



ISLINGTON

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 January 2019

SECOND DESPATCH

Please find enclosed the following items:

Item 1 Scrutiny Review : SID and Introductory Presentation (Homelessness)

1 - 20

Enquiries to : Ola Adeoye
Tel : 020 7527 3044
Email : democracy@islington.gov.uk



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SCRUTINY REVIEW INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID)
Review: Homelessness
Scrutiny Review Committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee
Director leading the review: Karen Lucas
Lead Officers: Ramesh Logeswaran
Overall aim: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To explore how the Council's Housing Needs Service tackles homelessness and delivers on its key performance indicators and reduce Homelessness.
Objectives of the review: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To highlight compliance in assessments and decisions that are underpinned by the Housing Act (1996) and Homeless Reduction Act (2017).• That prevention services and commissioned services are targeted and effective
How is the review to be carried out: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officer presentation• Evidence from St Mungo's, SHP, Islington Law Centre, Shelter, Pillion Trust, and Community based organisations that advocate on behalf of homelessness.• Types of accommodation services.• Consider details of the rough sleep count• Funding support available for rough sleepers
Scope of the Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To consider the Council's draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy which is currently being developed.• To consider whether the service is maximising on opportunities to prevent homelessness• How the approach to dealing with homelessness could be improved• Where partnership working could be further developed
The review will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those that are homeless and those threatened with homelessness.• Demographic data / Performance indicators / Outcomes achieved• Examples of gaps in service provision• Review of Ombudsman case studies/legal challenges.• How the Council engages with its partners to deliver holistic homelessness services
Types of evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence from officers, especially front-line staff• Performance, demographic and outcomes data• Examples of casework• Street count participation by members• Walk through the referral process• Evidence from the commissioning services• Homeless people and residents

Additional Information:

Programme	
Key output:	To be submitted to Committee on:
1. Scrutiny Initiation Document	14 January 2019
2. Draft Recommendations	2019
3. Final Report	xxxxxxx 2019



ISLINGTON

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

14 January 2018

Presented by:

Ramesh Logeswaran (Head of Housing Needs)

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- 7. How does the Council prevent and address homelessness?**
- 8. How does Islington work in partnership to prevent and address homelessness?**



Introduction (1)

- Approach has been to ensure focus our efforts on preventing homelessness in the first instance- it is the Council's overriding approach to help people to build resilience through prevention and early intervention
- Provision of practical assistance via:
 - access to rent deposit schemes;
 - Homefinder UK;
 - Sanctuary scheme;
 - Hope Worldwide;
 - Islington Lettings;support with negotiating with landlords to access the private rented market to secure alternative accommodation.
- Exploring as broad a range of options to prevent and alleviate homelessness
- For those already homeless, the service makes decisions in line with the Housing Act, supporting them until a decision is reached- irrespective of whether the decision is positive or negative



Introduction (2)

What does this mean?

Significant reductions in the number of homelessness decisions over the last three years in comparison to the number of homelessness decisions across London boroughs

Reduction in homelessness duty decisions has been accompanied by a 5% reduction in the proportion of homelessness acceptances

The service has therefore exceeded the Council's Corporate target (400) over the last three years

Between 2016 and 2018- 1173 households were prevented from becoming homeless- i.e secured alternative accommodation or to remain in their existing accommodation

21% reduction in the numbers of households in temporary accommodation over the last three years

Islington has one of the lowest numbers of households in temporary accommodation in London

60% of temporary accommodation placements in borough

The approach and performance to date has been underpinned by collaborative and strong partnerships across the public sector and a valued voluntary sector through the Islington Homelessness Forum (IHF) service leads actively participate in strategic Housing Needs meetings across the North London sub-region and the pan London Councils meetings to ensure a strong lobbying voice to help inform Government thinking



National picture

- National rise in homelessness attributed to the long-term failure to ensure a sufficient supply of affordable housing
- Increase in homelessness arising from the termination of assured short-hold tenancies in the private rented sector
- Decrease in social housing as a proportion of all housing
- Housing Benefit restrictions introduced since 2010, which arguably has made it difficult for claimants to secure housing at rents which Housing Benefit will cover
- Welfare reform- roll out of universal credit
- 56,620 homeless acceptances- 2017/18, down 4% from 2016/17, but still up by 19,000 cases from 2009/10.
- On 31 March 2018 the number of households in temporary accommodation stood at 79,880, up 3% from 31 March 2017- an increase of 66% from 31 December 2010.
- Corresponding increase in rough sleeping – 2.5 higher in 2017 than in 2010



Local picture (1)

- 2,504 households approached to Islington Council’s Housing Aid Team seeking advice on housing in 2017/18. Decrease of over ¼ from 2014/15, when there were 3,503 households seeking advice
- Table below contrasts the total homeless decisions vs homelessness acceptances in the North London Sub-Region between 2015/16 and 2017/2018.

	TOTAL NO. DECISIONS	Total *Acceptances (%)	TOTAL NO. DECISIONS	Total *Acceptances (%)	TOTAL NO. DECISIONS	Total *Acceptances (%)	% Difference in proportion of Decisions - 16/17 to 17/18	% Difference in proportion of Acceptances - 16/17 to 17/18
Islington	924	375 (41%)	689	364 (53%)	467	225 (48%)	-32%	-5%
Barnet	697	422 (61%)	934	640 (69%)	759	444 (58%)	-19%	-10%
Camden	103	67 (65%)	113	66 (58%)	132	94 (71%)	-17%	13%
Enfield	1455	1131 (78%)	1,354	1,096 (81%)	1085	786 (72%)	-20%	-9%
Haringey	848	603 (71%)	967	683 (71%)	827	395 (48%)	-14%	-23%
Westminster	956	541 (57%)	950	534 (56%)	784	454 (58%)	-17%	2%
NL Boroughs	4983	3139 (63%)	5007	3383 (68%)	4054	2398 (59%)	-19%	-8%
LONDON TOTAL	31,980	19,180 (60%)	29,650	18,060 (61%)	26,060	15,440 (59%)	-12%	-2%

Local picture (2)

- Emphasis on prevention approach = significant reductions in the number of homelessness decisions over the last three years in comparison to the number of homelessness decisions made across London boroughs
- In Islington however, “Parents, family or friends no longer willing to accommodate” remains the most common reason for homelessness acceptances
- Having children within the family or expecting a child is significantly the most common category of priority need each year, making up 78% of all households accepted in 2017/18
- **Age:** consistently two thirds of accepted cases are between 20 and 40 years old. This is likely to be linked to the applicant having dependent children and less settled accommodation.
- **Gender:** consistently around two thirds of accepted cases are female. This is likely to be linked to the applicant having dependent children, as single parents are more likely to be female than male.
- **Lone parent:** consistently small majority of accepted cases who are lone parents. This is likely to be linked to Welfare Reform, as lone parents have been disproportionately affected by Welfare Reform.



Local picture (3)

Households in temporary accommodation (TA)

Borough	15/16	16/17	17/18	% change 16/17 to 17/18
Islington	941	806	745	-8%

- Rates of households in temporary accommodation have remained largely stable across London between 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- Islington reduced the numbers of households in temporary accommodation over the last three years, equating to an overall reduction of 21% in 2017/18 when compared to the numbers of placements made in 2015/16
- In 2018/19 we will continue to purchase properties to use as temporary accommodation, minimising the use of private sector accommodation and bringing more of our temporary accommodation back 'in house'.

TA placements in borough vs out of borough

Year	Total no. households in TA	Percentage placements in borough	Percentage placements out of borough
Mar-16	941	55%	45%
Mar-17	806	63%	37%
Mar-18	745	63%	37%

- Despite the wider market challenges, we have seen continual reductions in the numbers of placements out of borough.
- Means significant proportion of households becoming homeless in Islington have been able to retain their social, familial educational, employment networks.



Homeless Reduction Act

The HRA significantly amended homelessness legislation and introduced a number of changes including:

- a strengthened duty to provide advisory services;
- an extension to the period during which an applicant considered 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days;
- new duties to assess all eligible applicants (not just those unintentionally homeless and in priority need) and to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness;
- these steps will be set out in a personalised housing plan that, wherever possible, collectively agreed between the local authority and the applicant.

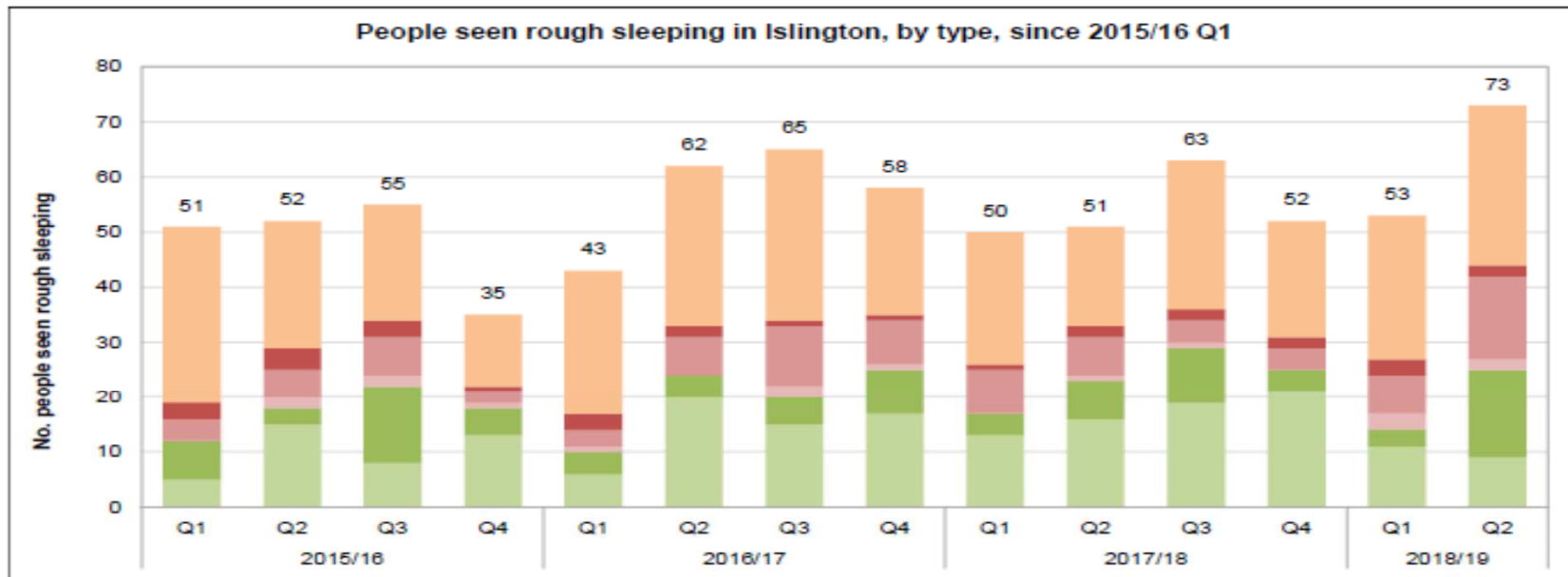
An overall conclusion is yet to be reached on the impact of the HRA but those identified to date include:

- reluctance in engaging with / agreement with Personalised Housing Plans (PHP)
- the customer journey has become more complicated to some extent as there are additional layers of interaction with officers before an outcome may be achieved
- increase in bureaucracy- impacted on the time required to carry out prevention specific activity such as searching for alternative accommodation, negotiation with landlords etc
- access to private sector accommodation for those under 35 years who are particularly impacted by caps on Local Housing Allowance rates

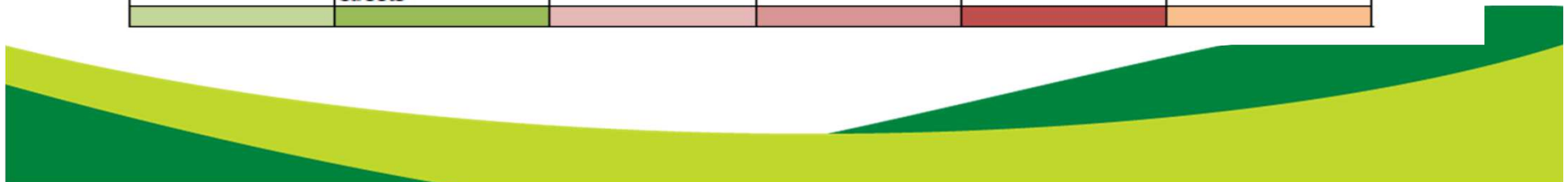


Rough Sleeping (1)

- London is seeing a worrying trend of increasing numbers of people rough sleeping
- Figure below illustrates the numbers of rough sleepers in Islington from 2015/16 to Quarter 2 2018/19.

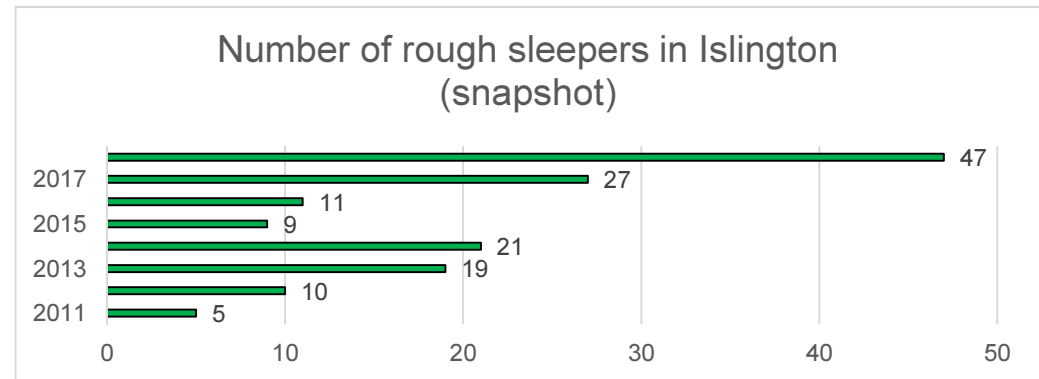


New rough sleepers			Living on the streets		Intermittent
No second night out	Second night out but not living on the streets	Joining living on the streets population	Known prior to quarter	RS205+	



Rough Sleeping (2)

- The graph represents a snapshot of rough sleepers in Islington at the annual street count
- Islington has seen a significant increase in rough sleeping particularly from 2017 to 2018 (74% increase)



How is the Council tackling rough sleeping?

Robust plans in place to address the issue comprising the following:

- a co-ordinated response from multiple departments within the Council (Community Safety, Social Care, Housing) and externally with other London wide initiatives;
- the commissioning of additional units for emergency shelters;
- the recruitment of additional officers to support rough sleepers;
- continued joint working with neighbouring boroughs and services to tackle hot-spot areas;
- securing funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Rough Sleeping (3)

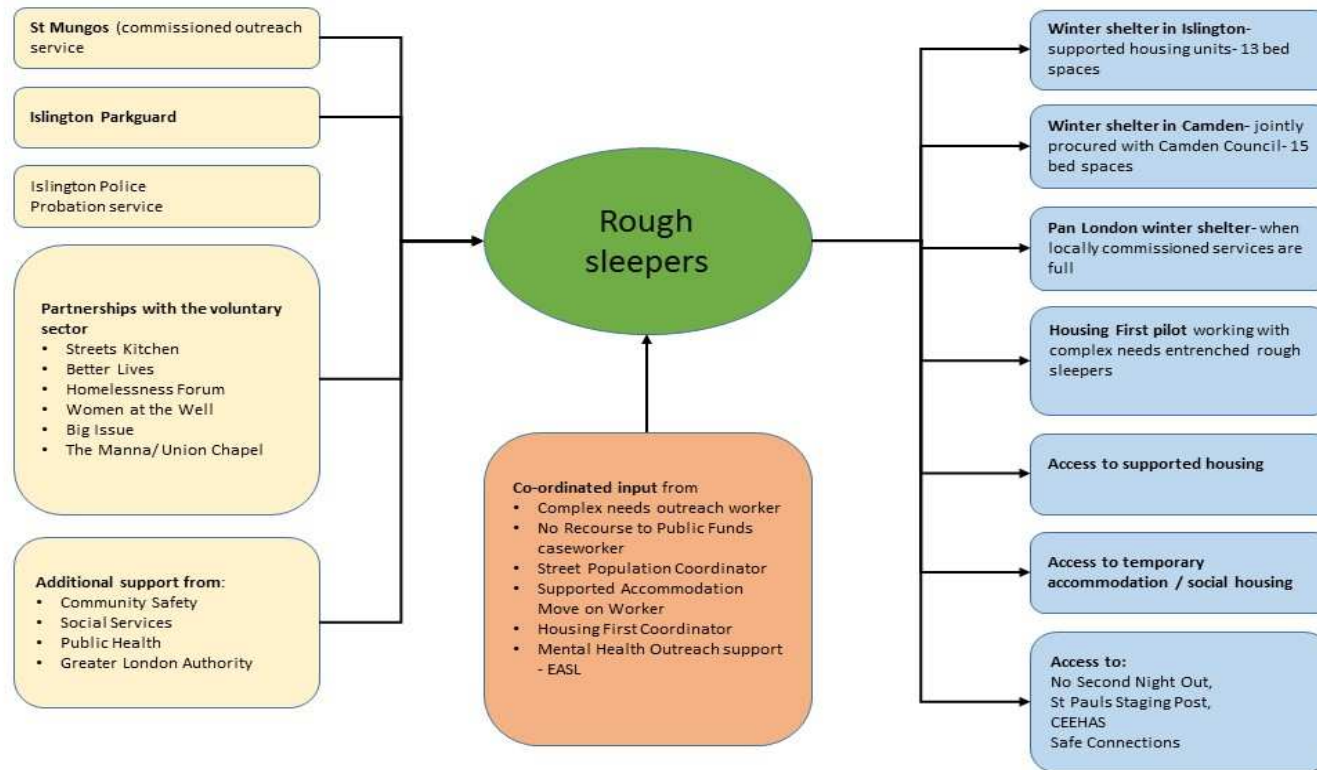


Diagram above illustrates who the Council is engaging with in terms of its local and external partners and the wider offer for rough sleepers to support them away from the streets

Rough Sleeping (4)

Outcomes

- 5 long term rough sleepers in social housing as part of Housing First pilot
- 3 mental health assessments via EASL since October, this gives us a better understanding of support needs and makes it easier to house someone
- Complex needs outreach worker secured accommodation for 6 rough sleepers in 4 weeks & is providing dedicated support to maintain accommodation

Accommodation outcomes recorded by St Mungos Outreach team Q2- 2018/19			
Accommodation type/outcome	Female no of stays	Male no of stays	Total
Assessment centre	8	11	19
B&B	0	1	1
Clinic, detox, rehab	0	1	1
Longer term accommodation	1	2	3
Temporary accommodation	1	0	1
No Second Night Out	3	6	9
Total stays	13	21	34



Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

- Five year strategy commencing 2019-2023- endorsed by the Health and Well- Being Board
- Key vulnerable groups have been identified as those that warrant particular attention including:

• Support for families, children and young people	• People being discharged from hospital (with physical/ mental/ social care needs)
• People who have been victims of domestic abuse	• Former members of the regular armed forces
• BME specific homelessness	• Those being released from prison or youth detention accommodation
• People with mental health needs	• People from outside of the UK without settled status
• Care leavers	• People in temporary accommodation

- Comprehensive action plan has been developed, to be delivered by the Housing Needs service and a number of partners
- Delivery of the action plan will be sponsored by the Health and Well-Being Board annually, post endorsement of the strategy by the Council’s Executive Members in early 2019.



How does the Council prevent and address homelessness? (1)

- **Provision of advice**

Monthly Outreach surgeries- Childrens Centres, Community Centres/ groups (Chinese, Somalian, Eritrean), local mosques, Probation Service, Job Centres, The Pilon Trust
Trailblazer programme- early intervention for victims of domestic abuse

- **Practical assistance to secure alternative accommodation**

Mediation with family members and or landlords
Homeshelter (Sanctuary scheme)
Homefinder UK
Hope Worldwide
Access to private sector properties
Access to supported housing
New Generation Scheme

- **Issuing of formal decisions under the Housing Act**

within the 33-day period of the Council's decision on acceptance / 56 days for reviews
timely decisions on requests for temporary accommodation pending a review of the Council's decision
and to judicial reviews



How does the Council prevent and address homelessness? (2)

- **Proactive engagement with stakeholders / partners who support the Council to alleviate homelessness**

Collaborative and constructive partnerships- promote early identification of those likely to become homeless.

Comprises partnerships with- Homes and Communities, Childrens and Adults Social Care, Community Safety, external organisations such as Partners for Islington, Housing Associations, St Mungos Outreach, floating support services (SHP, Help on Your Doorstep), Prisons, Probation, DWP, local hospitals in the North London region.

- **Delivering on medium to longer term plans to tackle the Council's ability to respond to homelessness**

Building more social housing- ambitious plan to build new social housing properties- expected to contribute to the alleviation of housing problems that can lead to homelessness
Reduce our reliance on private sector landlords and to ensure we can place more households in borough by purchasing additional temporary accommodation in borough



How does the Council work in partnership to prevent and address homelessness?

With partners, stakeholders and customers

Islington Homeless Forum and front line staff in the Housing Needs Team have been consulted about the aims, priorities and objectives of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy



With landlords

Improve their professionalism through the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme

By finding suitable and affordable accommodation, rather than bed and breakfast accommodation through lease agreements with private landlords

By investing in energy efficiency and renewable technologies, to support vulnerable households facing fuel poverty

The above runs in parallel to activities conducted by the Council's Residential Environmental Health team to raise standards of accommodation through licensing and other enforcement methods



With the North London sub region (Camden, Haringey, Westminster, Enfield and Barnet)

Heads of Service from the sub-region meet every two months to foster collaboration & sharing of best practise between NL & Pan-London boroughs and wider stakeholders

Successfully applying for funding to deliver front line services for the six north London boroughs where service gaps have been identified

To provide a strong lobbying voice to help inform Government thinking on a wide range of topics, via responses to government consultations, calls for evidence and commissioned pieces of work to present evidence behind lobbying stances

Active participation in Joint Rough Sleeper Leads Group, London Councils Housing Needs group, Supply and Policy Group and Directors Board

Questions, comments?

