



To: Executive Councillor for Housing
Report by: Frances Swann, Supported Housing Manager
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee 22nd September 2016
Wards affected: All wards

Key Decision No

Supported Housing Update

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report is predominantly for information and at a time of significant change within Housing, Health and Social Care. The Care Act 2014 requires public sector services to work in partnership to deliver preventative services which promote well-being in the community. In recognition that many of the City Council's tenants are vulnerable at some point in their life and during their tenancy, the City Council provides a number of services to its tenants and those in the wider community to ensure that tenancies are sustained and that households remain at home and independent for as long as possible.
- 1.2 This report focuses on the services within the City Council's Supported Housing and includes:
- Temporary Housing for homeless households
 - Independent Living Services for Older People
 - Move on housing for people recovering from a mental health condition
 - Tenancy Sustainment Service (Mental Health)

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 1) Acknowledge the 2015/16 outcomes of the Supported Housing Service.
- 2) To approve a review of the community alarms service

3. Background

- 3.1 Within the City Council's housing stock, there are a number of properties specifically set aside for specialist housing provision, this includes 12 sheltered housing schemes, 83 units of temporary accommodation including 3 hostels, 4 HMO's and 31 dispersed properties for homeless households. There are 22 units of move on accommodation for adults with mental ill health who are either leaving or stepping down from more intensive support services as part of an overall package of rehabilitation or moving towards independence.
- 3.2 In addition to this, in 2014, the City Council entered into a partnership with the County Council to provide support to older people living either in their own homes or in general housing. As part of this arrangement, the city council provides support to a small number of tenants in 4 non council sheltered housing schemes.
- 3.3 City Council is also the main provider of the "lifeline" alarm service in the City which has about 700 customers at any one time. The lifeline service enables, typically but not exclusively, older people to call for emergency help in the event of an emergency ie: a fall and make a significant contribution to the avoidance of unnecessary hospital admissions.
- 3.4 In 2014, in recognition of the impact that poor mental health has on tenancy sustainment, the City Council further invested in two Tenancy Sustainment Officers who work with clients and with agencies to ensure those at risk of homelessness (as a result of their ill health) are supported to access services in order to maintain their tenancy.
- 3.5 Many of the tenants and clients supported by these services will be either homeless, misusing substances or alcohol, victims of abuse, have a mental health condition, and be in poverty or an older person. As the report highlights, many of the clients will have a dual diagnosis ie: they may have physical ill health and alongside other other issues such as personality disorder or some form of addiction.
- 3.6 These support services also help tackle wider determinants such as poverty, isolation and loneliness and falls prevention.
- 3.7 The City Council continues to contribute to the role of the Local Health Partnership by ensuring supported housing services are targeted at those in greatest need.

3.8 This report will highlight the key outcomes achieved across the service.

4.0 Temporary Housing

4.1 There are presently 88 units of temporary accommodation within Cambridge City Council's service. In the last 12m, 155 households moved through temporary accommodation.

4.2 The number of properties varies in accordance with demand and this flexibility has enabled the Housing Advice Service to minimise the use of costly Bed & Breakfast accommodation and to provide basic support for those in greatest need whilst keeping families in their locality, close to their support networks.

4.3 Locally the service differentiates between Emergency Accommodation and is typically very short term (days/weeks) and Temporary Accommodation (weeks/months).

4.4 In 2015/16, 149 households moved through the Emergency Accommodation route with an average stay of 32.2 days. Households placed in Emergency Accommodation have become homeless for a variety of reasons including:

- landlord eviction
- parental eviction
- rough sleeping
- relationship breakdown and domestic abuse

4.5 The majority of households were either single people (40%), single parents with one child (24%) or couples with one child (18%). Almost half of the clients are aged between 16- 29.

4.6 Ethnicity varies, with the largest single groups recorded as White British (55%), Polish (11%) and Turkish (5%). The service is experienced at working with non-white British households and the complexities that language barriers can present.

4.7 Minimising void time in Temporary Housing is a key priority in order to ensure demand for homeless interim accommodation can be met. Over several years now, relet time has been in the region of 7 days and each year the service has a high number of properties which are relet on the same day as they were vacated.

4.8 However, unusually, in the first six months of 2016, demand for temporary housing significantly reduced resulting in an increase in

void times. The service has worked closely with the Housing Advice Team to respond to varying demand and to balance the need for available units v minimising rent loss.

- 4.9 Gross rent charges in temporary housing vary depending on the type of premises and are generally in the region of £150 – 200 per week. Rent arrears vary throughout the year and are closely managed. Arrears levels have been maintained at a consistently low level in the last 5 years and at the end of 2015/16, there were arrears of 0.83% (£4326). This is particularly good given the transient nature of some of the clients, delays and changes in benefit payments of those housed in this type of accommodation and in the likelihood that arrears will accumulate following an unfavourable homeless decision.
- 4.10 Funding for support from the County Council under the former supporting people regime ended in 2015/16. Those with complex support needs are now referred to Centra Support and lower level support continues to be provided by the temporary housing team in order to achieve an efficient turnover and to prepare, particularly young parents in their ability to manage a tenancy.
- 4.11 Many clients are already engaged with other services such as Probation, Street Outreach or Family Intervention workers and staff in Temporary Housing work closely with the key workers of those services to assist clients to maintain their tenancies whilst also promoting partnership working.
- 4.12 Regular drop-in sessions are arranged throughout the year with the Employment Support Worker who offers help with CV's, getting clients into paid or voluntary work, maximising income and benefits, apprenticeships, job applications and interview skills, etc. Temporary Housing staff have successfully referred 9 clients to the service within the last financial year.
- 4.13 Several safeguarding concerns have been raised for both vulnerable adults and children where staff have identified a serious concern, particularly in regard to women experiencing domestic abuse.
- 4.14 During 2015/16 Temporary Housing successfully secured almost £14,000 in grants for those on the lowest incomes with the majority coming from the Cambridge Local Assistance Scheme. Although not recorded for this service, this is in addition to the regular support given to enable households to access a variety of benefits.

5.0 Independent Living Service for Older people

5.1 In 2014, the City Council entered into a partnership with the County Council to provide a housing related support service within the City to all older people, irrespective of tenure. The County pays the City Council £180 000 for this service.

5.2 During 2015/16, this service reached 835 older people.

- 31% self referred
- 30% were referred by family
- 24% were referred from Adult Social Care (services like re-ablement and social workers).

5.3 The main reasons for support are shown below

Figure 1) 65+ referrals

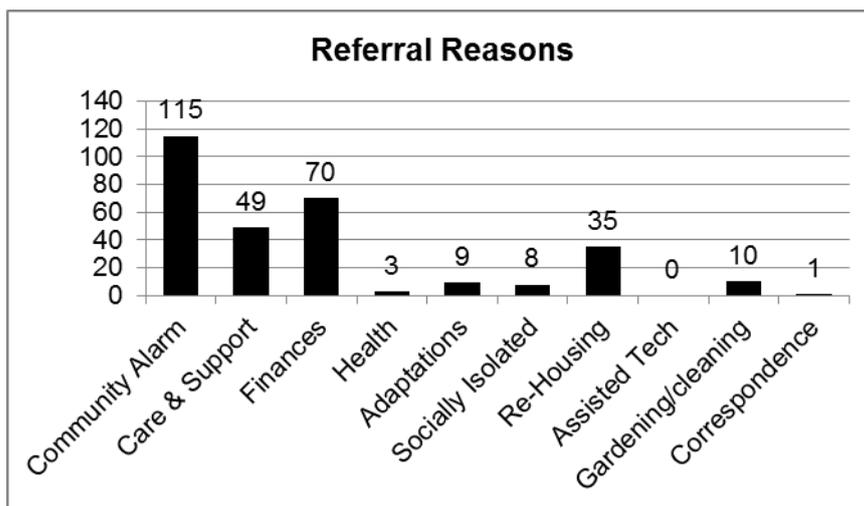
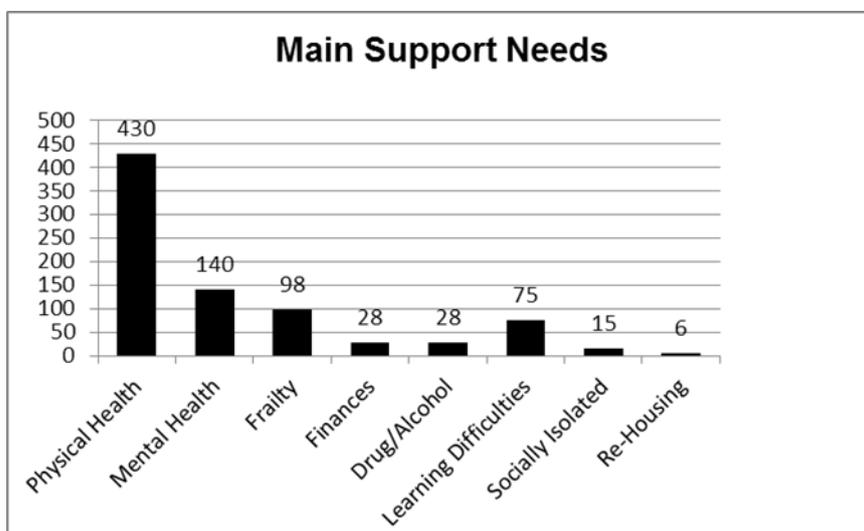
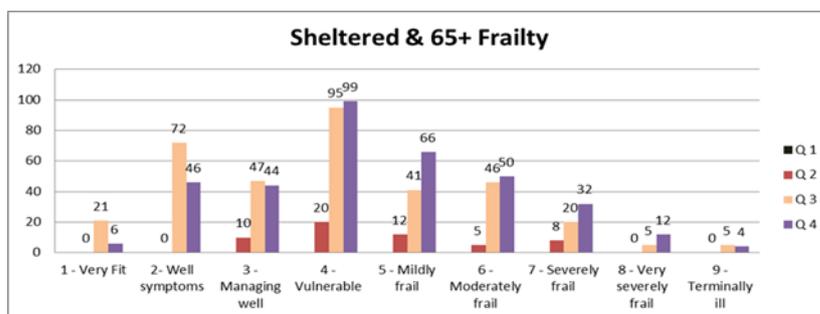


Figure 2) sheltered housing



- 5.4 78% of those supported live in either sheltered or general housing and 22% are from the private sector or a housing association.
- 5.5 During 2015/16, (from a non clinical perspective) the service started to measure the frailty of its clients using the Rockwood Frailty Index. The results are shown in Figure 3 below:



- 5.6 Although demographically Cambridge's population is slightly younger when compared to the rest of the County, a large proportion of the clients supported within this service are considered to be "vulnerably frail" to terminally ill. Preventative support to these clients enables them to remain at home for longer, independent and reduces demand on high costs residential care and nursing homes.
- 5.7 Figure 1 above shows that of the referrals received to the 65+ service, 17% relate to staff helping older people to access care packages in their own home.
- 5.8 Around 27% of those referred to 65+ or living in sheltered housing are helped to access *non* housing related benefits. In 2015/16, this service helped a large number of tenants access age related benefits such as Attendance Allowance and successfully increased client's incomes by £192 000 helping many older people avoid poverty.
- 5.9 The City Council is the only district which continues to provide an emergency response service as part of its community alarms service.
- 5.10 In 2015/16, of the 1160 calls attended by the emergency response service (part of the alarms service commissioned by the City Council), 393 resulted in an avoided admission. Those clients were assessed and safely settled in their home. Based on costings provided in 2015, by United Care Partnership, if every one of 393 clients avoided admission and an overnight stay, this service would have saved the public sector £247 983.

- 5.11 However, in 2015/16, the County Council also withdrew a small amount of residual funding to landlords in respect of the community alarms service. In Cambridge, this resulted in a slight increase in the recharged costs to the customer, although some of the impact was reduced through housing benefit.
- 5.12 There is scope to explore the extent of which the community alarms service also contributes to the public health objective to reduce the number of falls (and subsequent hip fractures) and the City Council would like to review this service possibly in conjunction with South Cambs District Council. The existing telephone response contract (which responds to alarm activations) is due to renewal or tendering in 2017.
- 5.13 Technological advancements have resulted in more modern community alarm devices being available and there are aspects of the service which could be reviewed in terms of best value for money.

6.0 Move on housing for people recovering from a mental health condition

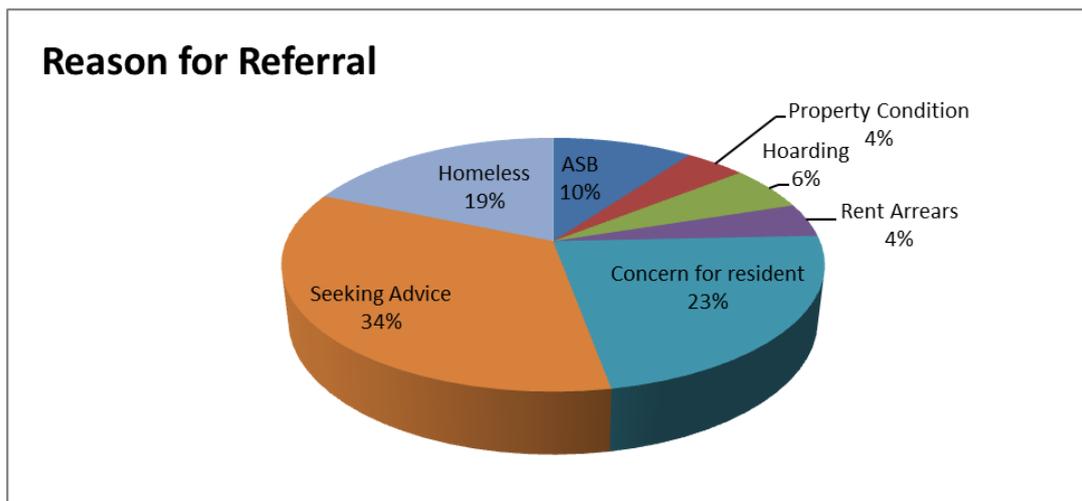
- 6.1 The City Council has 22 units of accommodation set aside for single people recovering from a mental health condition.
- 6.2 Prior to 2012, both the landlord and support function for this accommodation was delivered by two staff employed by Cambridge City Council. In 2012, the County Council changed the way it commissioned support for people in mental health accommodation and chose one provider across the County. As a result, Metropolitan Care and Support provide the support to these tenants.
- 6.3 This accommodation requires more intensive housing management than general needs housing. The 22 units include a shared house and since 2014, the self contained accommodation is let as fixed term tenancies. The expectation is that most tenants will, with support, move on to independent living within 3 years. In 2015/16, Cambridge City Council received 8 referrals for clients who were predominantly referred from either high support hostels, homeless hostels or from hospital.
- 6.4 Of the 6 tenants who moved on last financial year,
- 2 moved into independent accommodation
 - 1 returned to the family home
 - 3 tenants moved into more intensive specialist supported housing

Demand for this accommodation is steady and any void loss exceeding 4 weeks is paid by the County Council.

7.0 Tenancy Sustainment Service (Mental Health)

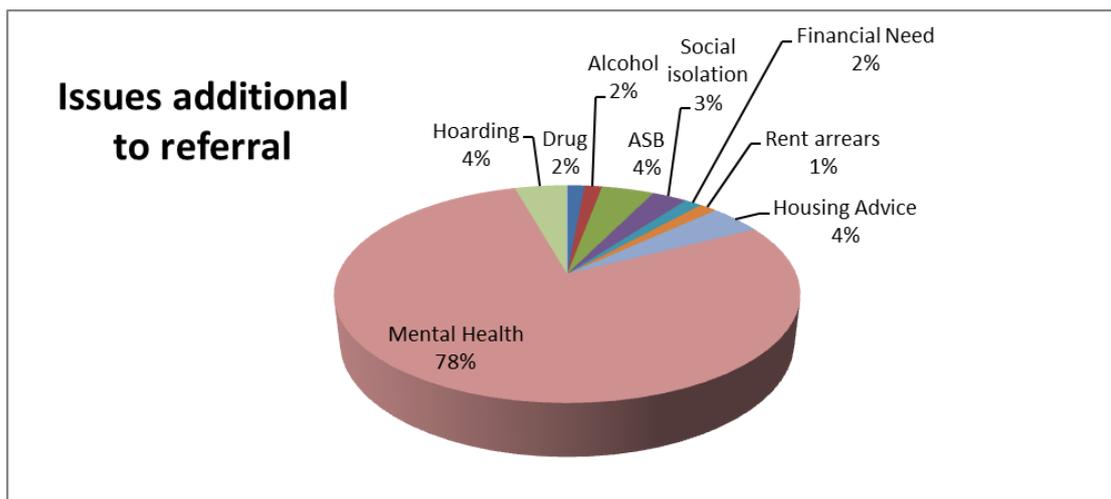
- 7.1 This service was introduced in 2014 to address the increasing number of tenants who's behaviour, associated with their mental ill health, was impacting on their tenancy or on their ability to maintain housing resulting in the threat of homelessness.
- 7.2 The service was funded on the basis that 75% of its referrals would relate to supporting City Council tenants and 25% would be to support housing applicants with a mental health issue that impacts on their ability to access suitable housing. The main referral sources were expected to the Area Housing Teams, the Safer Communities Team and the Housing Advice Service.
- 7.3 The other aim of the service was to work with health, social care and other agencies to ensure that the pathways for tenants to access mental health services was clear and that these services had a better understanding of the role of social housing in the City.
- 7.4 In 2015/16, the service which consists of two council officers, received 71 new referrals and carried forward 17 clients from the previous year. The main referrers are shown below:
- 28% (City Homes) Area Teams
 - 22% Cambs & Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT)
 - 21% Housing Advice Service
 - 7% Safer Communities Anti-Social Behaviour Team
- 7.5 Of the clients supported in 2015/16, 58% were CCC tenants, 20% lived in hostels, 13% lived in the private sector and 9% were from Housing Associations. Given that 87.5% of funding for this service comes from the Housing Revenue Account, the service needs to review why the number of clients supported in CCC tenancies has reduced.
- 7.6 79% of the clients supported were evenly distributed across all age groups under 49 yrs of age. However, the number of older people supported by the service increased with 21% of clients being over the age of 60.

7.7 The main reasons clients were referred for this preventative support is shown in Figure 4 below:



*Concern for the resident includes reports that the tenants is behaving in a way that indicates they are mentally unwell or that there is some concern about their property.

Figure 5 below shows the assessed need of the client following the initial assessment



7.8 The service outcomes include:

- 48% were clients and professionals who were given advice and appropriate signposting
- 30% were, after the initial crisis had been resolved, referred on to appropriate services for longer term support
- 16% declined the service or were inappropriate referrals
- 100% of tenancies were maintained
- Clients were supported to access £26000 non housing related benefits

8.0 General Overview

8.1 Supported Housing continues to work in conjunction with Health and Social Care to ensure Housing is part of a wider public sector partnership addressing the well-being of social housing tenants and ensuring that their interests are fully represented in developing relevant services. Staff employed within Supported Housing also provide advice to colleagues across the City Council who are dealing with vulnerable customers as part of their interaction with us as a district council.

9.0 Implications

9.1 Financial Implications

No additional implications

9.2 Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

No additional staffing implications

9.3 Equality and Poverty Implications

The report highlights the positive contributions Supported Housing makes to the overall anti-poverty objectives of the City Council. The service has helped clients to increase its financial resources by £230 000 in the last financial year.

The report highlights the positive benefits the service provides to supporting vulnerable people in Cambridge and contributes significantly to the well-being of those most likely to suffer inequalities in the City.

9.4 Environmental Implications

N/A

9.5 Procurement

N/A

9.6 Consultation and communication

The Supported Housing Service is a very customer focussed service. Accessibility to these services is promoted via social media, marketing events and in more traditional formats such as posters and leaflets.

The service represents the City Council on numerous partnerships associated with the well-being of vulnerable people.

There are no consultation requirements from this report.

9.7 Community Safety

The report highlights the positive contribution the service makes to reducing anti-social behaviour and homelessness.

10.0 Background papers

No background papers

11.0 Appendices

No appendices

12.0 Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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