

Keep My Home Support Project - Rapid Rehousing

Introduction

This project is part of Denbighshire County Council's recommissioning of housing related support services to align our services with our transition towards Rapid Rehousing.

Denbighshire County Council aspires to making homelessness rare through robust early intervention and prevention activities. Where homelessness does occur we will endeavour to make it as short as possible with the right level of support put in place to end homelessness. We want to ensure the risk of entering into a cycle of homelessness is mitigated against at every opportunity. In line with our Rapid Rehousing approach everyone is assumed to be 'housing ready' with the right support. We envisage this project to provide varying levels of the right, high quality, multi-agency support tailored to individual needs to prevent homelessness and help people sustain their homes.

The success of rapid rehousing depends on the right support being in place at the right time. The evidence is clear that the vast majority of people who have experienced homelessness, even those who have been severely marginalised and homeless for a long time, are able to maintain their tenancies in self-contained housing, with the right level of support where they need it.

Project description

This project is a holistic, housing related support project designed to support people living in Denbighshire to sustain their accommodation and prevent homelessness.

We are extremely keen to see an alliance-style approach to this project with providers working together with collective accountability to provide tailored support to meet individual needs. With this being a holistic support service we would like to see collaborations with various specialisms to ensure the service can be flexible and responsive to citizen's support needs.

Citizens supported will be any gender; aged 16 and above; single or part of a couple, and may or may not have dependent children. This service will be tenure neutral, citizens supported may be residing in a property that is privately rented, social housing or owner-occupied. Individual support needs will vary between low level support up to higher level support needs and they may have several support needs such as addictions, mental or physical health issues.

All individuals supported will be resident in Denbighshire and identified as needing support to enable them to sustain or manage their accommodation independently to prevent homelessness. Support will not be time limited and will need to be flexible as it is recognised that people's support needs differ and change overtime. It is expected that the provider will keep a 'dormant' caseload, allowing individuals to access very low level/emergency support, without the need for a formal re-referral. Should a crisis arise, circumstances change or wellbeing deteriorates, the ability to re-access light touch support in a prompt manner could prevent further deterioration and the need for crisis intervention. This support will be essential in supporting people to exit homelessness, but will also be critical to helping people to sustain their homes and avoid repeat homelessness.

The support provided will be flexible and person-centred, supporting people to maintain sustainable housing by addressing any mental health, substance misuse or any other

problems they may face, helping to improve their health and well-being and/or helping them progress into, or nearer to, a job or training opportunity based on their specific circumstances. The support provided in this project may also include budgeting, including accessing money advice; developing life skills; achieving safety and security, and accessing other services and opportunities with the aim of making homelessness non-recurring.

The project will support a minimum of 170 people at any one time. Support worker hours will be managed dynamically and will be allocated flexibly in response to support needs. The project will be expected to have the capacity to accept urgent referrals as may be required from time to time. The number of service users supported will normally be expected to exceed the minimum level as new service users join the project while support is gradually withdrawn from those service users approaching the completion of their support.

The project will be expected to operate 7 days a week between the hours of 8am – 10pm to ensure support is accessible to all. We expect citizens to be contacted within 24 hrs of a referral being received.

Periods of non-engagement are synonymous within support and are to be expected, but each occurrence should be treated differently, as the reasons for each are individual to that person. The onus will be on the service provider to engage with citizens and unless under extreme circumstances, the service provider should not consider ending support due to non-engagement. The project is expected to deliver support activities in appropriate settings in the community, including the homes of individuals supported.

To be most effective, we feel the project must be:

- Innovative – striving to continuously refine and improve the project to promote tenancy sustainment and homelessness prevention, working together with the commissioners and stakeholders to build on and develop best practice.
- Practical – include support to set up utilities, source furniture and white goods packs, make benefit claims, budgeting as well as general tenancy sustainment support tailored to the individuals needs.
- Structure and purpose - providing opportunities through activities, volunteering opportunities, education or work to provide structure and purpose in people's lives to help them feel empowered to reach their full potential.
- Co-productive – working in true partnership with citizens and other key stakeholders to plan solutions and shape the ongoing development of the project.
- Staffed by a competent and dynamic team who have a broad and diverse skill set to enable the successful delivery of this project, and to enable the project to achieve positive outcomes for individuals with a broad range of needs and circumstances.
- Person-centred – with the individual's voice, choice and control at the forefront.
- Complementing – the work of the Homelessness Prevention Team and working towards Denbighshire County Council's vision for Rapid Rehousing.
- Non-judgemental, with a psychologically informed approach - understanding that we're all individuals with different needs, goals and stories, and that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect.

- Needs-led – targeting and offering support/guidance where it is needed most.
- Peer support – is enabled and encouraged.
- Social integration – and reducing the stigma of homelessness.
- Accessible – being responsive, easy to find and contact, and not creating arbitrary processes, criteria or other barriers. The language used should seek to reduce the stigma associated with homelessness/risk of homelessness.
- Strengths-based in its ethos and support approach – maximising people’s own strengths and resources, and recognising that people are experts in their own lives.
- Sensitivity around challenging behaviours – recognising the importance of trauma informed practice.
- Engaging with a broad range of key agencies (including landlords) and settings where there are opportunities for collaboration on both practical and strategic levels.
- Promoting understanding of homelessness prevention, including around identifying and appropriately responding to risk factors/warning signs.
- The project will need to be flexible to respond to changing needs and circumstances, and to ensure that trust can be built and maintained as much as possible.

Key aims and objectives

- People are supported to sustain their accommodation (private rented, social housing or owned accommodation)
- People are supported in a flexible way that is right for them for as short or as long as they need it.
- People with lived experience are able to play a key role in shaping the delivery and development of the project.
- People are supported to achieve their full potential, including accessing education, employment, training, voluntary work and meaningful social activities.
- People are able to achieve good quality of life and wellbeing.
- People are at less risk from becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness in the future.
- People are safeguarded and protected from harm.
- People are able to live independently, increasing their confidence and independent living skills, and preventing dependency on services.
- People are able to manage their housing tenure, including being able to:
 - Pay for their accommodation
 - Meet the responsibilities of having a tenancy or owning their own home
 - Know how to manage all necessary utility services at their accommodation
 - Deal with repairs and/or improvements to their property
 - Keep warm, comfortable, safe and secure
 - Get on with their neighbours
- People are able to benefit from formal and informal support networks when needed.
- People have a better understanding of their rights in relation to their housing and other associated areas.
- People do not experience social isolation.

Programme Outcomes

Primary Outcomes

- People have been able to engage with housing related support services (advice, information and assistance) and are better informed about the options available to them and/or know where to go for assistance
- People have been able to access emergency / temporary accommodation or short-term supported accommodation
- People can access and sustain a suitable settled home

Secondary Outcomes

- People can manage their existing accommodation/home which prevents them from either becoming homeless or from having to access more costly public services (e.g. health, social care services)
- People have positive and healthy relationships with people in their life
- People feel safe
- People have independence and control of their day to day lives
- People are engaged in something meaningful to them
 - Education
 - Training
 - Voluntary opportunities
 - Employment
 - Sports and recreation
 - Hobbies
 - Other activities in the community
 - Diversionary Activities
- People's physical health is good
- People are managing the impact of their dependency
- People's mental health and wellbeing is good

A. Delivery Requirements

i. Citizen Involvement

People supported must have their voices heard, both when it comes to shaping their own support and in influencing how the project itself develops and is reviewed.

ii. Hours

It is expected that support hours will be managed dynamically, and will be allocated flexibly in response to individual needs. Staff will work flexibly to provide responsive support and guidance. We would need to see this flexibility extend over 7 days, with staff cover provided between 8am - 10pm Monday to Friday and 9am – 10pm on weekends.

iii. Location

The service is to be delivered across Denbighshire. Staff will be required to deliver support/guidance and activities in a variety of settings including citizens' homes and in the community.

i. Support planning and risk assessments

For the element of the project that involves direct support, all paperwork used with citizens must be user friendly, proportionate, and appropriate to individual needs and circumstances. It should be designed in a psychologically informed way and utilise the personal housing plan issued by the Homelessness Prevention Team.

The project will work with citizens to create strengths-based and outcomes-focused support plans. Agreed exit and move on strategies will also be developed.

Support staff will undertake comprehensive risk assessments and will develop appropriate and effective risk management plans where required.

Individuals supported must have ownership of their needs and risk assessments. All support plans and risk assessments/management plans will be reviewed regularly.

ii. General

The support delivered will be housing related and conform to Housing Support Grant Guidance standards, purpose and eligibility criteria. The project should not provide personal care, health care, professional or therapeutic counselling, or formal advice services.

It is expected that sufficient time for psychologically informed environment approaches for staff wellbeing is included. As often the complexities of the people requiring support are vast, best practice would include the provision of external clinical supervision for staff to reduce vicarious trauma and burnout.

The project will be required to meet identified performance indicators, as outlined in section in section E, below.

iii. Community Benefits

Community Benefits must be delivered as part of this contract, and we are inviting proposals for these as part of the tender. We are particularly interested in proposals that will support Denbighshire County Council to achieve its Net Carbon Zero goal, and to support better access to meaningful employment opportunities for citizens who are homeless.

Suppliers may also wish to consider that a lack of affordable accommodation is one of our most significant challenges in preventing and ending homelessness across Denbighshire, and we are always extremely keen to explore new ways to address this pervasive problem.

B. Monitoring

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The below are estimated KPI target levels that the project would be monitored against on a quarterly basis, including through submission of case studies. We are however keen as part of the tender process to understand what level of performance that suppliers estimate they can achieve, based on evidence of previous targets/outcomes achieved, and anticipated resources and capability.

KPI	Target	Achieved
-----	--------	----------

People feel that the support/guidance/activities from this project has made a positive difference to their situation and to their wellbeing.	90%	
As a result of the support/guidance/activities from this project, people feel they have the tools they need to prevent homelessness or risk of homelessness in future.	90%	
People still in secure accommodation 6 months after exiting the service.	90%	
% of planned, successful exits, i.e. the project's support to stabilize the accommodation. (90%)	90%	

These KPIs are intended to provide a broad guide as to performance and quality standards. Where minimum targets are routinely met, there will typically be a lighter touch approach to monitoring. Where KPIs are routinely not met, monitoring may be increased to determine the causes for the under-delivery. As a new approach, the nature and target levels for these KPIs will be monitored and may be re-negotiated between the commissioners and providers.

Additional monitoring will be undertaken throughout the year, including via contract monitoring meetings as required, and submission of quarterly Performance Monitoring Returns. There will also be a requirement to submit Outcomes returns in accordance with the Housing Support Grant Outcomes Framework. Full service reviews will be undertaken as needed, and written notice will be given to the provider when a full review is required. These reviews will include the commissioners gathering citizen and other stakeholder feedback, and viewing a sample of support plans.

C. Eligibility

This project will provide guidance and support to people 16+ who are in need of an intervention to sustain their accommodation and prevent risk of future homelessness. This will include people across all protected characteristics, and from a wide variety of backgrounds who may or may not have children or pets. People supported must be resident in Denbighshire.

The project will not be able to provide direct support to anyone under 16; however, it is expected that children under 16 will benefit from this project.

The project will engage with individuals who may have a broad variety of support needs, related directly or indirectly to any future potential risk of homelessness. This project is not intended or expected to meet all of these support needs, but it must work to ensure that other appropriate support is in place where required, e.g. mental health support, debt advice etc. This will likely include taking an assertive and proactive role in coordinating multi-agency responses.

The areas of support needs of people accessing this project may include (but are not limited to) one or all of the following:

- Poor mental health and/or wellbeing
- Difficult home life / families struggling to cope / family breakdown

- Young people's support needs, including acknowledging the increased risk of homelessness due to factors such as vulnerability to family breakdown/abuse, leaving care and benefits rules.
- Problems with neighbours
- Survivors (or those at risk) of domestic abuse, sexual violence, or other violence
- Facing discrimination because of gender identity or sexuality, or any other protected characteristics
- Being socially isolated
- Low self-esteem
- Poor literacy and/or numeracy skills
- Financial difficulties, including debt, unaffordable rents etc.
- Difficulty budgeting
- Developmental disorders (e.g. autism)
- Physical or sensory disabilities
- Learning disability or other additional learning needs
- Chronic illnesses (including HIV & AIDS)
- Substance use issues
- Offending or history of offending
- Behavioral issues
- Multiple and complex needs, including complex trauma

People will only be excluded from this project in extreme circumstances, where risk is unmanageable. Any such decision will be made in collaboration between the provider and the Homelessness Prevention Team. These individuals will be referred to the most appropriate agency in all cases.

As above, the project should not provide personal care, health care, professional or therapeutic counselling, or formal advice services.

D. Access

Given the nature of the project, we would expect that all individuals accessing support/guidance will do so following an assessment and referral via applicable referral route.

We expect that this will be a responsive service that will offer support / guidance to people as soon as possible following their move in to their own tenancy / accommodation. We would also expect that any assessment processes will be designed in line with a psychologically informed approach.

E. Key partner agencies and related services

We would expect the project to work with a broad range of partner agencies and other organisations – many of which may not be 'typical' homelessness prevention partnership agencies, such is the nature of this project.

While not at all an exhaustive list, we would expect that the project will need to engage with the following types of organizations / services / settings:

- DCC Homelessness Prevention Multi-Disciplinary Team
- Local colleges/ educational institutes
- Leisure centres
- Indoor and outdoor activity centres
- Holistic therapy practitioners

- Arts sector
- Sport groups
- The Job Centre / DWP
- Benefits Advice Shop
- Housing Benefit
- Social Services, including Children and Adult Services
- Families First and Flying Start
- Other family support services / settings
- Local Authority Education Services
- Youth Services
- Mediation and counselling services
- Community groups / day centres
- Various third sector agencies working in Denbighshire
- The Denbighshire Single Point of Access and Children and Families Gateway
- Talking Points
- Denbighshire libraries/One Stop Shops
- Community Mental Health Teams, CAMHS, and non-statutory mental health services
- The Substance Misuse Service, and non-statutory substance misuse services
- Food banks
- Police
- Probation
- Youth Justice
- Prison services
- Debt advice services
- Housing advice services
- Housing Maintenance Workers
- DCC Community Housing
- Private sector landlords, including landlords associations
- Housing Associations
- Estate Agents
- Social Enterprises
- Working Denbighshire
- Other employability support services, e.g. Careers Wales
- General healthcare settings, e.g. GPs and hospitals
- Environmental Health / Housing Enforcement
- Other housing related support projects

F. Contract Dimensions

Start date:

TBC

Duration:

3 years (with an option to extend for 2 years)

**Minimum units
(these may be
negotiated as part of
the tender process):**

We expect that the project will engage with at least 170 individuals at any given time to provide direct support/guidance (and that each of these individuals will have recorded outcomes).

Maximum contract price: £ maximum for the full (5 year) contract term
£ per annum
(Continued funding is reliant on continued grant funding from the Welsh Government)