

Homelessness Winter Transformation Fund

Case studies from winter 2021-2022



Homeless Link

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Contents

Introduction	3
West London Mission	4
Harbour Housing	7
NOAH Enterprise	9
Maundy Relief	11
King's Arms Project	14

Introduction

The Homelessness Winter Transformation Fund (2021/22) provided grants from The Department for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up, in partnership with Homeless Link and Housing Justice. The aim of the Fund was to support faith, community and voluntary groups to provide greater quality, privacy and safety of provision for individuals experiencing rough sleeping, offering more sustainable routes off the streets. This included funding single room/self-contained and COVID-19 secure accommodation for people experiencing rough sleeping over the winter of 2021/22. It included funding for non-residential support for people sleeping rough, where a specific need and targeted solution was identified.

Grants were offered for one or both of two purposes:

1. To enable the provision of quality, COVID-secure emergency off the street accommodation in the winter of 2021/22, supplementary to that which is provided through local authority-commissioned services
2. To enable faith and community groups to help reduce the number of individuals sleeping rough or requiring emergency shelter.

£3,718,796 was awarded through 62 grants, 12 of which funded capital work and 50 of which funded revenue costs.

Homeless Link have compiled the following case studies to illustrate a range of grant holders' transformative journeys. These case studies demonstrate *some* of what is possible but do not offer a 'one size fits all' approach. Each has worked for the grantee organisation for different reasons as they adapted and refined provision to meet the needs in their local area. Every organisation is unique, holding different strengths and experiencing different challenges. We thank all the organisations featured for agreeing to share their learning.

West London Mission – City of Westminster (Revenue)

The context

The work of the West London Mission (WLM) in the City of Westminster focuses on Community, Criminal Justice and Counselling. Each of their services are unique but wherever possible they work to deliver a coaching approach. WLM take a strengths-based approach to working with people experiencing homelessness.

What was funded

The grant (£66,082) was for 'WLM Winter Spaces'- a hotel-based intervention for working people or those that are work-ready and experiencing homelessness. The funding covered the costs of hotels, staffing and other related costs like welfare support and travel. The project responds to in-work poverty by not only offering accommodation and respite, but also thinking space where residents can work with a skilled Coach to look at their available options in all areas of aspiration, not just housing.

What they did

The WLM Winter Spaces approach asked people to choose the area where they wished to be accommodated and then to find a hotel or Airbnb room, paid for directly by the Transformation Fund.

Each person was allocated a Coach who supported them into their chosen accommodation and worked with them to explore their other goals and ambitions. Coaches took a person-led approach, taking time to build rapport with each person and completing referrals to other services collaboratively. Each person could continue working with their Coach for as long as they found it beneficial.

Prior to this, on any given night, WLM had 70 bed spaces available. This grant allowed WLM to create 15 additional spaces and through this project, WLM supported eighteen people in total, including four who went on to access further temporary accommodation and three who gained settled accommodation.

The intervention had a significant impact on the lives of the individuals involved. People who were sofa surfing reported a returned sense of dignity, connection, and respect from their social networks, as they no longer had to keep asking to stay with friends. One person highlighted that their friends now treated them like a human again, where they had previously avoided answering their calls and had become increasingly frustrated with them. This returning sense of humanity, dignity, and worth was powerful for those involved and the changes in their self-worth were very apparent.

Coaching enabled people to not be a 'passenger in their recovery', but to think about what services are on offer and to make informed choices with their Coach about the types of support they needed. WLM found that almost everyone they coached sustained their employment and some even successfully applied for new jobs with better terms and conditions.

What they learned

Positive impact of a coaching approach

- Giving people choice over the location and type of accommodation enabled people to choose a space that worked for them.
- By working alongside people to explore housing options lots of skills were uncovered, including financial planning.
- Supporting people to do things themselves alongside a Coach meant that they gained tangible skills, for example by going through the booking process and writing and receiving reviews from Airbnb.
- Exploring interests and aspirations helped build support for people beyond the project. For example, one person connected with a LGBT library resource and tapped into the local community for support outside of their work. Another was able to explore a passion for music which improved their wellbeing.

Understanding the coaching approach

- It took people time to trust the Coaches and to understand how their role is different from a more traditional support worker. In the future, WLM plan to build in a 'bedding in' period for coaching to begin over 2-4 weeks.
- Some people lacked the headspace to begin to unpack what it is they want or need beyond the immediate. They needed longer to engage with the process.
- WLM have developed how they explain the model, how it works, the boundaries around it and the expectations of the people they worked with.

Separating housing management from coaching

- It was originally anticipated that the project would separate out the coaching approach from more practical housing management support, making use of housing management experience within the team. It was also projected that administrative support for hotel bookings and exploring move on options would separate the coaching and administrative roles within the service. In reality the roles became a little blurred between coaching and housing support, and all were delivered via the Coach. Having a Coach to support making the initial booking was a useful first step to build rapport with the individual being coached and set the tone of autonomy in choosing the hotel as a member of the public would.

Accommodation choices

- Offering less traditional options, particularly Airbnb meant people could choose a space that worked for them.
- For people without rental history, good reviews from long-term hosts proved useful as an alternative to traditional landlord references. People had autonomy over their

booking as they communicated directly with the hosts, and they got the experience of sharing a flat with other people.

Dependency on market forces

- Hotel costs increased over certain dates, e.g. valentine's weekend, which made it more difficult to find appropriate accommodation.
- It was frustrating for people when they had saved a deposit but the housing market moved quickly and they were turned down for rental properties. Proprietors did not offer feedback which exacerbated feelings of futility towards the state of the housing market.

Gender-awareness

- WLM came to recognise the need for a more gender-aware service response and particularly what safety meant for the women they work with. In March 2022, they increased the amount of reflective practice provided to the team, from once per month to every two weeks. This extra space allowed them to work through their approach, their understanding of the gendered experience of homelessness and explore safeguarding concerns.

Administrative complications

- There were some unanticipated complications related to financial transactions. For example, credit card one-time passcodes, additional security checks and credit card spend limits when paying for hotels.
- WLM had strained conversations with hoteliers who accepted bookings only to later cancel them, difficult conversations about getting refunds, and very complicated long calls with Airbnb about bookings.
- All of these complications were experienced by the Coaches with the people they were working with, this gave a glimpse into the complexity of the problem of finding appropriate accommodation and the insight that obtaining funding for accommodation is only one part of the solution.

Partnership working

- WLM developed a good relationship with Westminster City Council as a result of this funding. The council have been observing the role WLM played in reducing rough sleeping in Westminster and discussions are underway with the local authority for continuation funding.
- The LA were involved in the launch communications for the project and were available for information sharing, they used their position in Westminster Homelessness Partnership to broaden the reach of the intervention.

Final thoughts

Funding from the Transformation Fund has helped in two ways. Firstly, WLM built on their own expertise and approach. Secondly, they were able to develop a winter programme that was not reliant on communal spaces and was much more than just a bed for the night.

Overall, the winter service went as planned. Unlike during the pandemic, where lockdowns put restrictions on the availability of hotels, the choice available during the period of this project was closer to the model they had envisaged - enabling people to have more choice over their accommodation.

Harbour Housing – Cornwall (Capital)

The context

Harbour Housing provides a wide range of tailored services all with the aim of helping people who are either homeless or facing homelessness transform their lives. This includes supported accommodation, a dedicated EVA (Empowered, Valued, Aware) Project property for women fleeing domestic abuse or sexual violence, an outreach project and seasonal cold weather provision.

Harbour Housing's aim is to provide people with a home rather than just a roof over their heads, and to work with people to enable them to overcome the barriers that lie between them and a life of independent living.

What was funded

Harbour Housing received a Capital grant (£97,500) to transform property they already owned, 'Little Cosgarne', from a 5-bed shared facilities accommodation into a purpose-designed facility of 7 self-, disability-friendly units.

Project administration and support for residents was funded separately, through the Cornwall Council Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Grant.

What they did

Originally a five bed HMO with a shared bathroom and shared kitchen, Little Cosgarne now has seven en-suite rooms, two of which are fully accessible for wheelchair users, and an additional accessible kitchen. The two communal kitchens are being used by residents, carers and volunteers to prepare meals. The conversion has made the existing accommodation more suitable for people experiencing multiple disadvantage and rough sleeping. It is also COVID-secure to enable comfortable self-isolation should the need arise. A significant amount of

building work took place to transform the layout of the property but there were no changes to the superstructure.

Work on the property was completed and residents moved in, before Christmas 2021. The match-funded support enabled Little Cosgarne to offer the two adapted rooms specifically for those with mobility issues who would otherwise be in hospital, and the other beds for those being discharged from, or frequently using, mental health services. The service was able to better meet the needs of people who would otherwise be rough sleeping or 'bed-blocking' in physical or mental health wards.

To find out more about the services, take a look at these videos https://youtu.be/Vx_UpIpXTBc & <https://youtu.be/Ct9cxc74PbE>

Through this grant-funded work, 57 people were supported. Prior to receiving this grant, Harbour Housing had 87 single night bed spaces available. The funding allowed additional bed spaces to be created, and positive outcomes including 29 people being supported into new temporary accommodation and 14 people being supported into new settled accommodation, following their stay at Little Cosgarne.

Financial Sustainability

Harbour Housing have been able to use the initial service transformation to access further funding. They plan to maintain the service through commissioning:

- They developed their partnership with the local authority who commission the Out of Hospital Care Model (also known as Hospital Discharge Service) and currently commission the support for the 7 units at Little Cosgarne, as well as 6 hospital discharge beds.
- Work with the LA will continue after September 2022. Adult Social Care may also commission this type of service as an element of their 'Empowering Independence' service for people experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage.
- They are seeking to develop more holistic services by building relationships with commissioners from the Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence departments of the local authority. Conversations have started about working towards commissioning that is most suitable and cost-effective for people experiencing homelessness with the most significant multiple disadvantage.

Greater interest from key agencies

- Partnership working is crucial to how Harbour Housing support is delivered. In this project they experienced even greater co-location of services and interest from key agencies.

"It is notoriously difficult to engage mental health practitioners or physical health specialists with their clients, however because news of the facility's development was shared across agencies and they were seen to be addressing health as well as homelessness needs, these barriers have begun to be less insurmountable."

The project has been successful in, and shown the importance of, bringing together professionals across services and breaking down barriers between traditional service siloes.

Upskilling and expanding offer of support

- Harbour Housing used the grant as leverage for another application for a Clinically Extremely Vulnerable grant via the local authority. This enabled them to recruit a Registered Manager to take them through the CQC registration process in order to create a service for people experiencing multiple disadvantage requiring packages of care.
- The expertise and training of the Registered Manager, and their ability to offer professional development opportunities to those seeking work in the homelessness and care sectors, was seen as a great advantage of this role:

“There is a shortage of carers in Cornwall, but further to this, there is a huge lack of existing carers who are willing to work with our client group due to substance use. With their expertise and training around working with complex needs, they can offer opportunities to people wanting to work in the homelessness and care sectors and up skill a workforce that is empathetic, supported and consistent so that needs can be met and hospital admissions, homelessness and other negative outcomes can be further reduced.”

What they learned

Project management

- Harbour Housing staff members found their project management skills were put to the test and saw the importance of a range of project management controls and skills e.g. aligning multiple stakeholders, budgeting and meeting grant conditions, sourcing appropriate contractors, running the capital project alongside managing the organisation, managing project priorities, general logistics, quality control, planning time, managing time delays and handling paperwork.

Delays

- COVID-19 caused a delay to the work due to contractors testing positive. They also experienced some delays with materials such as plasterboard, fortunately both of these challenges only delayed their predicted end-date by 6 weeks.

Final thoughts

Harbour Housing hope that what they are developing is a replicable model that may support other areas to re-design existing services for people experiencing homelessness to cope with post-pandemic pressure on the NHS and offer hope to people experiencing physical and mental health needs. King’s College is evaluating their Out of Hospital Care Model. Dr. Michelle Cornes, Senior Research Fellow said:

"Little Cosgarne can be held up as a 'blueprint' for step-down services nationally, offering high quality accommodation that is accessible and homely thus maximising people's chances of making a full recovery after a stay in hospital."

NOAH Enterprise – Luton (Revenue)

The context

NOAH Enterprise works across Bedfordshire and supports individuals who are sleeping rough, experiencing homelessness or social exclusion or who have fallen into poverty. NOAH's aim is to enable people to reach their potential by using as many support services and areas of NOAH as necessary. Through their award-winning Luton Welfare Centre, Outreach Team, Housing First, EUSS advice, EEP Housing, Cold Weather Shelter, and Training & Employment Academy, NOAH offers a stable place where people can begin to rebuild their lives. They are also a founding member of the Luton Homelessness Partnership, a collaborative of community organisations dedicated to improving services for people experiencing homelessness in Luton by working together to find and advocate for systemic solutions.

What was funded

The Revenue grant (£79,982) funded rental of a 5-bedroom shared house and support for the residents. Due to challenges procuring a property within the short timeframe, for the first month NOAH spot purchased hotel rooms for clients coming into the Transformation Fund project.

From December 2021, NOAH rented the 5-bedroom house, on a residential street 1 mile from Luton town centre.

What they did

This was the second year receiving a grant from the Transformation Fund. The project aimed to take a different approach, applying the principles of Trauma-Informed Care.

Some of the people supported by the project had limited access to public funds and were unable to go to other providers due to a mixture of immigration issues and previous exclusions from services. The support team placed a strong emphasis on building relationships gradually with people by talking to them positively and showing interest in their wellbeing. By investing time in getting to know them they were able to work with people who had been traditionally seen as 'hard to engage'. It was important that the support team found out what was important to that individual, their own goals and aspirations.

People interested in staying in the project were asked to show their interest by attending a NOAH service that was relevant to them (such as an ESOL class or the job club). They were then referred into the property.

During the day the residents received ongoing intensive support from NOAH services including the welfare centre and training and employment academy. The support team worked hard to resolve immigration issues where possible and enabled people to access public funds. In some cases, this then enabled people to move into accommodation with other providers.

The team placed a strong emphasis on ensuring each person received a positive welcome and came back to a peaceful, clean and tidy home. There were facilities for people to cook hot meals together and have a safe single bedroom to stay in. Overnight there was a security guard present between 11pm and 9am to ensure that there were no disturbances or concerns. The security guards also received an induction on how to work positively with the residents and avoid conflict. After 2 months, the project reduced the security staff as it was felt they were not needed, this despite the project housing people many of whom had been evicted from other projects.

The team worked proactively to create a positive shared house. This involved keeping open communication with residents to resolve any potential issues and talk through how to live in a shared space. People came from different cultures and some had no experience of communal living. The team found that by positively explaining how to share, residents lived well together.

As a result of this grant, 5 additional bed spaces were created. 11 residents stayed in the project over the winter period, 7 people were supported into further temporary accommodation, and 4 people were supported into settled accommodation. Some were able to access accommodation with other providers and some moved into other NOAH projects.

What they learned

Positive impact of a trauma-informed approach

- The staff took a trauma-informed approach and this had positive results. This involved taking time to build relationships with residents at their own pace and following their own goals and aspirations.
- The team worked flexibly with people at their own pace. For example, if the person wanted to engage with substance misuse services, the team could facilitate this in the way that best suited them whether this was having the worker attend the shared-house, setting up a meeting in town or attending an appointment at the clinic.
- The team took a person-centred and relational approach, explaining how things would work in the house and why people might need to behave in a certain way to live well with others. This worked and there was little to no conflict in the house during the project.
- This approach allowed the team to work successfully with a group of people who had previously been viewed as 'hard to engage'.

Staff training and induction

- Some staff were trained in a trauma-informed approach, and this was useful. Ideally more staff could have undertaken this training.
- Staff were inducted into the approach that the project wished to take and worked consistently.

- The project also relied on agency staff, but it would have been preferable to have more full-time staff so that residents could all have a consistent named key worker.

Working positively with security staff

- Security staff can sometimes be seen as institutional, and many residents have negative histories with police and other enforcement officers. Having security staff therefore had the potential to be re-traumatising.
- NOAH gave security staff a thorough induction on how to engage positively with the residents. They were also given the Manager's number to call if needed for input and support. This reassured the team and enabled two incidents to be resolved without calling the police.
- The team also worked with residents to explain the role of the security team and ensure everyone was clear on this. This helped to reassure residents about their presence in the project.

Communal living

- There were no incidents with residents living in a shared house despite most having been excluded from other services. This was felt to be because staff worked positively with each individual to facilitate how to share the house well and resolve issues.
- Living in a shared house proved to be a positive experience and, in some cases, helped residents to be accepted into housing with other providers as it demonstrated that they could live positively with others.

Successful move-on

- Part of moving people on successfully was working hard to resolve immigration issues and ensure that people had access to public funds.
- A positive reference from the shared house helped people to secure move on housing as prior to this many of the residents had been excluded from other services.
- Staff listened to individual concerns. For example, one resident was not utilising her room as she wanted to be closer to her partner in town. The project was able to find her accommodation in the area that she was asking for and she has been able to maintain this since.
- The service also commented that "when there is space to breathe many clients were able to find work and economical move on accommodation under their own accord."

Final thoughts

NOAH were pleased to have had the opportunity to run a Transformation Project for the 2nd year in a row.

"We recognise the vast difference between the dignity, quality and impact of these services."

Maundy Relief – Hyndburn (Revenue)

The context

Maundy Relief offers a range of wraparound support for those experiencing homelessness, poverty and ill health. They offer an emergency night shelter, support into the private rented housing sector, community lunches, counselling, help with welfare benefits and health advice.

In previous years Maundy Relief used a large meeting room as a communal night shelter. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, they have been using their counselling rooms as single bedrooms and, with support from the Transformation Fund in 2020 they were able to install male and female bathrooms for use by overnight guests. This made the sleeping accommodation self-contained overnight.

What was funded

The Revenue grant (£27,300) was to expand capacity in their night shelter. The grant was used to increase staffing hours, enabling guests to attend earlier, stay later and have a hot meal. By increasing staff time, they could also to work with guests to help them secure settled accommodation.

What they did

Maundy Relief increased their staffing to cover twilight hours as the lack of evening and early morning access was a barrier for those who may have otherwise accessed the service. This was particularly true of females who slept rough, who told Maundy Relief they would sometimes accept the offer of unsafe accommodation rather than walk the streets until they could access the shelter.

The grant also ensured they had capacity to maintain their single room accommodation offer and not revert to communal sleeping which had been their model pre-COVID 19.

Their emergency accommodation offer was enhanced through additional resource being allocated to their private rental access scheme (The Key Scheme) to increase capacity to source properties for those using the night shelter and to provide intensive move-in support and long-term tapering support based on the needs and wishes of the tenant.

Funding was also awarded for cleaning materials and bedding. This ensured that high levels of cleanliness were maintained as part of their enhanced infection control and hygiene regime, ever more important due to the pandemic.

55 people were supported because of the work the grant enabled. Prior to the grant on any given night, Maundy had 4 communal bed spaces available. As a result of this grant, 1 additional bed space was created and the accommodation became self-contained. Their outcomes included 12 people being supported into temporary accommodation, and 15 people supported into settled accommodation.

What they learned

Challenges in sourcing appropriate accommodation

- Maundy found that privately rented accommodation became ever more difficult to source locally due to lack of availability and rents rising beyond the Local Housing Allowance.
- They concentrated their effort more on sourcing supported move on accommodation.

"We have been greatly helped in this by the opening of a new male supported HMO locally and the efficient working of the local A Bed Every Night offer".

- Maundy Relief are continuing to source private rented accommodation for guests, although this has become more time consuming. Guests need support to claim, as a full benefit check and application for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is needed in many cases because there are shortfalls in deposits.

Acceleration of no-fault evictions

- Maundy commented on how 'no fault' evictions are gaining pace. They believe this is due in part to the very buoyant local housing market.
- One of the consequences of this is further pressure on social housing not only because of immediate housing need but also because those evicted are now wary of the private rented sector and want stability.

The 'Key Scheme' approach

- There was a commitment not to discharge people from emergency accommodation back to rough sleeping.
- They have a small pool of private landlords and agencies who are willing to accommodate guests on the understanding that they will provide open-ended tenancy support including benefit advice and help with applications including DHP and LA housing support funds.
- Despite the challenges with obtaining tenancies at LHA rates, they continue to move people on, a testament to their committed staff.
- The Key Scheme remains a core strand of their move on support along with referral into ABEN (A Bed Every Night), RSAP (Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme) and supported hostel accommodation.

Staffing challenges

- Their night shelter now operates 7 days per week and extending the opening hours meant they had to expand the team quickly to ensure proper staffing.

- Maundy had difficulty recruiting to these ad hoc roles, and ended up using existing staff on expanded hours, however they felt this worked well.

Enhanced offer for women

- In 2019 they were still offering only communal sleeping for their night shelter. It wasn't working and meant males were sleeping in their office space when female guests were present. They only had one bathroom and no shower facilities in the building.
- The move to single person overnight rooms has had a very positive impact on the service Maundy could offer to women - they now have their own room, single sex bathroom facilities and a female overnight worker.
- The number of women not attending the service has reduced for a number of reasons, including a much more positive response when potential guests are shown their accommodation.
- They have successfully accommodated women domestic abuse survivors, who normally came to Maundy when there were no available refuge spaces. These women then have a move-on plan put in place.
- Maundy have successfully supported all the women they have worked with to move on to a variety of places including refuges, ABEN, RSAP and PRS tenancies.

Importance of flexibility

- It was observed that having up to date and reliable local knowledge about the housing market and other services enabled them to adapt their offer appropriately as needed
- By increasing their length of stay, depending on the needs of the person, it meant they could provide more enhanced support to those who required it. It has enabled the process to feel more person-centred and respectful for guests.
- Positive outcomes for guests were gained by extending their opening hours for the night shelter. It significantly contributed to a reduction in people not showing up.

Final thoughts

Maundy understand the challenges facing the people they support, notably surrounding accommodation. Positive outcomes were received via their 'Key Scheme' approach, and they plan to develop this further. Maundy have experienced the positive impact of flexibility, specifically with extending length of stays. A person-centred approach is core to their working, and they would like to develop this moving forward.

King's Arms Project – Bedford (Capital & Revenue)

The context

King's Arms Project work across Bedfordshire to support clients out of homelessness, disadvantage and isolation. They were established in 1989 and registered as a charity in 2011. They support over 650 beneficiaries annually through: a Night Shelter, Rough-sleeper Outreach, No-Recourse to Public Funds service, nine Move-on Houses, meals, Employment & Life-skills courses. They support prison-leavers with access to accommodation, Syrian refugees to integrate and learn English, and offer mentoring across all their services resulting in increased confidence, enhanced social skills, and ability to cope with stressful situations.

What was funded

To add an additional 3 extra bedrooms to a property currently used as a shared house for 8 individuals with low support needs, and to increase staffing capacity to full-time cover.

What they did

The two grants they received (Revenue: £61,094, Capital: £83,299) enabled King's Arms Project to transform and fully staff a property they currently lease with floating support and reconfigure it to enable them to run an innovative hybrid service offering direct emergency access and longer-term residential support under the same roof. They were able to preserve the privacy of those who consider the house to be their home whilst opening their doors to those who need emergency support.

Some beds were one night 'direct access only' with the option of subsequently taking a short/medium room in the same property whilst suitable accommodation was sourced. The service was staffed 24/7 and referrals came from their own outreach team, another commissioned service in the town and directly from the council. Meals were made available along with facilities for laundry. Support was given for substance misuse issues, settled status paperwork/immigration issues and employment/training.

Seventy-five people were supported through the work the grant enabled. On a typical night before this, King's Arms had 39 bed spaces available. As a result of this grant, 11 additional bed spaces were created, 46 people were supported into further temporary accommodation and 5 people were supported into settled accommodation.

What they learned

Benefits of a hybrid model

- The reconfiguration of the building allowed King's Arms Project to segment the property as needed based on demand.
- They wanted to have some beds available for emergency access whilst still maintaining the longer-term bed spaces for residents. They felt it could be quite disruptive for people who were 'living' in the property if there was a constant turnover of other residents in and around their living space.
- They therefore created a flow in the building which meant if they wanted to they could have a unit of three, and two units of four, separate from each other by restricting

access through secure doors. Each area having its own bathroom facilities, meaning they could maximise the use of all the bed spaces according to need at the time.

- It also meant if they had a client referred for emergency access and they needed to find secure more permanent accommodation the next day there was the potential for them to stay under the same roof and move into a different bedroom while maintaining consistency of staff support and address (availability allowing).

“It developed nicely into an effective way of providing immediate support to the most vulnerable over the winter and working well with the council to get those people into more suitable accommodation rapidly. Being able to give stable rooms in the same house as the emergency bed spaces was a new thing for us and I was delighted with how that worked. It meant less disruption for clients and continuity of support from staff where necessary.”

Building complications

- There were two aspects of the project that meant delivery took longer than anticipated. One was the speed at which works could be completed, and the other was the level of planning and admin required in the background.
- King’s Arms Project were trying to complete the project in a busy time for the building trade, so getting high quality builders with enough time in their schedule was difficult. Their builders’ schedule meant work stopped and started more than they wanted.
- The nature of the bid process meant that accurately pricing up the works was difficult, particularly with changing requirements in the town for rough sleepers, and wanting to ensure the property changes were suitable for long-term use.

Planning permission

- The initial idea to increase the number of bedrooms in their existing HMO property was expected to be straightforward and only involve some internal building work and HMO sign-off. However, it emerged that local planning regulations required planning consent to create extra bedrooms and they have since been on a lengthy process of getting planning approved.
- They made use of retrospective planning rules so that they were able to use the bedrooms during the winter period, and once permission is granted then the long-term benefits will be clear in that more long-term beds will be available all year around.
- Kings Arms Project learnt that the amount of work required to bring the project to its full conclusion was not as straightforward as initially viewed by them, and the importance of knowing local planning regulations from the start:

“Had we known planning permission was needed, we could have employed a consultant to assist with the process and avoided some delays. Were we to be keen on attempting another project like this, we would need to know a lot sooner of a bids’ success so that all background work could be happening to keep the project on track.”

Staff recruitment and rotas

- Given the short-term nature of the funding it was hard to recruit specifically for related roles.
- Establishing the number and patterns of staff required to deliver the service took some time.
- Through developing their staffing support to 24/7 and extending the accommodation offer, they have been able to grow their expertise and ability to manage a variety of needs.

Move on and longer term support

- They have also achieved a smoother pathway with the council for getting people out of an emergency bed space and into more permanent accommodation quickly.
- Their night shelter staff were used to only having residents with them overnight previously and their focus would be on finding move on options and dealing with immediate challenges of someone straight off the streets. Incorporating the longer term beds in the same property gave them the opportunity to build relationships with clients in a different way and work with them on longer term issues such as motivating them to attend medical appointments, be more hands on to help with employability or training needs.

Final thoughts

Moving forward King's Arms would look for simple and effective property solutions to providing emergency accommodation without incurring a heavy staff presence. King's Arms spoke highly of the fund, commenting that *"Without this additional funding we could not have run this service in the way we did"*.

What We Do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign

for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

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**Let's End Homelessness
Together**

