

To support the homelessness, faith, community and voluntary sector to bring forward single room and COVID-19 secure accommodation over the winter, and to support services that prevent rough sleeping and support rough sleepers in innovative ways building on proven approaches. December 2020. The fund was managed in partnership with Housing Justice.

Aim

“This grant has allowed us the opportunity to be creative and set much needed provision that will continue to operate for some time. Although in its infancy, the service has seen some life changing outcomes.”

Reflections Summary

The Funding:

Benefitted a range of homelessness organisations working with various client groups including specialist providers of services for young people, women, LGBT+,

Covered core costs which enabled frontline services to continue and covered staffing costs,

Offset reductions in volunteer numbers due to sickness or the need to self isolate,

Highlighted the challenges of achieving digital inclusion among beneficiaries of the services,

Enabled moving on into longer term housing for 1, 015 people,

Funded a small number of capital adaptations.

Funds

MHCLG, The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) and Comic Relief

MHCLG: £2,349,440 – 66 grants, TNLCF: £1,215,608 – 31 grants, Comic Relief: £119,447 – 7 grants

£3,684,525 awarded via 104 grants

Impact

Service delivery impact

Adapt and fund additional costs e.g. new cleaning regimes, replacing bedding

Employ additional staff to cover increased sickness, PPE, mental health support

Reopening of closed day centres due to confidence in implemented safety measures

Increased importance of nutritious hot meals and practical help such as toiletries

Reduced capacity e.g. bed spaces, number of face-to-face callers.

Some extended hours to maximise the number of people they could help

Support was provided to **3,956 individuals**

Supported by: Substance misuse work **579**

Into accommodation: **1,644**

Long-term accommodation: **1,015**

Reconnected to another area: **207**

Received a CV-19 vaccine: **779**

Into employment/employment focussed services and training: **175**



Reflections Continued

- Many grantees reflected on the challenges of supporting people who struggle to access digital services and do not have adequate device, Wi-Fi, or data.
- Grantees use of and development of volunteers varied, with some grantees using funding to cover increased staff costs, as they needed to manage with fewer volunteers (to reduce overall number of people involved in delivering services or due to age or vulnerability of volunteers) whilst others were able to use funding to recruit and train new volunteers – often younger and furloughed individuals with a renewed interest and commitment to supporting their local communities.

“The service has developed from a 12-hour, overnight service to a 24 hour per day service allowing clients to isolate and social distance during daytime hours as well as night time.”

- Several grantees used the funding to move people on and into longer-term tenancies either in the PRS or, to a lesser extent, into social housing – often with additional support in both sourcing accommodation, moving in, and settling people into a new home during the pandemic. A small number of grantees were also able to use the funding to maintain and adapt hosting and night-stop type schemes.
- Staffing shortages and recruitment to posts within Homelessness Services was a common challenge for many grantees.
- The additional support for many services enabled a breathing space allowing for more professionalised adaptations to take place.

“The service developed into a much more professionalised service than our usual winter night shelters. Whilst we still worked with volunteers from our existing partners, local churches and faith groups partners; we also had paid staff on site. We were able to provide more comprehensive training and support to staff and volunteers supervising the shelters.”

“This grant has reinforced and accelerated our ability to comprehensively revise and enhance our approaches to the delivery of our service. We have improved our practical implementation of methods of co-production and successfully increased empowerment models for people who use the service.”

Reflections Continued

- Many grantees referred to positive outcomes from this grant and the pandemic enabling them to accelerate their digital capabilities, developing and swiftly rolling out new systems and tools to engage and support service users and manage and support staff members working remotely and from home. A number of grantees referred to the funding as 'transformational' in this regard. These remote working systems enabled organisations to develop closer relationships with other organisations, using zoom for example to share experiences and good practice and take advantage of training etc.

“The additional training has motivated staff to develop creative and innovative, customised responses to individual needs. Staff now feel invested and that there is a clear plan for their own human development.”

- Lockdown restrictions created challenges for many with staffing. It also created delays with referring to other services also experiencing staff shortages. It generated delays with capital work that had been planned.

“Our staff team has also been reduced due to staff shielding and as a result we have relied more on volunteers in order to still provide a functioning service”

- The nature of support for clients has changed. Many have struggled with their mental health more than previously so and also missed out on additional support such as employment and training focussed activities.