**Homelessness & Housing Network**

**3 Dec 2019 10am—12pm**

**The Arc Centre, 98b St Paul St, Islington, London N1 7DF**

**Attendees**

Sally **Healy** Berkeley Foundation

Anton **Scheving** Berkeley Foundation

James **Ross** Buzzacott

Amy **Doyle** Commonweal Housing

Michael **Parsons** Guy's and St Thomas' Charity

Jaishree **Mistry** Homeless Link

Lisa **Raftery** Homeless Link

Jacob **Quagliozzi** Housing Justice

Safia **Noor** Hyde-Housing

Emily **Rainbow** London Borough of Camden

Andrea **McDermott** London Boroughs of Richmond and Wandsworth

Nick **Smith** London Councils

Grace **Perry** London Funders

Geraldine **Tovey** London Funders

Melanie **Antao** London Sport

Shubh **Sharma** New Philanthropy Capital

Paul **Wishart** Oak Philanthropy (UK) Limited

Emma **Hill** Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Taseen **Khanam** Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Rachelle **Angeline** Social Finance Ltd

Natalie **King** St Martins Charity

Mark **Phillippo** St Martins Charity

Bob **Green** Stonewall Housing

Kate **Moralee** The City Bridge Trust

Philip **Mullen** Toynbee Hall

**Chairs’ welcome**

**Amy Doyle,** (Deputy Chief Executive, Commonweal Housing) welcomed all to the first Housing & Homelessness network meeting. After listening to feedback from members, London Funders has established a new Housing and Homelessness Network. We recognise that homelessness is a systems-change issue which requires cross-sector funder collaboration, and that London is uniquely affected by the housing crisis.

**Presentations**

Bob Green, Stonewall Housing

Our services:

* Six houses for LGBT+ people aged 16 to 25
* Commissioned by four London boroughs: Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Newham
* One house for LGBT+ people over 25
* One house for trans people over 25
* Floating support (as part of move on)

Advice

* Opened advice network in 1990, as we didn’t have the space to help everyone
* Now we have lots of partners we work with to run these services

Most people approaching us are:

* 68% of callers are Black, Asian or minority ethnic groups
* 18% identify as transgender
* 53% have a disability
* The majority of callers say their housing issue relates to sexual orientation or gender identity

Training

* We can’t house everyone so we also offer training packages to other networks
* Found LGBT+ people didn’t approach mainstream services or LGBT+ services due to stigmas

New Projects:

* **LGBT+ Rough Sleepers:** working with the Outside Project to deliver an emergency shelter & community space in old Clerkenwell Fire Station, funded by Greater London Authority
* **LGBT+ homelessness:** national training programme for the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
* **Domestic Abuse:** Home Office funded programme of national telephone and online advice for individuals and other agencies
* **Manchester Extra Care Scheme:** working with the Council and LGBT Foundation to develop the first LGBT+ affirmative extra care scheme

To be Continued:

* House of Stonewall (safe housing for homeless trans people)

Questions to Bob

Q. Why do you think there is a need for specialised housing for LGBT+?

A. LGBT+ people are communities, we have specific needs and aspirations, like any other communities in London, they need to be heard and met. Wellbeing industries can do that, and work well with LGBT+ groups with the right training and awareness. But many LGBT+ people want to live together and thrive when they live together. We know what it means to be LGBT+ and what the experiences are, they don’t have to come out again to explain personal stories. We are part of their family.

We are not saying only LGBT+ organisation can meet the needs of LGBT+ people, but they need the choice. We need to be working with mainstream organisations to help them train and be aware. There need to be community services and mainstream services.

Q. What can funders do to support this?

A. When you are thinking of funding housing, think of communities and people and look at it through an equality lens, not just in terms of numbers. Similarly, if you have an LGBT+ strand of funding, is there a housing element there? Rough sleepers aren’t being picked up, where is the LGBT+ element in your funding and where is the housing element in LGBT+ funding?

Older people are still hiding and struggling to get the care/help they need. They found a third of LGBT+ didn’t feel safe in accommodation. That goes up to 60% for transgender people.

We need more partnership funding. It’s encouraging to see more of it, and it is helping us to bring people together.

Q. How is the Manchester care scheme going to be funded?

A. It is still at the development stage, currently applying to Homes England for the development cost. The building, scheme and services will be funding through Homes England development programme and Manchester City Council.

Q. What are the pathways for people who come in contact with Stonewall Housing?

A. It’s a struggle to really know. 15 years ago most people went through the local authorities so it could be tracked, however now it is mostly private rental sector. This is a big issue for emergency shelter as there is nowhere to move to, there is less council housing and more private renters. We need a pathway approach, included supported housing so people don’t come to emergency shelter and park there for a year, but have a journey. A lot of waiting to see the what happened in the election.

Q. What extra value will the domestic abuse strategy bring and what can funders do to support that?

A. The issues for us is that our communities are not addressed in it, so we are working with [Galop](http://www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse/). We have produces a new report, [Recognise & Respond](https://www.galop.org.uk/recogniseandrespond/). 29% of LGBT+ people have disclosed an incident of domestic abuse. And LFBT+ people are more likely to have experienced self-harm, be at suicide risk, more likely to be abused by multiple partners, and likely to be abused by family. Our challenge is to government, commissioners and providers to recognise that LGBT+ cannot access refuge and support services.

The amount of emergency beds for GBT men is less than 20. There is still a challenge to work with providers, community groups and develop a new strategic response. We received Home Office funding for 1 year to work on advocacy project. 1-year funding has no follow up, we need longer term funding. Building services and expectation then nothing. Longer term funding based on strategic need and strategic priorities. The trouble we have with funders is the ask ‘What’s the evidence base?’ As we’ve shifted to more local needs, it’s more localised funding, small organisations struggle to get the data. It’s the support services that are lacking. Challenge now is where do we have the research base, and can funders be more flexible in their ask? You know there is a need but may not have allthe evidence. Can you take more of a gamble?

**Jacob Quagliozzi, Housing Justice**

The winter night shelter network has 145 projects across England and Wales. In London there are a total of 770 beds.

What we do in London, what the projects are and who uses them?

* In the last 10 years, we have seen the state step back from some areas of provision and local authorities have had significant budgets cuts. Grass roots/community groups have stepped forward to take on the provision
* 55% of winter night shelters opened in January, 54% pre-Christmas
* There were 2,900 guests in 2018/19
* As projects mature there is less rotating and a move to becoming more static
* The scale of these small grass roots projects is comparable to what the professionalised sector is i.e. St Mungo’s
* GLA fund us to build capacity across the network and improve the offer and get better outcomes and improved data collection
* We are working with Homeless Link to offer out data collection improvement to the projects
* Overwhelming majority of guests are not UK nationals
* Majority of non EEA guests have had failed asylum claims
* We receive guests from referrals, lots of work going on about ‘moving on’. But if we are serious about a pathway out, we need to look at the pathway in
* Almost all guests are being case worked. The big problem is the number of people ‘moving on’ is static and not growing, so why is the case work not being more successful?

Key barriers

* Immigration status and advice
* Engagement and personal wellbeing
* Access to secure work or welfare support

What we are doing:

* Working with Consortium on drop in sessions around settled status, and how people engage with those services
* Commissioning some non EEA immigration advice
* Looking at returners, taking a lead of facilitating case work

Questions to Jacob

Q. The bar chart with the discrepancies in 17/18, do we know why that was?

A. Not everywhere collects data, and we had a decline in places that year.

Q. There’s an ambition to get people into accommodation within 6 weeks, who is setting that target and where are they moving on to?

A. It’s individual projects who set those targets. Some have significant funding which links in to it. We agree it’s a good idea that they don’t have an open ended stay, and try to help forge a pathway. However, it’s incredibly rare someone is asked to leave if they ‘overstay’ unless maybe they hadn’t engaged at all with any of the services offered. Where people are moving on to, we aren’t 100%. That is where we want to focus on this year when collecting data.

At the end of the season there is a larger proportion of non UK nationals who haven’t managed to move on. When we are talking success rates, we are largely talking about UK nationals.

Q. We all know there is a huge rise in homelessness. With many volunteers delivering services, are professional services seen as an option? What can we do and what’s the balance?

A. In a crisis situation, short term measures we need to take to advert people spending long periods of time on the street and volunteers provide that. Night shelters are by necessity and part of an immediate solution, but not part of a long term/medium solution. Most of the people who come to us have no networks, so finding a way or creating networks would help.

Q. There is a huge range/diversity of how your work is carried out across different projects. Do you bring about an overall approach that benefits from an overall strategy?

A. One really obvious thing we know, is we are fortunate to have the GLA, it seems positive to have a regional structure. However, if I showed occupancy rates in neighbouring boroughs, it’s frustrating that you see one booked out, and then less than a mile away one at low capacity.

Q. Are you asking night shelters what barriers they are facing, and what is the expectation of provision and who is stepping in?

A. Part of the problem is there isn’t expectation on what they should provide as they are voluntary led. Good local authorities will be working with the project to move people through and see they’re safe, but then there is no real expectation.

70% of the groups aren’t UK nationals. Immigration advice is much more regulated than it used to be, which means there is far less of it around. No one else is reaching these people. Central/regional government, recognise something needs to be done, but not seeing much progress.

Q. What would you hope that funders can do for night shelters?

A. Night shelters give shelter at night, the problem is the day support. So funding day support, from advice services to or capacity building. Some people are not being engaged by outreach. Lots of funders are keen to fund beds, but don’t understand how much the support is needed in the day.

We’ve had some of our research funded and it gives a picture of what services are missing and what is needed. We can show trends and what the community needs, but don’t always have hard-core evidence. The Mayor needs to be working with funders too. The London Plan, is a lot of numbers, what about the communities and the people? We need funders to work together strategically.

Q. What is reasonable for us to look for in terms of outcomes or to fund? Or can we just give and be glad people are getting fed and sheltered?

A. Funding basic things like staff training, H&S. Need to be able to match services across all the local authorities. We discus with members that it is not enough to just offer a rest. Everyone wants to make a positive difference; it’s doing it a way with long term outcomes that is difficult.

Q. What extent do night shelters effectively link up with local authority teams?

A. Some boroughs are really proactive and great, wanting to work better with the sector and develop relationships. Others are harder to engage. We also have some very small projects that don’t want to work with the borough. Also having neighbouring boroughs talking would be more effective.

**Discussions / Comments**

* At London councils there is a Pan-London housing needs and homelessness needs group including all boroughs plus the MHCLG and GLA etc. It’s a good forum to raise awareness among boroughs and a forum to talk to them. Survey work across the boroughs can be discussed with them
* New homelessness reduction act, potential to look at granular data. There might be ways where it might supplement some of your data
* Housing associations are looking at young people’s transitions. There is an alliance pooled together. Trying to have a better understanding of the sector and what can we bring to the table together. How does that transition into housing and what are the blockers and enablers? Currently in the stage of conducting research
* It’s important for funders to promote partnership working, as part of a pathway. Recognising what their role in the pathway is. Local authorities, homelessness/housing forums are a focused way to make sure that happens.
* Each local authority should have its own forum to bring night shelters and services

**Resources**

Homelessness & Domestic Abuse, Safelives - <http://www.safelives.org.uk/spotlight-5-homelessness-and-domestic-abuse>

Recognise and Respond, Galop - <https://www.galop.org.uk/recogniseandrespond/>

Homelessness Reduction Act, NHF - <https://www.housing.org.uk/resource-library/browse/homeless-reduction-act-briefing/>

Manchester Care Scheme - <https://www.mhcc.nhs.uk/news/lgbt-extra-care-scheme-moves-forward/>