



homelessness and complex needs

creative 
service
solutions



Look Ahead
CARE, SUPPORT AND HOUSING



supporting people with experience of homelessness and complex needs

We've been supporting homeless people for more than 40 years. We offer more than just a place to stay – we provide people with the specialist support, care and compassion they need to rebuild their lives.

We're one of the largest providers of services for people affected by homelessness across London and the South East. Today, we work in partnership with 13 local authorities, delivering 25 specialist services that reduce rough sleeping, help people off the streets and support the most vulnerable individuals in our local communities.

Every year, we support close to 2000 people with a broad range of needs. Rises in homelessness and pressures on statutory

and specialist services mean the people we work with are more in need of our support than ever before.

We treat everyone we support with empathy, dignity and respect; we see beyond their needs and focus on their strengths, aspirations and abilities. We know and believe that with the right support, each individual has the potential to achieve their goals and move onto a brighter, more hopeful future.

our service models

We deliver a wide range of homelessness services, including assessment centres, supported housing, floating support and specialist women's services. This includes support for individuals who may be older, have dual diagnosis and specialist mental health needs including personality disorders.

Across this provision, we offer a number of distinct service models that have been developed to meet commissioner and customer requirements.

Each of our models can be applied flexibly and responsively to meet the needs of individuals with experiences of homelessness and complex needs.

We also have extensive experience of working with commissioners to reshape provision as local needs and pressures change, responding to community need and local specialist housing demand.

Across all our models, we work creatively with commissioners, local partners and the private rented sector to support and increase move-on rates.



Service outcome data is drawn from a range of sources over the last twelve months (2016-17) including customer data, internal quality and outcomes monitoring and commissioner reporting.

assessment centres

Our assessment centre provision provides short-term intensive support to individuals who may have found themselves homeless or rough sleeping.

We deliver thorough, rapid assessments based on individuals' housing support needs, deliver short-term support

interventions around immediate needs including health and life skills, and work with local authorities to identify appropriate move-on options through local accommodation pathways.

The Coninghams, Hammersmith Assessment centre

Our assessment centre in West London provides short-term accommodation-based support for up to 31 single homeless individuals with a range of support needs.

Individuals are referred to the service by the local homeless persons unit, must have a local borough connection and are supported for a period of typically up to nine months. The purpose of the initial 12 week assessment period is to assess each person's needs and to inform a recommendation to the local authority about where the individual should move on to, usually within the borough's homelessness accommodation pathway.

The service has established strong links with health; they have an onsite nurse, offer weekly health and wellbeing sessions and use local peer volunteers and occupational therapists to increase customers' engagement with primary care services. A number of adapted ground floor flats are available for individuals with mobility issues.

The service also offers a non-engagers scheme for the borough, working with individuals who are the most difficult to reach across the whole local pathway.

Recent **service outcomes**:

- The average positive move on time is less than **eight months**.
- **87% customers** regularly engage with the on-site nurse and health clinics: in the last month, the peripatetic nurse delivered eight clinics within the service and managed 35 appointments.
- The service has supported an additional **five individuals** through their non-engagers programme over the last twelve months.



supported housing hostel services

Most individuals we work with are supported within our supported housing services. This includes accommodation-based hostel and floating support services that have been developed with commissioners to meet local needs. This includes specialist dual diagnosis and older people's services.



Hopkinson House Hostel, Westminster Dual diagnosis and personality disorder service

Our Hopkinson House Hostel specialises in working with people who may be extremely vulnerable because of their level of need. The mixed gender service provides specialist supported accommodation for up to 36 people including those that may have struggled to sustain traditional housing options. For individuals who may be particularly vulnerable or need more intensive support, we provide four self contained flats as part of the service's 'Housing First' model.

Individuals benefit from a range of specialist input from external agencies with a particular focus on health – close joint working with local external partners facilitates both in-reach services as well as referrals to specialist services, psychiatrists and counsellors. A recent social enterprise in partnership with People Empowering People saw customers designing, creating and selling their own clothing and homeware to the general public in Soho.

Danni*, Hopkinson House Hostel

Danni had been living between hospitals, hostels and care homes for the last 20 years and had survived sustained periods of extreme trauma and domestic abuse. When she was referred to the service in June 2015, Danni presented a number of challenges in her support including drinking heavily, being aggressive to staff and neighbours and clear unmet care needs. During Danni's time in the service, staff have supported her to:

- Engage with treatment services and better manage her alcohol use, following a multi-agency approach including staff, local treatment services and Westminster's Safer Neighbourhoods Team.
- Start managing her own medication safely through working closely with her GP.
- Apply for and attend an Occupational Therapy Assessment; as a result, Danni now receives two hours of personal care a day.
- Initiate staged contact with her teenage daughter following a long period of estrangement. They are now back in touch and taking steps to rebuild their relationship.
- Develop her independent living skills and recently move on to a step-down service. This is the first time in 20 years that Danni has successfully moved to a greater level of independence.

*Name has been changed to protect individual anonymity.

floating support

We also provide floating support across a number of regions, to people with a wide range of needs, living in their own accommodation, often following a period of higher support.

The focus of our support in these services is on supporting people to sustain their tenancies and prevent a return to homelessness. Staff support people to

access and maintain engagement with specialist services, avoid social isolation and move towards meaningful engagement with volunteering, education, training or work.

These services are flexible and our teams can step up or reduce support as people's needs change.

Tower Hamlets Community Intervention Service Floating support service

Tower Hamlets Community Intervention Service (CIS) provides structured support for up to 212 individuals living in Tower Hamlets. The support is short-term (up to seven and a half months) and focuses on providing support interventions to people with medium to high unmet needs. The service supports individuals to avoid crisis, achieve greater stability and link into appropriate local services.

The service processes around 120 referrals every quarter and accepts referrals from a wide range of sources. This includes the local authority, hospitals, probation, domestic abuse services, Social Services, housing associations and self-referrals.

Recently staff members have been working closely with the Metropolitan Police to find out more about the issues affecting individuals involved in street-based prostitution. They accompanied police on night time patrols with the aim of building stronger links and facilitating increased referrals. It enables staff to engage with individuals who may typically be too chaotic and hard to reach and also provides a unique insight into the particular risks and vulnerabilities of some of the individuals we support.

Recent **service outcomes** (over a three-month period include):

Reducing referrals into secondary care

- **25 people** were supported to avoid street homelessness or a return to rough sleeping.
- **35 people** were supported to effectively manage a mental health crisis.
- **43 people** avoided extreme financial hardship as a result of support provided by the team.



specialist women's services

For those commissioners looking for gender-specific services, we run a number of specialist women's homelessness services across London and the South East. Many of the women in these services will have histories of complex trauma and experiences of domestic, physical or sexual abuse or exploitation.

We train and develop our staff to deal with these challenges, lending from Trauma Informed Care practice, as they support these women to move towards stability, stay safe, minimise risk and build their skills, confidence and self-esteem.

Manor Place Hostel, South London Specialist women's hostel

Manor Place provides specialist supported accommodation for up to 35 women with an experience of homelessness and complex needs.

The accommodation consists of self-contained accommodation and is split into two stages, which enables individuals to progress through as they become more independent. The service works closely with a range of specialist external agencies and delivers a range of activities on site including weekly yoga, cookery and art therapy sessions.

Jules*, Manor Place

Jules moved into Manor Place in April 2000. She has a history of childhood neglect, substance misuse, domestic abuse and a diagnosis of emotionally unstable personality disorder. During her time at Manor Place, staff have supported her to:

- Gradually engage with the support on offer following a series of previous placement breakdowns and abandonments.
- Put in place a protection plan to safeguard her from risks linked to her former relationship.
- Gradually reduce her alcohol consumption.
- Enrol and start at college where she is now studying.
- Apply to be a Look Ahead Peer Supporter which will allow her to share her experiences to support other women.



*Name has been changed to protect individual anonymity.

features of our service models

Each of our innovative service models shares a number of key features; these are integral to our approach and our homelessness and complex needs offer.

PSYCHOLOGICALLY INFORMED ENVIRONMENTS

Our homelessness and complex needs services are designed to support some of the most excluded and hard-to-reach individuals. They provide Psychologically Informed Environments that support individuals' psychological needs, emotional wellbeing and are conducive to recovery.

We do this in multiple ways including:

- Redesigning physical service environments, reviewing building aesthetics and reconfiguring layouts to maximise engagement, increase staff visibility/transparency and contribute to the service's therapeutic ethos.
- Training staff to recognise and respond to customers' behavioural and emotional needs and deliver psycho-social interventions including motivational interviewing, Cognitive and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy and reflective practice.
- Offering customers the opportunity to take greater ownership of their service through choosing furnishings and décor, agreeing activities for communal area, co-producing house rules and local policies/procedures and offering opportunities for meaningful customer involvement and peer support.



INTEGRATED PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Our teams work closely with a wide range of local partners to help meet individuals' needs. This includes joint working to support people to improve their physical health, reduce substance misuse, aid mental health recovery and develop new healthier lifestyles and routines.

Our links with health services across our homelessness provision are particularly strong. Our services promote good physical as well as mental health through provision of in-reach on-site services (including medical, counselling and psychotherapy services) and support access and engagement with both primary health care and specialist treatment services.

BESPOKE PROPERTY SOLUTIONS

As a housing association and registered social landlord, we can offer commissioners bespoke property solutions alongside our care and support offer.

With over 2500 units, we have an extensive property portfolio, across almost 30 local authorities in London and the South East. Our availability of properties in areas with high concentrations of homelessness allow us to offer commissioners a wide range of different property types and accommodation models that meet their local needs and requirements.

If you are looking for a property solution that is not currently available through our existing provision, we can still help. We have both the ability to invest capital and extensive networks and experience in this area. This means we can quickly source and develop quality accommodation, supporting you to meet local demand whilst reducing your high unit costs.



SAFE SERVICES THAT EFFECTIVELY MANAGE RISK AND BALANCE CUSTOMER FREEDOM

The people we work with are often vulnerable and can face a number of risks. We know how important it is to manage these risks and keep people safe, particularly within hostel environments where there is a range of needs under one roof.

We do this by getting to know the people we support really well, working in close community partnership and encouraging individuals to identify and start managing their own risks through our positive risk-taking approach.

Our 'See Think Act' approach, adapted from NHS guidelines for relational security, is also key to our approach. As part of this, we train our staff to recognise and understand the relationships an individual has with their environment and the people around them, and how this translates into how we work with them.

This approach has proved particularly effective in our hostel environments, to support building and locality management as well as wider community relations.



EXPERIENCED, SKILLED AND COMPASSIONATE STAFF

We know our people can *and* do make all the difference so we actively recruit experienced, qualified and compassionate support staff. They share our values and are deeply committed to working in genuine partnership with our customers.

Our staff treat each individual with empathy, care and compassion – they are non-judgemental, open-minded and work with each individual with unconditional positive regard - they believe in people's potential and capacity to change and move forwards with their lives.

Staff are trained to Care Certificate standards, and in addition to our core safeguarding, risk management and support planning training, receive a wide range of expert homelessness training to build expertise in areas as diverse as mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, sex working and trauma informed care.

We also have considerable experience of quickly recruiting, developing and mobilising staff in response to emerging population and community needs or commissioner requirements.

If you would like to work with us to develop tailored solutions specific to the particular needs and challenges you face, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



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