

## **Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission**

**27th February 2024**

### **Report of Members' Site Visits to Supported Accommodation for Single Homeless People with Complex Needs**

As part of its wider investigation into the provision of supported accommodation for single homeless people with complex needs in Hackney, Commission Members undertook site visits to supported accommodation schemes in London Borough of Camden and London Borough of Hackney.

The aim of the site visits was to gain a further understanding of the delivery of supported accommodation and housing-related support across comparable boroughs, as well as to hear about some of the experiences of service providers and users.

The Commission visited two schemes in Camden, both of which were managed directly by the local authority. The Commission also visited two schemes in Hackney, both of which were managed by St Mungo's.

The site visits were attended by Members of the Commission, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Needs & Homelessness and Council Officers.

Insights from the site visits are summarised below.

#### **Holmes Road Studios & Mount Pleasant Hostel, London Borough of Camden - 14th November 2023**

- Camden has over 743 bed spaces across 16 hostels run by a variety of providers including the local authority. This encourages flexibility across the pathway to ensure people are suitably housed. The schemes visited provided for 60 (Holmes Road) and 50 (Mount Pleasant) bed spaces.
- Both provide accommodation for single homeless people with ongoing support needs including substance misuse, mental health, offending behaviour and rough sleeping.
- Typical lengths of stay vary depending on the individual's circumstances, from four weeks to up to two years.
- Both offer resettlement support and advice to help residents find and sustain appropriate longer-term housing, which includes both social housing and private sector housing (although 6/10 are placed in private rented accommodation).
- All hostel staff have received psychologically informed training, ensuring that hostel-based work takes account of the effects of adversity or trauma on clients, and their resulting psychological and emotional needs.
- Accommodation is staffed 24 hours a day, and provides for mobility access, en-suite toilet and shower provision, shared kitchen facilities, communal garden/courtyard areas, medical rooms and multi-purpose rooms for a range of activities including recreation, learning and support.

- Accommodation is separated into living clusters depending on individual circumstances and experiences. For example, both schemes visited have separate clusters for women that have experienced domestic abuse and these have different limits on visitors.
- Visiting policies vary, but typically 1 to 2 visitors are allowed between the hours of 12-9pm. Visitors are provided with fob keys that only allow access to specified areas e.g. the host's room and shared facilities/communal areas. In order to ensure the safety and security of everybody living within the accommodation, all requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### Mare Street Hostel & Lansdowne Drive, St Mungo's Hackney - 17th January 2024

- The schemes provide for 68 bed spaces at Mare Street and 18 bed spaces at Lansdowne Drive.
- Both provide accommodation for single homeless people with ongoing support needs including substance misuse, mental health, offending behaviour and rough sleeping. Mare Street provided for clients with high support needs, whereas Lansdowne Drive provided for clients with medium to low support needs.
- Typical lengths of stay were 18 months to 2 years, but varied and were recovery focused.
- Resettlement support and advice to help residents find and sustain appropriate longer-term housing was offered, however those with higher complex needs are harder to place as local move-on options are limited and not always suitable.
- Hostel staff received psychologically informed training, and a complex needs worker worked at Mare Street. There is also an in-house psychologist who works between St Mungo's accommodation in Hackney. However, not all staff are equipped to deal with the increasingly complex needs of residents.
- Hospital discharge is an issue locally due to an acute lack of beds at the Homerton - meaning residents with high support needs are increasingly presenting to St Mungo's for supported accommodation. The short-term nature of funding and commissioning made it difficult for St Mungo's to plan service delivery and ultimately to support these residents/increase bed spaces to meet demand.
- Mare Street is separated into two living clusters depending on individual circumstances and experiences, and there are two emergency bed spaces in which residents can stay for up to five days.
- Lansdowne Drive is separated into three living clusters, with residents separated depending on their support needs and gender. Residents with medium support needs typically begin their stay in the larger clusters, before moving on to the self-contained units to support their adaptation to independent living.
- Increasing maintenance costs (due to inflation/labour and material shortages) and security costs (due to increasing complex needs of residents) are an issue for St Mungo's, which did ultimately have an effect on service delivery. If costs continue to increase this may become even more acute.
- Mare Street provides for shared kitchen facilities, shared toilet and shower provision, communal areas, an IT suite and a music room. Mare Street also works in partnership with the Greenhouse day centre to provide health services.

- Lansdowne Drive provides for shared kitchen facilities, shared toilet and shower provision, wash facilities in self-contained units, a shared garden and multi-purpose conservatory.
- Mare Street allows up to 2 visitors per day, who are in some cases allowed to stay overnight. Lansdowne Drive has visiting hours of 10am-9pm, limited to the first six residents to request visitors. In order to ensure the safety and security of everybody living within the accommodation, all requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Officer Contact**

Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer (Tel: 020 8356 4316)

[craig.player@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:craig.player@hackney.gov.uk)