design work to support system wide change going forward. The ambition being that we meet the holistic needs of some of our most vulnerable residents and benefit from better understanding of how we can improve services and the outcomes for our communities.

#### **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 The West Sussex Supported Housing and Homelessness Task and Finish Group (T&F Group) has been formally meeting since January 2019. This followed the final decision of the WSCC Cabinet member for Adults and Health to reduce funding for supported housing commissioned services across the county from September 2019 to £2.3m per annum from an original budget of £6.3m per annum.
- 2.2 The membership of the group comprises of the Chair, Natalie Brahma-Pearl, Chief Executive of Crawley Borough Council, a strategic leadership group comprised of Paul McKay (Director of Adult Services, WSCC); Judy Holmes (Assistant Chief Executive, Mid Sussex District Council); Louise Rudziak (Director of Housing & Communities, Chichester DC) and Mary D'Arcy (Director for Communities, Adur & Worthing Councils) and the wider membership which includes lead housing professionals from WSCC and each of the Districts and Borough Councils in West Sussex.
- 2.3 The main aim of the group, which is aligned to the West Sussex Strategic Housing Officers group (also chaired by Natalie Brahma-Pearl) has been to develop an inclusive West Sussex response to these changes, recognising the wider systemic changes that have been taking place over many years. Most recently this includes the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.4 The T&F Group aims to develop a response that addresses the needs of the customer and also recognises the statutory requirements of each agency within the system to prevent and relieve homelessness; addresses safeguarding issues for adults and young people (including those leaving the care system) and in essence, finds a way forward for the future in a vastly changed financial, legal and socio-economic climate.
- 2.5 The system also includes a wider base of commissioners, stakeholders and key interested parties, such as health commissioners and providers, the criminal justice system, those currently providing supported housing services as well as crucially, those in receipt of such services. The T&F Group recognises the importance of engaging with all these

stakeholders in this process. The Terms of Reference for the T&F Group are attached at **Appendix A.**

2.6 In January the T&F Group established the need to work at pace and defined two initial phases that required immediate consideration

- **Phase 1** - reviewing the impact of funding changes to service provision from September 2019 - March 2020 and agreeing how to collectively manage this.
- **Phase 2** - designing a new, whole system, approach to how we commission and deliver support to some of our most vulnerable communities in need of these services ensuring that we are a) meeting the right needs and b) are fit and sufficiently flexible for the changed landscape and the future.

2.7 Phase 2 will support a future joint commissioning programme for services from April 2020 and beyond. It is accepted that there are likely to be further phases, however the work to date has concentrated on these two, which have been running in parallel with each other. The progress to date is highlighted below.

### **3.0 Phase One: Service Provision October 2019 - April 2020**

3.1 Key activities in this phase to date have included:

3.2 Reviewing and understanding the principles provided by WSCC regarding its approach to funding decisions for the future, linked to its statutory responsibilities, and the impact for services in 2019/2020 and beyond. These are referred to in the appendices of the WSCC report presented at this meeting.

3.3 This approach identified existing services as Red, Amber or Green depending upon whether WSCC would be likely to fund those services post September 2019. As a result of these discussions, the T&F Group is clear on the reasons underpinning the decisions by WSCC to cease funding certain services from October 2019 (Red services) and the rationale for continued funding of other services at a higher or lower level in 2019 and beyond (Green and Amber).

3.4 In partnership with the T&F Group, WSCC has agreed how the remaining funding allocated to 2019/2020, could be used across Amber and Green services, to continue to support service delivery whilst a service redesign process has been taking place.

3.5 Providers have received very clear messaging from WSCC colleagues on this process, and the Chair of the T&F Group has met with the Provider Coalition Group and kept the group up to date with the approach being taken. Providers have also had the opportunity to be involved in a number of workshops to help inform the emerging Phase two work.

### **4.0 Phase One - Emerging Risks and Issues**

4.1 Two specific areas have emerged as key risks during Phase one and continue to be separate work streams within this phase.

i) Older People's Services

4.2 A number of the contracts commissioned by the Supported Housing budget are targeted specifically at an older age group, these contracts are in the main provided by agencies to assist older people to remain living independently in their homes or adapted accommodation. Experience of their success across the West Sussex area is patchy. These services were all identified as 'red' services by WSCC. Whilst as part of a wider service redesign and commissioning approach the T&F Group is exploring the way in which floating support for all ages can be provided going forward (see below) the loss of these services in some areas has been identified as a risk. The key risk being that additional and costly burdens are placed upon the health and adult social care system if a solution is not identified.

4.3 Work is ongoing to understand current service provision, any possible duplication of services and explore potential options for this type of support going forward. A subgroup of the T&F Group is scheduled to meet with the lead from WSCC Adult Social Care in June 2019 to discuss this and how to mitigate the risk.

ii) High Risk/ Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) Offender Services

4.4 Currently Change, Grow, Live (CGL) is contracted to provide accommodation and associated support to high risk and MAPPA offenders. It has properties across West Sussex. Referrals are made exclusively by the National Probation Service (NPS). Part of the support includes working with those in the accommodation to access move on accommodation and in the main they are very successful at achieving this.

4.5 This service will not be funded by WSCC in the future. There is no requirement for statutory housing authorities to give specific priority to this group, and financial support for supported accommodation has not been made available by the NPS or the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). This type of provision is not universally provided across the country or even within Sussex. The support meets only a small percentage of the need for accommodation for those released from prison. In most cases, offenders leave custody and return to live with family/friends, secure private rented accommodation or in some cases will sleep rough or access hostel type accommodation. The key risk with high risk MAPPA offenders, is that without such accommodation they will not be able to access provision elsewhere, and will ultimately end up sleeping rough. With the associated increased risks, vulnerabilities and complexities that MAPPA offenders present with, this brings not only exposure of risks to others, but also to themselves.

4.6 In order to explore this issue and seek solutions a subgroup of the T&F Group is concentrating on this workstream. Meetings have taken place with CGL, and the NPS, along with other potential providers to see what other options can be explored moving forward. The Chair of the T&F Group is in the process of writing to both Secretaries of State for MHCLG and the MoJ, as the situation we are in is not unique, and to a degree requires national attention. Given the Government's target to reduce homelessness by 2027 and halve it by 2022 there is a significant disconnect between the approach from both Ministries.

4.7 Given the level of risk this issue presents, there needs to be a focus from the West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board on how these individuals are supported following the withdrawal of funding.

4.8 It is important to emphasise that the risk/issues listed above and identified in section 7.0 of this report have significant potential to contribute towards an increase in rough sleeping, which is already a growing problem across West Sussex and nationally. There is a clear government requirement for partnership working to both tackle existing and prevent further rough sleeping and it is hoped that this work will galvanise partners further to achieve this.

## **5.0 Phase Two: Redesigning our System for the Future**

5.1 At the outset of this work, the West Sussex Chief Executives agreed to collectively invest the necessary resources in terms of both people and finances to ensure that the work undertaken by the T&F Group created long term sustainable solutions, as opposed to a 'sticking plaster' approach. Having reviewed the options of appointing a consultant or using service design approach, the T&F Group decided to explore the latter. The key aim being to use all the resources and assets at hand; including our housing professionals, provider services, commissioners and interested parties as well as service users, to better understand our current needs, and create a system that was fit for now and the future. This approach recognised that the current system of provision has developed organically over many years without any recent strategic review or development. The changes described above, provided the impetus and opportunity for all partners in the system to work collectively to create new and innovative approaches and to ensure value for money.

5.2 Members of the T&F Group agreed that this work needed to cover all service provision going forward, regardless of whether the area of provision was within the Green or Amber services areas, as it is necessary to review the whole system and how it connects with housing, children's, adults and social care services, as well as other parts of the system such as health and criminal justice.

5.3 The three key areas the T&F Group agreed to focus on in redesigning services are:

- Young People and Care Leavers
- Adults with complex needs (including rough sleeping)
- Floating support and independent living for people of all ages

5.4 In March 2019 'Snook' were appointed as the design agency to support this work. The brief created to describe this work is attached at **Appendix B**

## **6.0 Service Design: Progress to date and emerging themes**

6.1 The design work consisted of a number of key activities which have taken place across March, April and May these include:

6.2 Research and data gathering have included:

- Face to face interviews with 19 service users and telephone interviews with three others
- Face to Face interviews with Housing and other professionals
- Research interviews with seven provider organisations

- Data capture on the number of service users accessing supported housing provision and their needs
- Data capture on those presenting to housing teams and their needs
- Analysis of 'vulnerabilities' for those currently housed in Temporary Accommodation (TA) provided by all West Sussex housing authorities.

6.3 11 workshops to date have involved:

- Housing professionals mapping the current system
- T&F Executive team to understand and agree the structure of the work
- Commissioners from across the system including health, social care (adults and children), police, probation, local authorities and others
- Providers
- Registered Social landlords and other key stakeholders
- A final senior commissioners workshop held at the end of May.

6.4 The final stage of this process will be for Snook, the design agency to provide the T&F Group with its collated view and design principles as outlined in the attached brief.

## **7.0 Phase two - Emerging Themes - Risks and Issues**

7.1 Snook has provided a high level review of the emerging themes from the workshops to date which are still to be further synthesised and discussed with the T&F Group in order to support the next phase of development. The key high-level themes include:

7.1.2 General themes:

- The need to identifying the risks of homelessness early in order to prevent it
- The system needs to be more joined-up and there could be better information sharing between agencies
- Good, user friendly information at the earliest stage is critical
- Recognition of a 'cliff edge' at the point of 'discharge' from statutory services – this includes care leavers, those being discharged from hospital and those being released from custody
- Waiting for services and the revolving door of provision causes high levels of distress and anxiety and increases complexity levels
- Life skills development is critical to long term outcomes
- Those in priority need vs those who are not, or who are deemed 'intentionally homeless'
- Move on accommodation and ongoing support is lacking
- Healthy networks are key
- Lack of affordable accommodation
- A more joined-up approach to service provision with effective cross-agency information sharing, including the identification of indicators which signal a need for intervention.

7.1.3 For younger people and care leavers specific themes included:

- There is evidence of a cliff edge when leaving care and there is a need to put preventative measure in place much earlier
- Setting realistic expectations for those leaving care/home

- Cross agency information sharing
- Where is the first point of contact? Can this be exploited to better effect?
- Family breakdown is a key factor in young people becoming homeless – what needs to happen to support families?
- Information needs to be accessible and tailored to young people’s needs
- Transitioning from children to adult services – whether health, social care or housing are all daunting and create huge barriers to progress
- Vulnerable young people are at greater risk of exploitation
- Health inequalities
- There is a need for specific mental health and trauma support and for statutory services to go beyond the letter of their remit
- Young people need dedicated substance misuse services
- Services can be rigid, and do not recognise the assets young people bring
- Support at the point of crisis can be difficult to obtain and often leads to a downward spiral into more complex needs
- Out of area placements create additional burdens

#### 7.1.4 Vulnerable adults with complex needs including rough sleepers:

- Hope and giving people a reason to live came through strongly
- The sense that help is only offered at a ‘point of crisis’ and needs to be much earlier
- Such support could prevent complexity and significant costs to most agencies.
- If needs worsen, service users had experienced eviction and the inability to access services again
- Information and specialist knowledge at every port of call – DWP, health, benefits etc – all agencies need to understand how to support those who might be at risk of homelessness
- The need to collectively support the general public, businesses and other organisations to understand the complex issues for rough sleepers
- The need to collectively solve problems.

#### 7.1.5 Targeted and Floating support for people of all ages:

- The priority is to help people live well, independently after a major life event (e.g. health issue, bereavement, fall etc)
- Enabling community support is critical
- There is a blurring of lines between what supported housing providers are expected to do, and how the statutory, social care and health systems should be responding
- Explore opportunities to empower private landlords in this area.

7.2 Following on from the above, the T&F Group has identified several key risks/gaps that have emerged, these are as follows:

i) Young people and care leavers.

7.3 Every session highlighted a need for a better defined preventative approach which could result in far fewer complex cases and reduce the number of seriously damaged young people in our system. Given that this has been highlighted by the recent OFSTED report as a critical area, this clearly warrants further detailed work. In addition, there is

clearly a related risk around external care placements in the county, many of which are located in a small geography and cause particular pressures for those Districts and Boroughs.

ii) Adults and young people with complex needs - particularly mental health issues.

7.4 The complex mental health needs of all our service user groups was a regular topic of discussion in every workshop and throughout the research. Many of the most vulnerable that present to local authorities and providers for help, often present with multi-faceted safeguarding concerns (adults and older children) often requiring intensive support and help, as opposed to shelter. The term 'snakes and ladders' was often used by customers/users and providers to describe the experience of individuals as they try navigating through the system. Engaging mental health service providers in this work is essential and there is significant concern that the level of need we are asking providers and officers to deal with is unsafe. It is clear that unless mental health services are better engaged in this process, we will continue to see gaps and issues that cannot necessarily be resolved via better commissioning of services.

iii) Affordable move on accommodation.

7.5 Whilst the provision of support and supported accommodation is a crucial part of our system, the fact remains that in many services, access to affordable move on accommodation creates its own challenges as 'bed blocking' prevents those in most need from accessing the type of support they may need. This is clearly part of a much wider issue regarding the availability of affordable housing and the pressure this places on health and social care services, both of which have a significant impact in this area of work.

iv) Ex-offender accommodation

7.6 Clearly a reduction in available accommodation, with appropriate and safe levels of support, for people leaving prison presents risks for the individuals and communities. This is particularly important for high risk offenders.

v) The ability of the market to meet the need.

7.7 Our supported housing providers and registered social landlords, provide an invaluable service to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Their view is that levels of complexity are rising and access to appropriate health and social care support is reducing. The risk therefore is that some providers will seek to reduce their work in this area, unless we can support a whole system approach that enables and empowers not only our residents and service users, but those seeking to support them.

7.8 In addition to the workshops and evidence gathering, District & Borough councils (as Housing Authorities) have also undertaken an exercise to establish from live data the primary (Fig.1) and secondary (Fig.2) needs and vulnerabilities of those currently residing in temporary accommodation across West Sussex. (This data is extracted from the primary applicant if a family has presented as homeless). The vulnerabilities clearly identify the complexities of individuals and reinforces why a multi-agency partnership

and systems approach is imperative if we are to improve outcomes and deliver more effective services.

Fig. 1 Primary vulnerabilities of those presenting as homeless. Consolidated across West Sussex.

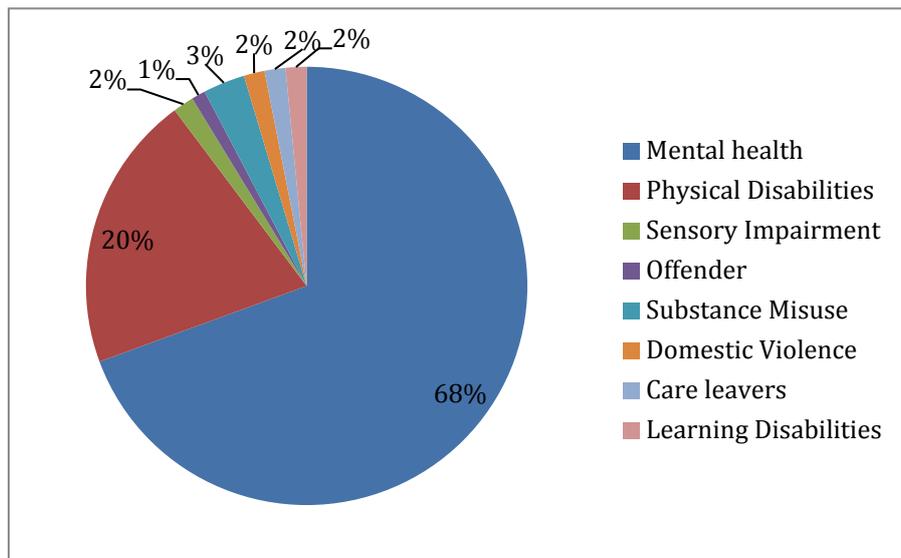
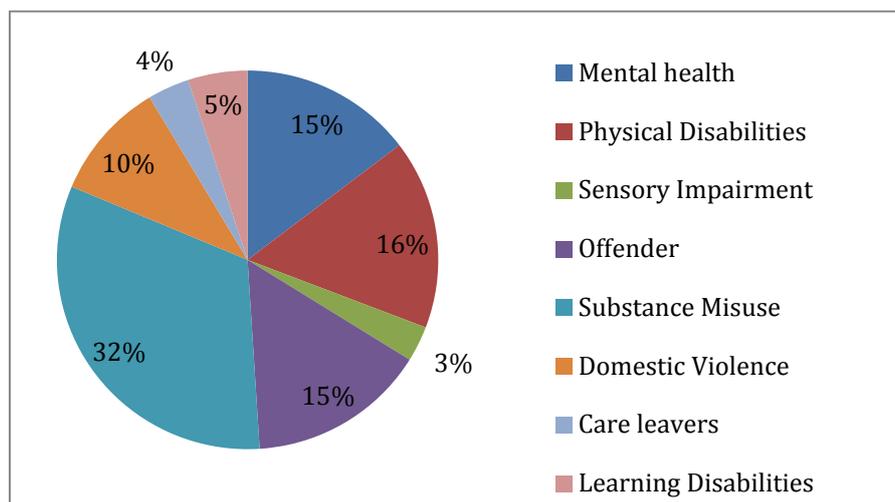


Fig. 2 Secondary vulnerabilities of those presenting as homeless. Consolidated across West Sussex.



## 8.0 Next steps

8.1 The T&F Group will be receiving and reviewing the output of the work undertaken by Snook and creating a timetable for future activity. It is anticipated that the short, medium- and longer-term steps will include some/all of the following:

- Agreeing what a redesigned system should look like
- Developing a set of specifications for future service provision
- Agreeing a financial envelope for future service provision
- Completing a procurement/commissioning process - which may involve further market testing/discussions with potential providers
- Reviewing the timetable for procurement

- Allocation of transition funding to support this programme of work
- Setting up contract management and governance structures going forward
- Identifying and supporting additional work streams that flow from the design work
- Supporting the future development and leadership capability across the housing system in West Sussex

8.2 In taking forward this work the T&F Group would welcome additional support from the following to ensure the revised approach is most effective:

- Mental Health service involvement in the service redesign and commissioning process
- West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board in particular in addressing the risks and issues related to ex-offender accommodation and support and in reducing rough sleeping, many of which present as significant adult safeguarding issues.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

9.1 The Supported Housing and Homelessness T&F Group has achieved good progress in the first five months of the year. Further work at pace, is needed to complete a system redesign and recommission services for the future and build structures that can sustain and support those services in a way that has been lacking in recent years. There are emerging risks and issues, most notably how the work of the T&F Group links into the wider change and transformation work that is underway in WSCC Children's and Adult Services and also the impact of continued financial pressures across all agencies.

9.2 The T&F Group will continue progressing with this work with the aim of creating a fit for purpose, flexible and responsive supported housing system. Commissioning and procurement of new arrangements will be undertaken as soon as possible. It is proposed that a further report on the work /outcomes of the T&F Group will be presented to this committee in November 2019.

### **Report Author:**

Natalie Brahma-Pearl – Chief Executive, Crawley Borough Council & Chair of the West Sussex Supported Housing & Homelessness Task and Finish Group.

## **Appendix A. Terms of Reference for the Supported Housing & Homelessness Task & Finish Group.**

### **West Sussex Supported Housing & Homelessness Task & Finish Group February 2019**

#### **Terms of Reference**

Supported housing helps hundreds of the most vulnerable people across the county. A safe, stable and supportive place to live can be key to improving people's lives, and for many it is a stepping stone to independent living in the longer term. The supported housing sector is diverse. People with physical or learning disabilities, drug or alcohol problems, ex-offenders, care leavers, older people, homeless people and those fleeing domestic violence are some of the groups who use this provision.

A WSCC decision (December 2018) has been made to reduce WSCC funding from £6.4m to £2.3 by April 2020. WSCC have agreed to extend Housing Support commissioned contracts until September 2019 while a review is carried out. However, it was agreed at the West Sussex Leaders Board meeting on 23 November 2018 that:

*A task and finish group would be set up with representatives from the Social Care Authority and each of the Housing Authorities (Districts and Boroughs) to look at how we seek joint efficiencies, remodel provision and identify what alternative funding streams could be made available, including from other agencies.*

WSCC and Districts & Boroughs agreed to fund this work externally with Terms of Reference to be agreed with parties. It was agreed that the T&FG need to take a whole system approach to reviewing how all councils and other agencies commission, manage and deliver services for vulnerable people.

#### **Membership**

- West Sussex County Council
- District & Borough Councils (across West Sussex)
- Agencies to be involved:
  - CCG/Health
  - Probation
  - Police
  - Mental health trust
  - MHCLG
  - Providers- as a reference/interface group/co-design of solutions/sense check.

Chair- Natalie Brahma-Pearl CBC Chief Executive,

Steering group- Mary D'Arcy, Director for Communities, A&W; Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive, MSDC, Louise Rudziak, Director Housing & Communities, CDC, Paul McKay Director of Adult Services WSCC.

**Meeting frequency: initially every 2-3 weeks. Separate meetings for Phase 2.**

**This group will undertake work in two phases:**

**Phase 1- Critical priority task (to avoid a significant cliff edge in October 2019)**

1. Review the current provision of supported housing & homelessness need across West Sussex to identify potential efficiencies. (This was prepared for the WSCC meeting in **November 2018**).
2. Identify all funding streams (all LAs) November 2018- update **new 2019/20** budget figs.
3. WSCC to identify which contracts will not be funded using WSCC criteria (i.e. across adult, children and preventive services using Red, Amber Green ratings). **Feb 2019**
4. Once WSCC have identified which services will be decommissioned, D&Bs (RAG ratings) to identify appropriate exit and lead in times for new arrangements and transition arrangements for those services that are to continue either in an existing or redesigned format. **March 2019**.
5. Identify which services DCs/BCs consider are critical to discharge their statutory homelessness duties and determine how services which fall out of the WSCC prioritisation exercise will be 'caught' by local/combined geographical arrangements and seek service alignment, redesign and efficiencies where possible. **March/April 2019**.
6. The Phase 1 exercise should look to protect and enhance services based on need, utilising opportunities of co-commissioning /production with wider partners and stakeholders to deliver services differently and access alternative funding streams. Identify easy wins to be in place **1/10/19**.
7. Identify and bring together other providers who have a role and establish commitment to working collectively and clarity on commissioning arrangements e.g. Probation/MOJ, CCG, mental health, police.
8. Influence where £750k WSCC Transition funding should be focussed. TBA (**Allocated from Sept 2019**).
9. Updates provided to the West Sussex Chief Executives Group (ongoing) to commission new services for commencement in October 2019 and agree future governance, monitoring and management arrangements.
10. Report to the Health & Social Care Select Committee 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (**report draft May 2019**).

**Phase 2 - (in parallel to Phase 1) Longer term Service Redesign**

1. Agree scope of external consultant to undertake Phase 2. Tender, appoint. (**Feb/March 2019**)
2. Undertake a comprehensive system review in readiness for redesign. **April 2019** onwards
3. Seek to develop the most appropriate and realistic joined-up local strategic partnership working arrangements amongst local commissioners and delivery partners, to ensure that strategic planning around homelessness and supported people is well informed, balanced, with realistic implementation and transition arrangements in place post April 2020. Commissioning workshops pathway design **April-June 2019**.
4. Multi-agency commissioning and provider's workshops **March/April 2019**
5. Identify provision needed after March 2020 and new services to be developed, commissioned and monitored from April 2020 through a new if possible multiagency funding model. **June-Dec 2019**

6. Ensure that whatever proposals emerge that they allow local areas to take account of their particular circumstances and that they allow all agencies to discharge their statutory responsibilities. System synthesis, redesign, draft specifications.
7. Should involve coordination between housing, Revenue and Benefits (and local DWP representatives in connection with Universal Credit where appropriate), adult social care and health authorities and commissioners and should also include providers, managing agents and other stakeholders.
8. Report recommendations to the West Sussex Chief Executives Group to commission new services for commencement in April 2020 and agree future governance, monitoring and management arrangements.
9. Report into WSCC Select/Cabinet committee- Autumn 2019.
  
10. Highlight what further work the WSHOG can take forward for furthering integrating the commissioning process at a local level. E.g. Development of Multi-agency Supported Housing Principles.

Feb 2019 vs.4

**Phase Two - Using a design-led approach**

This forms the basis of the scope for this brief.

The Task and Finish group have agreed to invest in a design-led approach to:

- Understand the needs of people across West Sussex accessing supported housing and preventing homelessness services now, and
- What is needed for the future.

The ambition is to co-create, suitable and flexible services in our places.

Our goal is to understand what the system design for the future needs to look like in order to commission services that support the wellbeing of vulnerable groups and prevent homelessness for the following groups:

- Younger people and care Leavers
- Vulnerable adults with complex needs (including Rough Sleepers)
- People of all ages who need targeted, intensive, and/or floating support to access and sustain their tenancy

Ex -offenders are being considered as a separate stream, but may also overlap with vulnerable adults with complex needs.

Key Outputs will be:

- A clear understanding of the services and support that members of the Task and Finish Group need/want to commission for the future.
- A better understanding of how these do - or could - fit into a wider system of support and intervention
- The development of a set of commissioning intentions that will inform a set of specifications.
- Involvement from providers and other key stakeholders to support a future commissioning process and
- Confirmation that there is a market for the services that will be commissioned
- An exploration of what measures could be used to ensure the effectiveness of these services in the short, medium and long term
- An agreed budget envelope for the future commissioning of these services
- An exploration of the possible ways in which WSCC and the Districts and Boroughs, could collectively develop a joined-up approach to the governance of such commissioning and contract management for the future.