

Specification for 2020-21 Short-term Floating Support Service for Housing Demand

INTRODUCTION

This specification is for a floating support service which will support the London Borough of Ealing in delivering its obligations under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

A number of changes have been implemented under the Act;

- An extension of the period 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days.
- A duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need.
- A duty to refer - public services now need to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- A duty for councils to provide advisory services on homelessness, preventing homelessness, and housing rights, free of charge
- A duty to assess all applicants' cases and agree a personalised plan

As a result of the changes LBE is commissioning a support service for people who have applied to the authority as homeless.

The service will be designed to assist individuals to develop or maintain their independence within the community, this will ensure a successful transition to accommodation.

Ealing is a culturally diverse borough and the service must be culturally sensitive and meet the needs of people from Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

The floating support service will provide low level time-limited support requiring a multi-disciplinary approach for people with support needs that include but are not restricted to the following client group areas:

- Generic
- Households with debt/financial housing related support needs
- Households with support needs including, mental health, substance misuse, risk of offending and/or multiple support needs

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE

The service is for people who have been identified by housing demand for floating support. They will have been identified as requiring support to maintain their accommodation and/or their ability to live independently in the community.

The principal aims of the service are to provide housing-related support to:

- Increase an individual's ability to maintain a tenancy/accommodation and meet occupancy obligations;
- Promote financial independence and reduce arrears/debt as needed
- Maximise social inclusion and reduce social isolation;

- Minimise the use of crisis/emergency accommodation services and other forms of temporary accommodation;
- Assist individuals and their dependents to maintain personal safety and security;
- Increase access to health services and improve health outcomes for individuals;
- Referring individuals to appropriate specialist services when required.
- To be enabling and reduce a culture of dependency or reliance on floating support services in a timely and positive way.

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Duration of support

The service is short-term, typically three to six months with a view to enabling individuals to increase independence to point where the service can be withdrawn and the individual is able to successfully maintain independent living.

Service Level

The service will be required to deliver time-limited support and each service user will be given an average of two hours of Floating Support a week. The levels of support will be variable, flexibly delivered and dependent on the specific needs of the individual.

There will be monthly client review meetings at Perceval House.

The number of hours a service user requires may be varied up or down within the duration of the service. However, the expectation is that for the majority of new service users, after an initial period of more intense support, the number of support hours required will diminish until such time as the service “floats off”.

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the service are to:

- Carry out needs and risk assessments, develop and regularly review support plans for all individuals; which may include those with communication difficulties.
- Provide flexible, person-centred support to enable the individual to maintain their accommodation and independence.
- Provide support with income and managing finances, including applications for Housing Benefits, Universal Credit and Discretionary Housing Payments, addressing rent/service charge arrears and support maximising income and budgeting.
- Ensure that safeguarding requirements are adhered to and are adopted in all service areas, at all times;
- Provide time-limited resettlement support to individuals moving from temporary accommodation onto independent accommodation, where required.
- Work in partnership with a range of agencies and other service providers to enable individuals to meet their identified needs and outcomes;
- Ensure that support is provided to promote the health and wellbeing of individuals and that they are enabled to access relevant wellbeing services such as GP &

Dental services.

SERVICE AVAILABILITY

Referrals

Referrals for floating support will be made from the Housing Demand service using in-house referral tools.

Eligibility Criteria

The service shall be available to vulnerable adults:

- Aged 18 or over- this can include adults who are living as part of a family unit.
- The majority of clients will be living in the Ealing area or placed in accommodation by LB Ealing in West London and nearby areas.
- Have a need for housing related support to enable access to housing and set up, maintain or prevent loss of their accommodation and independence.
- Willing to engage with the service and work with a support worker to an outcomes based support plan.

Access

The provider is expected to use its best endeavours to ensure that the service is accessible to all minorities and hard to reach groups within the borough.

STAFFING

The service provider will provide support workers with appropriate experience, skills and competencies to provide housing related support to vulnerable adults with a wide range of support needs.

The service provider must ensure that staff are properly supported, supervised and trained to undertake the service.

The support workers will use a variety of approaches, both responsive and proactive to ensure that the service users are engaged.

The service provider will be responsible for all employment issues and compliance with all relevant legislation including working with vulnerable adults and children.

OUTCOMES

The service will be measured against defined outcomes. Providers must demonstrate how the service is achieving these outcomes each quarter.

- Sustain accommodation for the duration of support 95%
- Assessment carried out five working days after referral 80%
- Reduce rent arrears and/or maintain clear rent accounts 98%
- Clients registered with a GP 98%
- Clients referred to other support agencies/services where there is a need 98%

The service provider will also need to report on the following monthly:

- Number of Safeguarding (SG) identified (month)
- Number of complaints (month)
- Service utilisation