

# Reading RSI Partners workshop



## Case Study

### Introduction

Reading Borough Council (RBC) had been asked by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to complete a self-assessment of their homelessness services to form the basis of their Rough Sleeping Initiative submission for 2022-25. RBC wanted to get an objective assessment of their services from local statutory and non-statutory services currently providing support in the area to feed into their self-assessment toolkit submission. RBC approached Homeless Link to facilitate the gathering of intelligence and views from local services.

It was agreed that the Homeless Link Partnership Manager would organise and facilitate a workshop discussion and online survey to enable Reading to objectively assess their rough sleeper services. This would provide both statutory and non-statutory insight into the current state of service provision across the councils remit, and obtain views on where these partners want provision to be over the next 3 years.

### Change Needed

Homeless Links Partnership Manager and MEAM Policy & Engagement Manager met with RBC's Homelessness & Housing Pathways Manager and Rough Sleeping Interventions Co-ordinator to form an approach to gathering local partners views. The approach taken was to hold a workshop where RBC staff would present on RSI and the reasons for submitting the self-assessment, then Homeless Link staff would facilitate breakout sessions for attendees to answer 3 main questions. RBC staff would not attend the breakout sessions with the intention of obtaining an objective viewpoint from local partners, and to ensure full engagement with the discussion.

The 3 main questions for attendees to answer were taken from the self-assessment toolkit;

- a) strengths & gaps?
- b) specific cohort needs and specialisms they might need now and in the future?
- c) How we need to shape services for rough sleeping groups in Reading over the next 3 years, what services and outcomes do we want for people sleeping rough or at risk or rough sleeping by 2025?

Homeless Link staff created a Zoom event and sent invites out to local services in Reading to sign-up for the event. The online event would be 2 hours long. 28 local partners signed up for the event in advance, with a mix of statutory, non-statutory and faith based services from housing and homelessness, as well as allied services such as migrant services, health, probation and more.

Homeless Link created an agenda, a presentation for the workshop and also an interactive Menti board to gather the strengths and gaps at the workshop.

- RBC Rough Sleeping Interventions Manager presented the reasoning for the event and explained what RSI20-25 is.
- 3 Homeless Link staff attended to facilitate the 3 breakout groups
- All attendees completed the Menti board on strengths and gaps and then broke out into 3 groups and discussed these at greater length.
- 2 more breakouts occurred to focus on specific cohort needs and how to shape services over the next 3 years. Each breakout session was facilitated by Homeless Link staff to ensure all views on the discussions were captured and that each breakout concentrated on the pertinent points. Staff wrote notes throughout and facilitated constructive discussion.
- RBC Pathways Manager explained “what next...” for the RSI process.

### **Impact of Homeless Link involvement**

- Some key themes from the breakout discussions were:
  - Partnership work is good and the housing pathway accessible, but could improve some systems
  - Accessibility of mental health provision difficult and a barrier to client progression
  - Little options for people with restricted eligibility
  - Involving people with lived experience for coproduction of services would be hugely beneficial
  - Current services not always promoted well enough
  - Need for more affordable move-on accommodation for workers, couples etc
  - Consider “navigator” style roles for end-to-end support
  - Increased frequency of partnership meetings to improve communication
- RBC and Homeless Link staff met as a de-brief to discuss initial pertinent points and general outcomes of breakouts and workshop.
- Homeless Link staff provided RBC with comprehensive notes from the breakouts to feed into their self-assessment toolkit completion.
- A survey was sent out to all attendees and other local partners who could not attend so that all viewpoints could be fully gathered.

### **Recommendations**

- RBC will take all intelligence gathered (workshop, Menti board and survey) and feed into their self-assessment toolkit and RSI 2022-25 funding bid.
- The workshop and survey will provide crucial intelligence to form part of RBC’s RSI 2022-25 funding bid and shape service provision over the next 3 years.
- Offer available for follow-up once RSI allocation decided and Homeless Link can assist in drawing upon good practice elsewhere to support development on ongoing services within Reading.

## **Feedback**

*“Having the support of Chris, Jacob and Natalie in enabling and hosting this workshop session has meant we’ve been able to garner opinions from across the sector in that objective way we wanted and needed. Their input has provided us with several themes – some expected and some that are new – but all of which will be included in our self-assessment that will inform the interventions we propose to DLUHC. Their honest feedback, advice and guidance leading up to and taken from this workshop has been invaluable in supporting our RSI submission for better outcomes in Reading – thank you from RBC.”*

– Verena Hutcheson, Homeless & Housing Pathways Manager, Reading Borough Council

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