



**Executive  
27<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

**Report from the Director of  
Housing and Community Care**

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Authority to implement a Move On/Move In Team  
(START Plus) within Housing and Community Care**

Forward Plan Ref: H&CC-07/08-38

## 1.0 Summary

1.1 This report relates to the proposed implementation of a Move On/Move In team within Housing & Community Care to improve the Council's ability to refer vulnerable people to hostels, supported housing and floating support, and the work undertaken to develop this over the past four months.

This report requests authority to:

- Agree the implementation of the new service, START Plus
- Agree the timescale for implementation
- Agree the recommendations within the report

This report summarises the process undertaken in planning the development of the new team and the implications including benefits, and makes recommendations for taking the project forward.

## 2.0 Recommendations

Approve the establishment of a Move On/Move In Team to co-ordinate access to all supported accommodation (except sheltered housing) and floating support services in the borough, with a phased implementation from September - November 2008.

### 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The project is to develop and implement a Move On/Move In Team that will be the single point of contact for referral to supported accommodation and floating support services. This will tackle the issue of silting up in supported housing services, hostels and registered care homes, and also tackle current barriers that exist with regards to access to supported housing and support services, and move on from services into independent accommodation. The main alternative source of move on accommodation in the borough is the private rented sector.
- 3.2 The project is one of the elements supporting the key principles of how housing need for vulnerable people is addressed in the borough and will help to deliver Adult Social Care transformation through assisting people to move out from residential care.
- 3.3 The project will have a phased implementation from September – November 2008. The go-live and soft launch will be in October 2008, with a formal launch in December/January for a wider group of stakeholders.
- 3.4 A review of the position regarding move on in the borough carried out in 2004 demonstrated a 78% deficit between supply and demand for move on accommodation, with the position becoming more acute since that time (see paragraph 3.4 below). Additionally, silting up of supported housing and the significant shortfall of social housing properties have created extra pressures on the availability of and access to move on accommodation.
- 3.5 Data taken from the Supporting People providers' move on questionnaire developed for Phase 1 of the project indicated the following:
- 30% of service users were ready to move onto independent accommodation now
  - 75% will require move on accommodation within the next 2 years
  - Of those requiring move on accommodation, only 30% were able to move on in 2007/08
- 3.6 The development of the project is monitored through the Move On Strategic Group, through the Move On/Move In project action plan as agreed by the steering group, and through the Supporting People work plan.
- 3.7 Significant work has been undertaken to date to improve access to supported housing and support services, jointly with Housing and Community Care and has resulted in the START project, and the development of the role of the Hostels Move-On Co-ordinator and the Move On and Lettings Officer posts. The project will ensure a streamlined approach to service delivery and better co-ordination of services for service users.
- 3.8 The START project in Brent is the single point of access to all floating support services in the borough, and has been operational since November 2006,

initially developed as a one year pilot project. The evaluation of the project recommended continued further implementation of the project.

- 3.9 Since inception, START has received on average 100 referrals a month and has been successful in improving access to floating support services in a number of ways: ensuring that people in priority need requiring support are able to access services in a timely way, that providers receive appropriate referrals for their services, and that a more co-ordinated and transparent process for accessing support has been developed. All referrals to START come directly to the central access point within the Council (Housing and Community Care, within the Care & Support Unit). Referrals are received from stakeholders including statutory and voluntary sector organisations, self-referrals, relatives and carers.
- 3.10 In developing the Move On/Move In project, it is clear that the START project provides a solid foundation on which to build the new service, and is a central link in developing and taking the project forward.
- 3.11 Initial scoping identified a number of strands of work which linked to and referenced this project. These included:
- the Procurement Review
  - the Housing Advice Review
  - Development of the Single Homeless Advice Surgery
  - Transformation Project – Adult Social Care services
  - Housing Strategy and Homelessness Review
- 3.12 Brent has 3,907 people living in temporary accommodation (March 2008 data). The majority of these are cases that Brent has accepted a homeless duty to, and at any one time there are approximately 250 homeless applications under investigation. This indicates the level of pressure on current services and available resources.
- 3.13 The number of 16 and 17 year olds who approach as homeless and their placements is of particular concern to the Council. This project is seen as one element in improving the Council's ability to access suitable accommodation for this group.
- 3.14 The development of the Single Persons Homeless Advice Surgery is an important link to this project. This weekly surgery is a pilot, and is aimed at non-priority single homeless people, and co-ordinates access to support and advice services whilst refocusing work on the preventative agenda. The START project picks up referrals through the surgery, and it is proposed that the START Plus Team will complement this role and take direct referrals to accommodation services and assist in co-ordinating move on from accommodation services.
- 3.15 Using the initial project scoping report research and findings, the Steering Group agreed that the scoping for the team will include referrals from all Supporting People client groups with the exception of sheltered housing where referral arrangements are working efficiently. Adult Social Care services will be a key point of referral to the new service.

- 3.16 Research was undertaken within the West London region and more widely to identify arrangements and best practice of similar models in other areas. This has contributed to the development of a single point of access model that is the 'best fit' for Brent and meets the strategic needs of the Council.
- 3.17 The proposed new Team and Supporting People service providers will actively need to manage expectations of the new service. This is particularly important as the demands for assistance from this service will most likely be far greater than what can be provided. Therefore the Team will need to prioritise applicants for vacancies and move on, in order to make the best use of scarce resources.
- 3.18 The expected benefits from the implementation of the START Plus Team include:
- ❖ A more co-ordinated approach for single homeless people accessing housing support services through a single point – a 'One Stop Service'
  - ❖ An identified pathway and improved signposting to services, such as through the links to the new Single Homeless Advice Service
  - ❖ Clear and consistent information about services available for single homeless people, eligibility criteria, and how to access services
  - ❖ A more timely response in providing solutions for service users requiring information and services
  - ❖ More effective partnership working with the Voluntary and Community Sector and other Stakeholders, and reduced duplication of services
  - ❖ Empower Service Users and promote increased independence using a flexible and responsive approach to service delivery
  - ❖ Closely matching client need to housing/support services to ensure the right service for the right person to help sustain tenancies in community
  - ❖ Improving the sustainability of tenancies by providing appropriate support when placements are made into the Private Rented Sector
  - ❖ Establishing links with HELP (West London employment project) to ensure a holistic approach to addressing housing needs and options
  - ❖ Increased numbers of people moving out of supported accommodation, hostels and Registered Care Homes into independent tenancies
  - ❖ Improved take-up of the Private Rented Sector as the move-on alternative for people leaving supported housing, hostels and registered care homes
  - ❖ Better use of resources to generate efficiencies, directing resources to where they are most needed and will have the greatest impact
  - ❖ Increased availability of data and information used to strategically plan and commission services, aligned with other H&CC service areas
  - ❖ Improved take up of services by excluded groups and people in priority need, and increased customer satisfaction with the services provided

### **Next Steps**

- 3.19 This implementation of the project will involve extending the role of the START team, and also introduce a post to provide some direct resettlement support to single people with particular support needs as defined by the eligibility criteria.

3.20 The following are supplementary actions needed to successfully implement the project and delivery, and a number of these have already been achieved.

#### Single Point of Access

- Establish a Steering Group to implement the project involving service providers
- Standardise identification of clients ready to move on from Adult Social Care, and action
- Develop and agree eligibility criteria for the project with service providers
- Implement an IT system to support management and monitoring of referrals
- Recruit for posts for the new team and implement new structure
- Develop an Information Pack for the project with wide circulation

#### Improve Move On mechanisms

- Develop a system to create a pathway for move-through within supported accommodation services
- Implement financial and contractual penalties for move on within SP contracts, including improving information sharing about clients ready to move on
- Agree which voluntary sector organisations will have access to the move on quota from September 2008

#### Communication

- Develop a Communications Strategy to improve awareness of Supporting People services
- Undertake actions resulting from the Communications Strategy to ensure strategic alignment with other parts of the Council and implement the Action Plan
- Ensure publicity and awareness raising of START Plus and its expected benefits

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 The Supporting People Grant is a ring-fenced budget of £12.8 million per year which funds housing support provided by a range of agencies in Brent.

4.2 The proposed team will include nine people, of which four new posts will be created. The remaining posts are either in place currently within the Council in a particular form, and two are being performed by partner organisations. All the existing posts are being funded by the Supporting People grant or Brent PCT, and the funding can transfer across as the posts move into the new team.

4.3 The Supporting People Commissioning Body has also agreed additional funding of £250,000 per year towards the cost of the team. The on-going costs for a full year will be £404,937. Brent PCT have committed £40,000. The total SP funding for the new service for 7 months from September 2008–March 2009 will be £236,213. This Supporting People funding and PCT funding is sufficient to fund the project and associated costs, as indicated by the service budget and has been budgeted for within existing budgets, with no impact on other Council budgets.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The decision on how the current move on quota is split between voluntary sector agencies will be made differently following the implementation of the new Team from September 2008. This will not affect the Allocations scheme.

5.2 The new START Plus Team will make decisions on which organisations have access to the quota, based on their performance and using criteria which will be agreed with Providers in due course. Recommendations for move on will be made to HRC who will continue to do the allocation for move on, however, the method in which the nomination is received will change as it will come through the START Plus Team.

5.3 Other legal implications are noted in 7.4 regarding potential TUPE implications.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 Consultation to inform the implementation of the new team has included developing questionnaires and focus group questions for stakeholders with specific questions about how diversity and equalities issues could be tackled to minimize discrimination. Feedback from stakeholders to mitigate against this have been taken on board and included in the development of Phase 1 report to take the project forward.

6.2 Specific consultation has been undertaken with particular organisations within Brent to ensure that key issues relevant to diversity and equalities were identified at the outset and solutions proposed. This included voluntary and community sector organisations (VCS) specifically working with BME groups within Brent and included Innisfree Housing Association, Irish Centre Housing, Brent Irish Advisory Service (BIAS), Cricklewood Homeless Concern (CHC), Help Somali Foundation, the Brent Refugee Forum and Jewish Community Housing Association.

6.3 An Equality Impact Assessment/INRA has been undertaken as part of the project development. This has not identified any adverse implications for particular communities in developing the project, and has highlighted benefits for Brent's diverse communities from the project development and implementation. The new team will include people who will bring specialist knowledge within the disability, mental health and social exclusion fields.

## **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

- 7.1 A new staffing team has been proposed with the agreement of the Move On Strategic Group Steering Group. This is a mixture of existing Council employees, new posts and transfer of existing posts with partner organisations into the new service.
- 7.2 Two of these posts are currently provided by external contractors, and there are some implications for Council staff arising from the implementation of the new service as there will be some changes to existing roles.
- 7.3 The Council considers that TUPE may apply as the proposal is that two of the existing posts operated by partner organisations be brought into the new staffing structure. Advice has been sought on this from Legal.
- 7.4 There are accommodation implications for the new team as the current location of the existing Care & Support team is at full capacity. The Phase 1 report has recommended that the new team is accommodated alongside the existing START team as there is a direct link between the services provided, and this will approach will contribute towards a more coherent service delivery.

### **Background Papers**

Supporting People Grant Conditions (CLG)  
Brent Supporting People Strategy 2005/10  
Audit Commission Key Line of Enquiry (Housing Inspectorate) – Supporting People Inspection Programme  
Access to Services: Supporting People Unit and Care & Support Unit (2006)

### **Contact Officers**

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