

# Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Monday, 20 January 2020

## Rapid Access Accommodation and Link Working

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Committee is asked to note the update on the delivery of rapid access accommodation the development on the link worker role.
- 1.2 Committee is asked to note that case studies are being developed by the service area and be circulated to members on completion.

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# Report

## Rapid Access Accommodation and Link Working

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update on the delivery of rapid access accommodation for rough sleepers and the development of the link worker role.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 For the purposes of this report rough sleeping is understood to mean “The most extreme form of homelessness. It means people sleeping outside or anywhere not designed for human habitation for example parks, cemeteries, doorways or car parks”.
- 3.2 The Council in partnership with the Scottish Government developed the first Rapid Access Accommodation (RAA) in December 2017. RAA is a service that can only be accessed by street-based outreach workers and is accessible 24 hours per day, 365 days a year, with support provided on site by partner agencies.
- 3.3 Initially this service was provided in a 12 bedroom property in the former Hopetoun Guest House. Previous reports to the Housing and Economy Committee have provided updates on the delivery of the service.
- 3.4 Due to the success of this form of accommodation in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the city the service has been further developed and there are now 68 rooms (76 bed spaces) available in the city across 3 sites.

### 4. Main report

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- 4.1 All of the RAA accommodation has a partner agency that provides support to the residents. The services are:
- 4.1.1 Hopetoun House – Streetwork
  - 4.1.2 The Pleasance – Salvation Army
  - 4.1.3 Spring Gardens – Your Home
- 4.2 A range of supports are provided within RAA. These include but are not limited to:

- 4.2.1 Income maximisation,
  - 4.2.2 Support to obtain ID,
  - 4.2.3 Assistance to open a bank account,
  - 4.2.4 Support to register and bid for housing,
  - 4.2.5 Referrals to rehabilitation services,
  - 4.2.6 Support to access specialist services,
- 4.3 Each service operates with a high tolerance no barring policies to maintain engagement with vulnerable service users. Support providers will assist re-housing officers around contact with service users to ensure their housing application is kept live, to avoid lost contact and the need for future representation.
- 4.4 All services ensure that rough sleepers can leave the street and stay in RAA for however long it takes to stabilise and engage with support and alternative accommodation services.
- 4.5 A total of 301 people have been supported across the three RAA services since they opened. This includes 212 single males, 75 single females and seven couples.
- 4.6 All properties have high occupancy rates ranging from 92 – 99%, with average lengths of stay ranging between 28 and 50 days. The Hopetoun RAA service is now specifically for women. This change came as a direct result from feedback from vulnerable women who highlighted female only accommodation would be a safer option; resulting in slightly lower occupancy due to holding vacancies specifically for women.
- 4.7 All the services have produced excellent numbers of positive outcomes for residents ranging between 60 – 70%. A positive outcome would include:
- 4.7.1 Move to supported or alternative temporary accommodation,
  - 4.7.2 Accessing long term supported accommodation,
  - 4.7.3 Move to a private rented tenancy,
  - 4.7.4 Housing First tenancy,
  - 4.7.5 Accessing or returning to social tenancy.
- 4.8 The service is currently undertaking research which includes case studies to highlight the positive impact of these services on vulnerable people's lives who previously did not access services.
- 4.9 An early example of the type of information contained in the case studies relates to a service user with additional mental health issues, with a history of offending who prior to accessing RAA had 33 temporary accommodation placements over a 3-year period and had a history of rough sleeping and challenging behaviour entered RAA in January 2019. Since then they have stabilised, have had continuous supported accommodation and is now being referred for a Housing First tenancy.
- 4.10 Similarly, another service user with a history of mental health and addiction issues, who had also been the victim of domestic abuse accessed RAA in December 2018.

It was established that they were sleeping rough following gatekeeping issues in their tenancy. This service user remained in RAA for 6 months and is now in a supported flat and actively seeking a sheltered housing property now they are stable.

- 4.11 Most service users have an active substance abuse and/or mental health issue. To further develop support services for residents who are leading a chaotic lifestyle, the Council has developed a link worker model in partnership with the Scottish Government.
- 4.12 The link worker will provide housing options advice and a homeless assessment for residents if required on site, rather than requiring service users to make and keep an appointment at a locality homelessness service.
- 4.13 This service is vital in ensuring that the Council can statutorily assess and support people with recent experience of rough sleeping who are likely to have a range of complex needs and a history of non-engagement with services.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Officers will include future provision of RAA within the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, which is due to be presented to Committee later in 2020.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications from this update report.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 There is no impact on stakeholder or community impact as a result of this report.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 None.

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 None.