

21<sup>st</sup> March 2022

Report for information

## Homelessness Reduction Board Progress Report

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<p><b>Summary:</b></p>	<p>In September 2020 the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) approved the establishment of a Somerset Homelessness Reduction Board (HRB) to sit within its governance framework. The inaugural HRB meeting took place in April 2021 with the first true activity focussed meeting taking place in June 2021 where it agreed it's terms of reference – attached at Appendix A.</p> <p>Despite the inevitable diversion of focus created by local government reorganisation and the establishment of the Integrated Care System, the Board has made good progress with several initiatives under its remit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the Better Futures programme during 2020 left the Somerset partnership with a clear plan to improve the future outcomes for rough sleepers and other homeless individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage and the Board has been managing progress with this.</li> <li>• Development of a dashboard to assess delivery of key projects and overall achievement of the aim to reduce homelessness.</li> <li>• During 2021 the Homeless Nursing Team which was established following a HEPP funded Pilot has now become a permanent team within SFT linking with existing wider health promotion activity.</li> </ul> <p>This report provides an update for the SHWB on the progress with these initiatives and the impact they are having for homeless people.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>	<p><b>That the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board:</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Receives for information an update on the work of the Homelessness Reduction Board and continues to support its activity.</b></li> <li>ii. <b>Ensures its members contribute positively to the Better Futures agenda, including facilitating the cultural change necessary to make the Creative Solutions approach effective.</b></li> </ul>								
<p><b>Reasons for recommendations:</b></p>	<p>To provide an update on the work of the HRB since the HWBB approved its establishment in September 2020.</p> <p>Supporting the work of the HRB will continue to highlight the system wide role the board ha, in Somerset: to coordinate, monitor and lead across all areas related to homelessness reduction activity and in particular the Better Futures programme.</p>								
<p><b>Links to The Improving Lives Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>Please tick the Improving Lives priorities influenced by the delivery of this work</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>A County infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Fairer life chances and opportunity for all</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> </table> <p>Homelessness is recognised as a health and wellbeing issue. People who experience rough sleeping also experience some of the most severe health inequalities and report much poorer health than the general population. Many have co-occurring mental ill health, drug and alcohol dependence and physical health needs, and have experienced significant trauma in their lives.</p> <p>The Somerset Homelessness Reduction Board vision that 'By 2027 all elements of local government, in partnership with the voluntary sector, business and wider society, will be working together to ensure that everyone in Somerset has access to secure and suitable housing with <b>appropriate support</b> so that no-one should have to experience homelessness or rough</p>	<b>A County infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services</b>		<b>Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment</b>		<b>Fairer life chances and opportunity for all</b>	✓	<b>Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer</b>	✓
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<b>Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer</b>	✓								

	<p>sleeping again' and subsequent workplan directly supports these priorities.</p>
<p><b>Financial, Legal, HR, Social value and partnership Implications:</b></p>	<p>The activity managed by the HRB creates social value by improving the lives of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. By reducing the impact of homelessness on our communities, through making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring, we will also reduce the impact on public funding streams.</p> <p>The HRB membership reflects the statutory (housing, health and social care) and VCSE sectors and partners are engaged in collaborative delivery of the HRB programmes. Whilst clients and others with lived experience of homelessness are not yet represented on the Board, engagement with them is already informing its activity.</p> <p>There are no specific financial, legal or HR implications.</p>
<p><b>Equalities Implications:</b></p>	<p>It is widely understood that homeless people, particularly rough sleepers and other individuals who have experienced multiple dis-advantage, are disadvantaged in relation to access to statutory services. The activity managed by the Board seeks to reduce these inequalities and improve health and wellbeing outcomes for these households and individuals.</p> <p>A comprehensive equalities impact assessment was completed to inform the development of the Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-23 which has direct relevance to the work of the HRB.</p> <p>The equalities impact of the work of the HRB was referred to in a report to HWBB in September 2020 when it was reported that the HRB will review the Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and accompanying Action Plan. Any revisions to the action plan will need to be informed by the existing EIA and any future refinement of this. In addition, there is ongoing evidence gathering, e.g. Vulnerability Pathways and Health Needs Assessment. Both of these pieces of work will provide a rich source of equalities relevant data to inform the development of specific proposals/future commissioning arrangements.</p>
<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b></p>	<p>Covid has presented significant opportunities to support the cohort of homeless and vulnerably housed adults in Somerset – the learning from which we need to understand and use to influence future provision.</p>

Risks:

- How we will affect system change in a local climate where we have LGR, ICS and central government lead housing policy such as RSI 22-25 which is district council led.
- Shortage of and future provision of single person accommodation in a housing market lacking stock

This is linked to:

- Provision of suitable floating support for those adults who require support once they have moved on – for their tenancy but also their health, social and community needs
- Ensuring that existing and new health provision is considered in a system wide manner and well-coordinated to ensure equity in the offer across Somerset.

## **1. Background**

In September 2020 the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) approved the establishment of a Somerset Homelessness Reduction Board (HRB) to sit within its governance framework. The HRB met for the first time in April 2021 and its terms of reference are attached at Appendix B.

Membership includes key sector representatives from statutory and voluntary organisations who work with those who are homeless (or at risk of becoming homeless) or rough sleeping. All board members are sufficiently senior in their own organisations to take strategic decisions (including budget / commissioning decisions) and ensure that actions they commit to on behalf of their organisations are delivered. Meetings are held quarterly.

Despite the inevitable diversion of focus created by local government reorganisation and the establishment of the Integrated Care System, the Board has made good progress with several initiatives under its remit:

- The development of the Better Futures programme during 2020 left the Somerset partnership with a clear plan to improve the future outcomes for rough sleepers and other homeless individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage and the Board has been managing progress with this.
- The establishment of the pilot Creative Solutions team in SWT for adults experiencing complexity and for whom the existing system does not work.
- During 2021 the Homeless Nursing Team which was established following a HEPP funded Pilot has now become a permanent team within SFT linking with existing wider health promotion activity. The team is seen as vitally important not only for the clients but also as a catalyst/hub from which to develop a wider, coordinated needs led homeless health offer across Somerset.

This report provides an update for the HWBB on the progress with these initiatives and the impact they are having for homeless people.

## **2. Better Futures**

The Board has been monitoring progress with the Better Futures programme action plan. The plan covers six themes:

- Early help and prevention
- Commissioning homes and support
- Appropriate use of short-term supported accommodation
- Access to permanent homes
- Sustainable tenancies
- Leadership, learning and governance.

A dashboard summarising the status of the theme action plans as at January 2022 is attached at Appendix B. This demonstrates that good progress is being made against most of the key actions but that there is slippage in some areas.

**Early help and prevention** - Helen Price (Assistant Director Children's Social Care) is member of the HRB which ensures that links between the work of the HRB and P2I for example are fully considered

SCC and districts councils are currently providing joint funding towards the delivery of the P2I innovation pilots – the results of these pilots will be reported to the HRB and will eventually be used to inform future commissioning arrangements.

Individual case studies within the P2I service are being considered within the Better Futures 'commissioning theme' (see below) to help improve pathways and associated support.

In November 2021 we provided Helen Price with a snapshot regarding those families in Temporary Accommodation.

At that time there were 137 families across Somerset who were vulnerably housed in some sort of temporary accommodation.

Whilst housing teams have reported that they consider the needs of the family, when processing housing/homelessness applications, analysis conducted by Emily Harding-Moody at the First Response MASH/Early Help Hub shows that currently less than 1% of referrals to Children's Social Care are known to have a 'housing' origin.

Despite the low number of referrals, we know that over 80% of those received at both Level 3 (FIS) and Level 4 (Safeguarding) are of a good standard and are accepted by Children's Social Care.

As part of the Better Futures work theme around Early Help and Prevention we have linked with SSCB and promoted their training offer to all HRB member organisations. This still requires further work and there is no doubt that the pressures of Covid on all workforces and their capacity to do additional training has impacted on this.

Over the coming period we will be conducting targeted work with Registered Housing Providers to increase; awareness, training and skills around Early Help / Prevention.

Under the **commissioning** theme, the plan is now progressing at pace with the needs and supply analysis complete and co-production sessions having commenced. The desired outcomes from the co-production phase are:

- i. A greater focus on the barriers to people moving on from supported accommodation and a whole system approach to overcoming these. This could free up sufficient supported accommodation for those who need it.
- ii. A shift in the levels of support available in some settings to enable those with higher levels of need and specialist support needs to be accommodated safely.
- iii. Provision of treatment accommodation to support those who want to recover from drug and alcohol misuse.
- iv. Review of the need for and options to deliver step-down accommodation for those discharged from hospital, pending appropriate resolution of their housing needs.
- v. An increase in the number of homes that are accessible for people with mobility difficulties.
- vi. A shift towards more accommodation with self-contained bathroom and kitchen facilities.

At the first session in January 2022 commissioners and providers worked together to generate plans for delivering these outcomes. The first outcome is complex, requiring greater access to suitable homes, including engagement with private landlords to encourage them to let to homeless people, as well as system and communication changes, such as management of expectations about availability of accommodation and resolving the disincentive to find employment whilst living in supported accommodation due to the support service charges applied. A task and finish group is being established to work on this outcome.

The potential to commission treatment accommodation to support those who want to recover from drug and alcohol misuse is being considered by a small group including commissioners, the dual diagnosis service (in Somerset Foundation Trust) and the drug and alcohol service (commissioned from Turning Point). It will explore the way current services can work together using existing resources to support homeless accommodation providers; and better understand the needs for treatment accommodation – the latter will build on the data provided by providers of supported accommodation for homeless people.

Step-down from hospital accommodation: For those over the age of 55 step-down accommodation is available and allocated through the weekly hospital discharge meeting involving; housing, health and social care. Options for alternative provision of step-down accommodation for younger people leaving hospital and requiring care and support to regain independence are currently being explored.

Plans for achieving the other outcomes are being developed between providers and district council housing teams. In Somerset West and Taunton, because of the imperative to move people living at Canonsgrove by March 2023, a plan had already been developed and good progress is being made. Currently only 38 people remain, against a target of 40 by the end of March 2022. In South Somerset plans are progressing for the replacement of the Pathways hostel with a decommissioned care home, representing better quality accommodation for those needing temporary housing.

In addition to the commissioning activity described above, the specific requirement to accommodate prison leavers has been recently reconsidered due to the ending of the Positive Lives arrangements. Julian House currently provides 21 units of dispersed accommodation across Somerset (12 SSDC, 7 SWT and 2 Sedgemoor) under a Positive Lives contract. From April 2022 this arrangement will be extended with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Probation jointly managing the contract. At this point it is intended to formally recommission the accommodation and support service, with a new contract to commence from October 2022.

Under the **appropriate use of short-term supported accommodation** theme, a new multi-agency team has been established, the Creative Solutions group, initially focussed on the Somerset West and Taunton area to support the decommissioning of Canonsgrove. The team comprises housing, health and social care practitioners from both statutory and VCSE sectors and has been meeting weekly since August 2022. The meetings are facilitated by Second Step as part of their countywide contract and a strengths-based approach to assessment of needs and solution generation.

The approach and the way it has worked in recent months is currently being evaluated by the team and recommendations for improving this moving forward being developed. Initially there was a lack of engagement by some agencies and whilst attendance has improved over time, there continues to be some rigidity in adherence to established rules, rather than working creatively as mandated by the HRB.

A task and finish group is being established to consider the learning from the Creative Solutions team approach, together with reviewing the arrangements in place across the rest of the county, and developing a proposal for the HRB to consider for a new countywide approach to:

- managing access to and move-on from short term supported accommodation and
- developing and implementing holistic, bespoke solutions for people with the most complex needs.



### 3. Health support:

We have delivered a comprehensive Covid-19 vaccine offer to the wider homeless cohort across Somerset. We commenced the vaccine offer before it was mandated for this cohort with a range of approaches including:

- GP in-reach (Taunton, Canonsgrove and Lindley House)
- GP out-reach (Yeovil, Gateway Church)
- Bespoke NHS Vaccine team sessions at community and accommodation settings and surgeries in all districts.
- Vaccine Centre extended opening (Shepton Mallet)

In January our performance report for Somerset showed:

	Offered	Accepted
Vaccine 1	99% (360 people)	65% (236 people)
Vaccine 2	70% (255 people)	56% (203 people)
Booster	55% (200 people)	30% (111 people)

The population is ever changing – the figures are greater than those currently in accommodation and reflect all known vaccinations delivered to those sleeping rough or vulnerably housed (hostel accommodation etc.)

Our approach to the vaccine and subsequent monitoring has been cited by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities as an example of good practice to other areas within the SW.

We have since held additional evidence based bespoke sessions in Wells, Frome and Yeovil.

**Homeless Nursing Team** pilot – In September the Homeless Nursing Team approach was adopted by Somerset Foundation Trust as business as usual.

Sitting within the Neighbourhoods and Primary Care directorate the team now is now fully staffed.

The team, in addition to supporting individuals within settings, have forged links into the existing network of Health Link Workers in addition to their NHS colleagues and are working in a range of settings. The team have already begun to identify gaps in the system (see oral health and dentistry below).

There is a less complete but developing GP offer across Somerset – the HRB is keen to ensure that this is linked to the wider homeless health offer.

**Oral Health and access to Dentistry** has been identified as a priority area of need.

People who experience homelessness have higher dental treatment needs compared to the general population. However, their use of dental services and levels of treatment completion are low.

There is little to no capacity amongst existing provision to effectively meet the needs of this cohort.

Somerset PH are currently preparing a bid to pilot a bespoke dentistry offer for this cohort which includes an oral health promotion programme and training.

We are drawing on the comprehensive evidence base which exists regarding this and learning from the effective strategies which exist elsewhere in the SW.

The Somerset Health Inequalities Delivery Highlight Report identifies the development of an Oral Health pathway as a mitigation action and we have HEP funding to support this.

Outreach Clinics (homeless and vulnerable groups) and Oral Health Improvement both feature within the current NHS Somerset Action Plan

### **Palliative Care**

Dr Lisa Horman (Specialist GP and HRB Board Member) has commenced work with colleagues from St Margaret's Hospice, Musgrove Park palliative care dept, Better Futures, Adult Social Care, SWT and Mental Health Social Care, to consider the challenges in providing palliative care for homeless people and (at the time of this meeting) have presented case studies and observations, to the HRB, regarding improving access to palliative care for this cohort.

### **Health Protection**

On March 22<sup>nd</sup> operational colleagues from outreach and accommodation settings (hostel, refuge etc.) are attending a Health Protection session organised by Somerset Public Health Team to brief on Sexual health / HIV / and other blood borne viruses, common infections, prevention, Oral health, etc.

Alison Bell (Consultant, Public Health) is briefing the HRB in relation to this on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Clinical Psychology**

The last two years have been a period of opportunity to support the Homeless cohort in Somerset with significant investment from central government in order to fund accommodation and support as part of Everyone In and more recently

Protect and Vaccinate. The Rough Sleeper Initiative (?) funding is now on phase 5 and is supporting Local Authorities develop and implement their housing approaches.

The workforce supporting the client group has primarily been drawn from a range of relatively specialist accommodation providers with high client to staff ratios.

Several settings have experienced traumatic deaths over the period in addition to the long periods of restrictions on social activity and the pressures that this has created for the client group and in turn the workforce.

Feedback from these providers at the recent Better Futures commissioning day identified a gap around access to clinical psychology for staff and clients. Whilst this is available within the commissioned Step Together service and provided to the Homeless Nursing Team it is not a universal offer to all those engaged in supporting this often-complex client group (adults experiencing a combination of homelessness, substance misuse, mental health issues, domestic abuse, and contact with the criminal justice system).

We have a meeting scheduled with Lorna Stewart, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Lead for Colleague Psychological Health (SFT) in early March to progress.

**Dual Diagnosis** – Somerset Foundation Trust’s mental health directorate have agreed to focus on treatment housing and complex needs housing as part of the 2022 dual diagnosis strategy and work with providers and commissioners to meet this objective

#### **4. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community**

The work of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) working group is now within the remit of the HRB. The priorities for the group are conclusion of the GRT accommodation assessment and development of a permanent transit site.

#### **5. Improving Lives Priorities and Outcomes**

##### **Fairer life chances and opportunity for all**

Included in the body of the report.

##### **Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer**

Included in the body of the report

## 6. Consultations undertaken

Better Futures Commissioning sessions involving a wide range of partner agencies and engagement with clients during the development and implementation of the Creative Solutions approach.

## 7. Request of the Board and Board members

To continue to recognise, support and promote the work of the Homelessness Reduction Board.

To support and encourage the development of a co-ordinated and comprehensive health offer for those who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

## 8. Background papers

The Homelessness Reduction Board report to HWBB in September 2020.

## 9. Report Sign-Off

	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign-Off</b>	Relevant Senior Manager / Lead Officer (Director Level)	Trudi Grant	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Cabinet Member / Portfolio Holder (if applicable)	Clare Paul	Click or tap to enter a date.
	Monitoring Officer (Somerset County Council)	Scott Wooldridge	Click or tap to enter a date.