

Home for Good

The role of floating
support services
in ending rough
sleeping



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St Mungo's
Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives

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Foreword

A home for good is somewhere safe and secure, where you can live permanently.

It's what everyone is looking for. You have freedom – freedom to express yourself and make a place your own.

But today, not everyone can get a home for good. We don't think this is fair.

When someone who has been homeless moves into their own place, they might need help. If you've lived in a hostel for a long time it can be intimidating to move out on your own.

You might also need to get to know a new area. When you've been homeless, your new home might be far away from anywhere you know. Moving is stressful, and support to find a new community is really important. This might include finding new friends and social groups.

The most important thing is trust. Having a case worker you can go to can make a huge difference. It can be scary to ask for help, and sometimes you don't know where to turn. But someone who knows you, knows your past and what you're going through can be a huge support.

People might need support to make sure they don't go back to homelessness. This can include help to access and manage benefits – and applying for Universal Credit in particular can be a worry. It's very important to keep recovery going once someone is living independently.

Everyone should have a home for good, and the support they need to stay there.

**Outside In members,
on behalf of St Mungo's clients**

Outside In
The voice of St Mungo's clients



Executive summary

Rough sleeping is the most damaging form of homelessness. In autumn 2017, 4,751 people were sleeping rough in England. This figure has increased by 169% since 2010.¹ What's more, the number of people returning to the streets is also rising. Since 2015, **London has seen a 27% rise in the number of people returning to rough sleeping** after at least a year away from the streets.²

The Government has recognised that this is unacceptable and pledged to end rough sleeping by 2027, setting out a plan to achieve this in their recent Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in August 2018.

But it doesn't go far enough.

That's why in October 2018 St Mungo's launched the **Home for Good** campaign, which calls on the Government to deliver the long-term housing and support people need to rebuild their lives away from the street for good.

Floating support services are essential to ending rough sleeping.

Floating support – sometimes called tenancy sustainment support – helps people, who might otherwise struggle to cope, to live independently in their own home. It is focused on preventing vulnerable people from losing their home and, in the case of people who have slept rough, can prevent a return to the street. Support is delivered by skilled case workers who visit people in their homes or meet them somewhere close by.

Not only do these services improve outcomes for people with a history of sleeping rough and those at risk of homelessness, but there are also clear benefits for landlords and the taxpayer too. They enable people with support needs to live independently, increase the number of homes available to rent for vulnerable groups, and

reassure landlords that their tenants will be able to meet the requirements of their tenancy.

This report summarises existing evidence on the benefits of floating support, and outlines new research from St Mungo's on changes to funding for these services. **Our research reveals that these services have been subject to significant funding cuts over the past five years.**

These services are typically provided by local authorities, and were funded through the ring-fenced Supporting People programme until 2009. However, following the removal of the ring-fence, this funding began to decline.

New St Mungo's research sought to determine whether this funding decline continued after the initial removal of the ring-fence. We issued Freedom of Information requests to all local authorities in England that recorded 10 or more people sleeping rough in autumn 2017, asking them to provide details of their floating support contracts for the past five years.

Responses were received from 133 local authority districts, and 103 provided the financial details of their floating support services. These responses revealed that the areas with the highest levels of rough sleeping had cut funding for floating support. Our findings include:

- An overall **18%** decrease in funding for floating support services between 2013-14 and 2017-18.
- **61%** of areas reported a decline in funding for floating support services.
- This overall figure masks differences at the regional level. For example, across London boroughs there was a reduction of **41%** from 2013-14 funding levels.

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2018) *Rough sleeping Statistics Autumn 2017, England* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2017>

² CHAIN (2018) *CHAIN Annual Report April 2017 – March 2018* <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>

- Across eight out of the 10³ areas with the highest number of people sleeping rough in 2017 there was a **25%** reduction in funding.
- Funding for specialist floating support services has been particularly hard hit. Generic services experienced an increase of **5%** in funding between 2013-14 and 2017-18. During the same period there was a **41%** decline in funding for substance use services and **46%** for mental health services. Funding for ex-offender services declined by **88%**.

As a result of these cuts, fewer people at risk of rough sleeping are able to access the support that they need to remain in their homes.

The Government has acknowledged the benefits of floating support in its new Rough Sleeping Strategy. It is providing some funding for 'supported lettings' to deliver flexible support to people moving on from rough sleeping.

However, this funding won't cover what has already been cut from floating support services and is only available for a two-year period.

Significantly more investment is required to reverse the cuts to floating support services and restore what has been lost.

Sustained and secure funding is needed to enable local authorities to plan and also deliver effective services to end rough sleeping for good.

That's why the St Mungo's Home for Good campaign is calling on the Government to set up a new programme to provide guaranteed, long-term funding for homelessness services, including floating support.

In order to ensure that funding for these services is protected in the long term, the Government must:

Urgently review the decline in funding for housing related support services, including floating support, which are designed to help people at risk of homelessness to access and sustain stable housing.

Commit to guaranteed funding for local authorities to plan and commission homelessness services. This must include housing related support services, and ensure a tailored package of support is available to everyone who has slept rough.

Ensure that local homelessness and rough sleeping strategies include a focus on the provision of floating support.

Everyone deserves a home for good. By implementing these recommendations, and increasing access to safe, secure and genuinely affordable housing, the Government can stop people returning to the streets permanently.

³ One area failed to respond, and the other had not provided any floating support services over the five-year period.

Introduction

We can end rough sleeping.

By 2010, 20 years of action by successive governments meant the end of rough sleeping was in sight. However, since then spiralling housing costs, increasing insecurity for private renters and cuts to services that prevent homelessness have seen rough sleeping increase dramatically.

According to official government figures, 4,751 people were sleeping rough in England in autumn 2017.⁴ **This is an increase of 169% since 2010.** What's more, the number of people returning to the streets is also rising. Since 2015, **London has seen a 27% rise in the number of people returning to rough sleeping** after at least a year away from the streets. In 2018 when the total number of people sleeping rough in London fell, the number of people returning to sleeping on the streets continued to rise.⁵

Rough sleeping is the most dangerous form of homelessness. The average age of death for a man who dies whilst sleeping rough or in homelessness services is only 47. For women it is 43.⁶ Analysis by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism revealed that at least 449 people died while homeless in the UK in the year up to October 2018.⁷

In order to stop people from dying on the streets, we must first stop them living there.

The Government has pledged to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it altogether by 2027. The new national rough sleeping strategy, published in August 2018, is an important first step towards achieving this goal. However, more must be done to ensure that people can move on from rough sleeping and rebuild their lives away from the streets for good.

Access to the right housing is crucial.

By building more social housing, ensuring these homes are available to people who have slept rough, and improving affordability and stability in the private rented sector, the Government can ensure that people with a history of rough sleeping can access the homes they desperately need.

The Government must also recognise that many people need support to remain in these homes.

Floating support services can help people to gain independence, sustain a tenancy, and access services such as mental health or drug and alcohol support.

Crucially, floating support can prevent people from returning to rough sleeping once they have begun to build a life away from the street.

Everyone deserves a home for good.

However, in recent years the homelessness services that help people to move into, and remain in, independent housing have faced drastic funding cuts. This report presents new research by St Mungo's on changes to funding for floating support services, and outlines recommendations that the Government should implement to ensure these vital services are available in the future in order to help end rough sleeping.

4 MHCLG (2018) *Rough sleeping Statistics Autumn 2017, England* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2017>

5 CHAIN (2018) *CHAIN Annual Report April 2017 – March 2018* <https://files.datapress.com/london/dataset/chain-reports/2017-06-30T09:03:07.84/Greater%20London%20full%202016-17.pdf>

6 Crisis (2011) *Homelessness: a silent killer* <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/health-and-wellbeing/homelessness-a-silent-killer-2011/>

7 The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (2018) <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2018-10-08/homelessness-a-national-scandal>

Chapter 1:

What is floating support?

Local authorities commission different types of services to allow people to get the support that is right for them. If they have high needs they might be placed into supported accommodation or, increasingly, Housing First.⁸

Floating support is usually targeted at people with low to medium needs and it exists to support them to live independently in their own home. It is focused on preventing the loss of housing and, in the case of people who have slept rough, a return to the street. Support is delivered by skilled case workers, who visit people in their own homes or meet them somewhere nearby such as a café or library. They can also accompany them to appointments dependent on their needs.

Tenancy sustainment and support

These services are also sometimes known as tenancy sustainment, but the term floating support is used throughout this report to acknowledge that the support provided often goes beyond simply maintaining settled accommodation. This additional support often includes assistance navigating healthcare, accessing employment or training services and developing life skills.

Emotional support is also provided. Service users often comment on the importance of the relationship they have developed with their case worker when describing how floating support has benefitted them. Case workers can act as mediators in difficult situations, or advocate on behalf of their clients when engaging with other services.

Support is personalised. For example, some people need specific help to manage their finances during a crisis to prevent arrears and eviction, while others require ongoing support with substance use or mental health problems. The type of support provided is dependent on the skills of the case workers and the specific service which is commissioned.



⁸ Nicholas Pleave et al (2017) *Using Housing First in Integrated Homelessness Strategies*
https://www.mungos.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ST_Mungos_HousingFirst_Report_2018.pdf

Case study: Peter

Having worked in recruitment for many years, Peter was made redundant in 2014. This was the start of a sequence of events which led to him becoming homeless. He ended up sleeping on the streets for five days. *“Being on the street is a scary situation. I got attacked a few times, I was seen as fresh blood.”*

After a year and a half in a hostel, Peter moved into his own place.

When he moved in, Peter was offered regular support by the Tenancy Sustainment Team (TST). He would meet his keyworker every two or three weeks, and get regular check-ins by call or text. But it was by no means plain sailing. *“It’s a struggle. It took me a year to settle in and get used to having my own front door, getting worried whenever there’s a bump in the night.”*

When it came to his TST worker he admits *“I was pretty obstreperous when I started, I was angry, high maintenance. My worker would have to put up with me, but she handled it very well. Because I had someone there, who didn’t give*

up, gave me the confidence to have a go. I learned to use my anger positively, to give me my self-confidence back.”

Over time, Peter engaged more and more proactively with the offers of support available and now regularly comes into the TST offices, often once a week. He uses the space to make phone calls and access the computer to send emails.

If he hadn’t had this support the consequences could have been serious, as Peter had never lived alone in his adult life. *“It would have made me feel abandoned and lost... coming out of the trauma, feeling there’s no one to lean on, God knows what kind of negative effect that could have had. I could have failed my tenancy, and if you screw that up then you’re back on the street.”*

Peter now feels more prepared to look to the future positively. *“I feel capable. I need to start work again. I’ve applied to jobs across all sorts of sectors... I’ve now got the will to go out and work and get back on track.”*

A recent funding prospectus for the Government's *Move On Fund* described the following activities as constituting floating support:⁹

- **Help to achieve financial independence**, including support with welfare, rent payments and rent arrears repayment schedules, and setting up utility payments
- Support to learn **crucial living skills** such as budgeting and cooking
- Assistance in accessing **training or employment opportunities**
- Work towards **digital inclusion**
- Help to seek appropriate support or treatment for **substance use** or **mental health problems**
- **Prevention of tenancy breakdowns**, responding effectively to crises for those who are not coping in their accommodation
- A reduction in the **social and economic exclusion** of former rough sleepers.

Specialist services

Some floating support services are generic and support anyone with a housing related support need in the local area. Others are focused on specific groups and provide tailored support to people with a particular support need. For example, some floating support services focus exclusively on ex-offenders, or people with a substance use or mental health problem.

Specialist services offer bespoke support in finding and maintaining housing (which can present particular challenges for certain groups such as ex-offenders), and in navigating complex systems such as the mental healthcare system or rehabilitation services. They can also offer support which reflects the unique experiences of their specific client group. For example, recent St Mungo's research has highlighted the unique experiences of women who sleep rough, who are more likely to experience sexual violence and stigmatisation.¹⁰ Women can benefit hugely from floating support, but services for them should always be trauma informed and reflect their specific needs and experiences.

Floating support workers are not clinicians and do not offer healthcare. Their role is focused on ensuring people can maintain their housing, but may also involve advocacy for the individual and helping them to access treatment.

Flexible support

As the support is mobile, it can be provided to people living in any type of housing, including social housing and privately rented properties.

This flexibility allows services to respond to the needs of different individuals. It also means that a wide variety of services fit the description of floating support. At one end of the spectrum, there are services offering basic practical support on a very short term basis. At the other end, some services, including the St Mungo's Tenancy Sustainment Team (North London), offer ongoing support. The key uniting factor is that support is mobile, and focused on tenancy sustainment and meeting individual needs.

⁹ MHCLG (2018) *Move On Fund Prospectus* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/move-on-fund>

¹⁰ St Mungo's (2018) *Women and Rough Sleeping: A Critical Review* <https://www.mungos.org/publication/women-and-rough-sleeping-a-critical-review/>

Case study: A day in the life of a case worker – Sandra



My day started at 9.30am with a trip to hospital. I was supporting one of my clients, Marie, to see a doctor; as she struggles on her own. I wanted to ensure she was listened to, got the right treatment, and was properly supported. Many of our clients can get ignored so I had to advocate on her behalf, and was pushing the doctor to refer her to a urologist. I stayed with her until midday, then headed back to the office.



I had a quick lunch, and wrote up my notes from the morning. I then had to start a Universal Credit claim for a client who had struggled to do this on their own. He had a drug use problem but had been working until quite recently. Unfortunately he suffered a relapse and binged on cocaine and heroin, causing him to go £1,000 into rent arrears and received a court order. He doesn't have access to a computer or even an email address, so we had to set up everything from scratch. To do all of this takes at least an hour.



After that I worked on the case of a client who is going to court for eviction. He is originally from Italy and, due to issues with his immigration status, he stopped getting housing benefit, and now he is in rent arrears. I'm going with him to court and to give a statement.



I saw a client in the office who is pregnant with twins – her electricity had run out and she needed £10 to top up the meter. I worked with her to ensure this was covered so she can sleep easily.



I finished off the day by making a referral for one of my clients to access a grant. I also made phone calls to clients who had called me throughout the day, and confirmed the next day's appointments.

This is a fairly typical day for me, but things always change. I have a caseload of 28 clients who have a variety of needs. They require different types of support as such help to settle in to new accommodation, or to attend to a drug and alcohol service support team. Sometimes I will go to their house and visit them, and sometimes they'll come into the office. We have drop-ins on Monday or Friday for any clients to pop in and get support, they can use the computer or phone too if they need to.

Helping people with their benefits takes up about 70% of my time. Half of my clients are now on Universal Credit.

I have quite a lot of independence in the role. One of the most important things when you first start is building trust and a relationship with clients. It's tough but rewarding. I recently helped a client prepare and attend an interview, and now he works in a solicitor's office. He just needed encouragement, he had such low self-esteem. That type of work is very rewarding for a floating support worker.



Housing First

Floating support is sometimes mistakenly conflated with Housing First. However, despite some similarities, there are several key differences between the two service models. Some of this confusion has arisen because floating support services have sometimes been incorrectly labelled as Housing First.

Housing First services provide intensive support to clients for as long as required (although this can be dependent on commissioning cycles), and follow a set of seven core principles for service delivery.¹¹ This includes a focus on the human right to housing, choice and control for service users, and a harm reduction approach. There are also low caseloads for case workers, and services are focused on people who have complex and on-going support needs.

This intensity of support, the high support needs of the client group, and the clearly defined ethos of service delivery combine to make Housing First unique.¹² Housing First services are usually offered to people who are moving straight off the streets, or for whom other supported housing routes may have been ineffective.

Floating support is made up of a much wider range of services which are focused on individuals who have low or medium support needs. As a result, services are often time limited. Some do offer more intensive and long term support but, crucially, do not follow the seven core Housing First principles. Often floating support will be offered to people who have benefited from a period in supported housing and are moving into independent accommodation as the next stage in their recovery.

Both Housing First and floating support have an important role to play in ending homelessness. A mix of service models is crucial if everyone is to access the support they need, when they need it.

11 Nicholas Pleace et al (2017) *Using Housing First in Integrated Homelessness Strategies* https://www.mungos.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ST_Mungos_HousingFirst_Report_2018.pdf

12 Homeless Link (2016) *Housing First in England: The Principles* https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Housing%20First%20in%20England_The%20Principles.pdf

Chapter 2:

The benefits of floating support

Studies have consistently found that floating support provides benefits across a number of different measures, including tenancy sustainment, client satisfaction and cost effectiveness.

In a survey of 22 different providers of floating support, respondents reported that the biggest impacts of their services are to enable people to live in 'ordinary' housing (100%), increasing social inclusion (88%), improving users' health (82%), preventing tenancy breakdown (76%) and obtaining a tenancy (71%).¹³

In July 2018, St Mungo's published *On My Own Two Feet*, a piece of qualitative peer-led research which sought to answer the question 'why do some people return to sleeping rough after time off the streets?'

The research team found that there were a number of push and pull factors which often worked together to cause someone to return to rough sleeping.

Push factors included being evicted, relationship breakdowns, housing not meeting needs or being of poor quality, and leaving accommodation due to isolation and loneliness.

Pull factors included feeling competent in survival (compared to feeling incompetent when managing a tenancy), feeling 'addicted' to the streets, life on the streets being busy and interesting (compared to boredom or loneliness or lack of occupation in accommodation) and having people around.

The report also identified 'holes in the safety net.' These are the missing protective factors that – if present – could help prevent a person returning to rough sleeping. They may not trigger rough sleeping episodes, but combine to weaken someone's protection from it, so when a crisis or trigger happens they are less able to avoid returning to the streets. Holes in the safety net include:

- Lacking a social network with resources to help (either having exhausted that option, or not having a family or friends who can help)
- Trauma and unmet health needs, and lack of support with these
- Difficulties maintaining a tenancy (and lack of support with this), and not knowing legal rights
- Inability to secure a new tenancy (no deposit, landlords won't take you, council won't house you).

Many of these problems would be overcome by access to unconditional support, which is flexible, informal, and based upon trust.

One of the key recommendations of the report was that everyone who has slept rough should have access to tenancy sustainment support for as long as they need it. This was seen by the research group as a key method for overcoming both push and pull factors, and the holes in the safety net.



¹³ RSM McClure Watters et al (2012) *The Effectiveness of Floating Support*
https://www.nihe.gov.uk/effectiveness_of_floating_support_summary_report_december_2012.pdf

Reducing homelessness

For people with a history of homelessness, including rough sleeping, the benefits of floating support can be particularly impressive.

The FOR-HOME study tracked the resettlement of 400 single homeless people from supported housing into independent tenancies across England, and reviewed the differences between people who had access to floating support and those who did not. The subjects of the study who had on-going contact with a floating support service were considerably less likely to have had rent arrears (32% vs 45%), or have been taken to court for rent arrears (15% vs 22%), in the past 12 months than those who did not.¹⁴ As a result, tenants in receipt of floating support are less likely to be evicted due to arrears.

Intensive floating support can be very effective in supporting people with a long history of rough sleeping into long term accommodation. Clearing House is a London based service which provides people who have slept rough with a housing association property, alongside on-going floating support provided by two Tenancy Sustainment Teams. In the first 25 years of operation, 92% of Clearing House tenants never returned to rough sleeping. Before this, the same individuals had spent 110,000 nights sleeping rough.¹⁵

Amongst the thousands of people who have benefitted from this service are 291 'hard to reach' clients who have been housed since 2009. As of 2016, more than half of this group were still living in their Clearing House homes, and the number of occasions they had slept rough reduced from 5,740 to 252.¹⁶

Client satisfaction

People report very high satisfaction with floating support services. In one study, based on 11 focus groups, all participants stated that their case worker had been very effective in providing support, and that this reached beyond tenancy sustainment into softer outcomes such as improved self-confidence and motivation.¹⁷

Another study found that 88% of respondents were "very" or "fairly" satisfied with the support they received. Respondents reported tangible outcomes from this support, including help to claim welfare, payment of bills and rent, and improved relationships with landlords. Many also mentioned the personal relationships they had developed with their case workers, with 38% reporting that they had provided support for emotional or personal problems.¹⁸

Access to social housing

In addition to helping people to maintain a tenancy, floating support can play a key role in overcoming the barriers that people with a history of rough sleeping face in accessing long term housing.

Social housing providers have become increasingly reluctant to accept tenants with complex needs, and evidence suggests that landlord confidence in letting to this group has weakened as a direct result of poor availability of floating support services.¹⁹

The recent St Mungo's *Home for Good* report²⁰ outlined the benefits of social housing for people with a history of rough sleeping due

14 Maureen Crane et al (2011) *The For-Home Study* <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/scwru/pubs/2011/craneetal2011forhomefinalreport.pdf>

15 St Mungo's (2016) *Clearing House at 25* https://www.mungos.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CH_25_Report_Final.pdf

16 Ibid

17 RSM McClure Watters et al (2012) *THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FLOATING SUPPORT* https://www.nihe.gov.uk/effectiveness_of_floating_support_summary_report_december_2012.pdf

18 Maureen Crane et al (2011) *The For-Home Study* <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/scwru/pubs/2011/craneetal2011forhomefinalreport.pdf>

19 S. Fitzpatrick (2017) *The homelessness monitor: England 2017* https://crisis.org.uk/media/236823/homelessness_monitor_england_2017.pdf

20 St Mungo's (2018) *Home for Good campaign report* <https://www.mungos.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Home-for-Good-campaign-report.pdf>

to its stability and affordability. However, it has become very difficult to access this type of housing. Research by Crisis found that the number of new social housing lets to single homeless households of working age has fallen continuously from 19,000 in 2007-08 to 13,000 in 2015-16. The fall as a proportion of all new lets is similar, from 12% to 8%.²¹

In one survey, housing associations were asked to identify barriers to housing homeless households. The most frequently mentioned barriers were lack of housing stock and suitable properties, but 30% of respondents cited a higher risk of arrears and 28% cited the higher cost of providing services or support to formerly homeless tenants.²²

Local authority housing officers have directly linked the falling availability of social lets to a decline in access to floating support.²³

Access to social housing has become incredibly difficult. There were over 1.15 million families and individuals on social housing waiting lists last year in England, but only 290,000 social homes were made available in 2016-17.²⁴ As a result, social landlords are reportedly “refusing to house anyone with rent arrears or support needs” and “require applicants to be tenant ready.” One housing officer directly related this to a lack of floating support, stating that social landlords are “more reluctant to take households with support needs as support is limited due to cuts in Supporting People funding.”²⁵ This not only prevents people from moving on into independent living when they are ready, but also has the knock-on effect of creating a bottleneck in homeless hostels, trapping some people in housing that is designed to be temporary, and still more out on the streets.

The private rented sector

Private sector landlords are also unwilling to let to people who are homeless, with 80% stating that they would not let to this group. Of those who were unwilling to rent to people who are homeless, 83% stated that this was due to concerns about rent arrears, while 75% had concerns that tenants from this group would require more intensive management and support.²⁶

Access to adequate floating support services can go a long way to allay these concerns around rent arrears and tenancy management. These services support tenants to pay their rent in full and on time, and the evidence outlined above shows that access to floating support reduces the likelihood that tenants with support needs will accrue rent arrears. Floating support case workers can also mediate the relationship between tenant and landlord, decreasing the need for landlords to ‘manage’ a tenant.

Value for money

Floating support services also offer excellent value for money to the taxpayer. PwC recently conducted a cost-benefit analysis of homelessness services. This included a review of avoided costs to local authorities and the Exchequer through the provision of floating support services, which reduce the use of other public services. It also included estimates of the increased economic output of service users. The analysis was projected to 2041, based on a forecast of the number of people likely to sleep rough or be homeless in the future, in order to assess the costs and benefits of Crisis’ plan to end homelessness.²⁷

21 Crisis (2018) *Everybody In* https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/239346/everybody_in_how_to_end_homelessness_in_great_britain_2018.pdf

22 National Housing Federation (2018) *Homelessness Survey: Discussion paper* <https://www.housing.org.uk/resource-library/browse/homelessness-survey-discussion-paper/>

23 S. Fitzpatrick (2017) *The homelessness monitor: England 2017* https://crisis.org.uk/media/236823/homelessness_monitor_england_2017.pdf

24 Shelter (2017) https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/articles/one_year_on_from_grenfell,_millions_still_stuck_on_housing_waiting_lists

25 S. Fitzpatrick (2017) *The homelessness monitor: England 2017* https://crisis.org.uk/media/236823/homelessness_monitor_england_2017.pdf

26 K Reeve et al (2016) *Home. No Less will do* https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237166/home_no_less_will_do_crisis.pdf

27 Crisis (2018) *Everybody In* https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/239346/everybody_in_how_to_end_homelessness_in_great_britain_2018.pdf

This process was consistent with guidance in the Treasury's Green Book on economic appraisal and evaluation.

PwC found that if every potential person sleeping rough between 2017 and 2041 with medium or low support needs was provided with floating support, alongside a Guaranteed Deposit Scheme and financial support, this support would cost £98million (at 2017 prices) but deliver benefits of £321million.

For every £1 spent on support, more than £3 would be delivered in benefits.²⁸

What does a good service look like?

Floating support services are more likely to produce positive outcomes if they are tailored to the needs of service users. As outlined in Chapter 1, floating support can be targeted at a number of different client groups. This creates a challenge in demonstrating the benefits of these services.

The key differential is the ratio of case workers to clients. The positive outcomes for people with a history of homelessness that are outlined in this chapter are frequently associated with more intensive floating support services, where ratios will be under 1:30.

Another key factor is the duration of support. One major study found that when people with support needs and a history of homelessness had accessed floating support for a period of only six months, some struggled to transition to fully independent living. Some participants in

the study coped well after their tenancy support ended, but others experienced difficulties either in managing the everyday challenges associated with independent living or in addressing changes in their circumstances. For example, among those who initially had a tenancy support worker when they were resettled but for whom the service had subsequently stopped after six months, 31% were living in squalid or dirty accommodation and 44% were having problems with utility payments nine months later.²⁹

However, for others with low support needs, support may not be required for longer than a few weeks when a crisis occurs. For example, Critical Time Interventions are an intensive form of floating support, designed to be provided over the short term during periods of transition such as release from prison.³⁰ A number of different services are required to meet the needs of everyone with housing related support needs.

It is also crucial that people who access floating support are able to move on from this support at the right time for them. However, connecting floating support to specific social housing units may deter clients from moving on into fully independent living. The Clearing House programme has had undoubted benefits for its clients, but its floating support provision is directly linked to specific housing association properties. This means that when clients no longer need support, they are expected to move out of their homes. This can create real difficulties particularly due to the shortage of affordable housing in London, which has been exacerbated by welfare reforms such as the Local Housing Allowance rate freeze and the introduction of the Benefit Cap.

²⁸ PwC (2018) *Assessing the costs and benefits of Crisis' plan to end homelessness* https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238957/assessing_the_costs_and_benefits_of_crisis-plan_to_end_homelessness_2018.pdf

²⁹ M Crane (2016) *Rebuilding Lives* <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/publications/rebuildinglives-full.pdf>

³⁰ Nicholas Pleace et al (2017) *Using Housing First in Integrated Homelessness Strategies*

https://www.mungos.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ST_Mungos_HousingFirst_Report_2018.pdf

Summary

Where appropriate floating support is available it can bring huge benefits, not just to service users but also to landlords, housing providers and the public purse. Service users can access practical and emotional support, which helps them to retain their home and move forward in their lives, and landlords are reassured that the likelihood of rent arrears or property damage will decrease. However, these services must be planned and delivered in a strategic way to ensure that needs are fully met.

Case study: Marie

Marie came off the streets 10 years ago. During and prior to that she experienced domestic violence, as well as substance use, *“I went off the rails, ended up being a junkie.”*

She spent a short amount of time in a halfway house before moving into her own housing association property in North London, at which point she began receiving floating support.

Marie has been supported by Sandra, her current case worker, for about a year and half now. She visits Marie in her home, which she shares with her pet dog and cat. *“She comes round whenever I need her, I’d be lost without her.”*

Marie also visits the office when her health allows. *“Sandra’s office is on my doorstep. Anytime I get letters, they keep a copy for me, which gives me peace of mind, everything always gets sorted. She also comes to the doctors and hospital with me, as I have some health problems at the moment.”*

Marie feels strongly that Sandra has made a big difference to her life. *“She makes my life easier, I sleep easier because I don’t have to worry about anything...I have a temper. I think I would have ended up in prison if I didn’t have support. The best thing I ever did was get clean. I’ve been off drugs for 30 years and 26 years clean from alcohol, but even if I relapsed I know there would be help. I see my case worker as more of a friend. It’s nice to have someone to talk to. She’s someone I can confide in. I’d go loopy without her.”*

Reflecting on her experiences, she says *“I lost everything. I lost two boys, a lovely home, and ended up on the streets. I should have been dead yonks ago. I should not be here. It’s the Irish mentality, strong as an ox.”* Thanks to her own personal determination and the support of Sandra she’s in a much better place and says *“right now, I’m happy.”*

Chapter 3:

Policy context

Developing floating support

Floating support services largely began to develop in the 1990s, when a number of new service models were created by providers seeking alternatives to accommodation based support for vulnerable people.

In 1991, the Housing Corporation (the predecessor to the Homes and Communities Agency) began to allow housing associations to bid for revenue funding which could fund mobile support services. This support could be provided to people living in any housing association property, rather than being limited to accommodation based services, such as homeless hostels. This allowed housing associations to grow their floating support services.

Supporting People

Following this initiative the Government announced in 1999 that it would introduce a new funding stream for services designed to support vulnerable tenants, known as the Supporting People programme, starting in 2003. This programme would provide funding for all housing related support, including supported accommodation and floating support. In the interim, services were funded through Transitional Housing Benefit.

The promise of on-going funding and long term security led to a dramatic increase in the availability of services. In particular, floating support services – which could be provided relatively quickly and without the large start-up costs associated with providing accommodation – expanded significantly.

By April 2003 there were 106,892 households receiving floating support.³¹ During this period the Tenancy Sustainment Teams which support tenants in Clearing House properties were also established.

Removal of ring-fenced funding

When the Supporting People programme was introduced in April 2003, it was a £1.8 billion ring-fenced pot of grant funding for local authorities. This funding was subsequently cut by £15 million in 2004-05 and then again by £85 million for the year 2005-06.³²

The ring-fence was removed from Supporting People in 2009. The Government had recently introduced a Public Service Agreement focused on “increasing the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training.” Local authority funding became more flexible in order to achieve this target, which was monitored by central departments.

However, the Public Service Agreement system was abolished in 2010 and in April 2011 the Supporting People allocation was subsumed into the Formula Grant (or general funding) paid by central government to local authorities. From this point, there was no longer a specific budget paid by central government to local authorities for housing related support services.

These changes were then followed by large scale cuts to local authority funding from central government, and councils began to experience extreme financial pressures.³³ As a result, funding for floating support and other housing related support services began to decline.

31 DCLG (2008) *Research into the effectiveness of floating support services for the Supporting People programme Final Report* <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/floating-support-research.pdf>

32 The Guardian (2004) *Supporting People Q & A* <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2004/dec/03/housingpolicy>

33 Institute of Fiscal Studies (2016) *A time of revolution? British local government finance in the 2010s* <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/comms/R121.pdf>



The results of these funding changes have been stark. In 2018, the National Audit Office found that there had been a 69% reduction in spending by councils on housing related support services between 2010 and 2017, compared with a fall of 46% in housing services overall.³⁴ The following chapter reveals new evidence of the changes in funding for floating support services in particular:

Funding for the future

The Government has recently acknowledged the value of offering floating support to people with a history of rough sleeping.

In the Government's new Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in August 2018, it states that *"a lack of support funding is a major barrier to landlords of all types bringing forward properties to those with greater needs, as they do not have confidence that tenants will receive support that will enable them to sustain their tenancies."* The strategy pledged that £19million of funding would be made available over two years to fund

flexible support and tenancy sustainment for people with a history of rough sleeping.³⁵

This is a welcome first step towards restoring funding for floating support services. However, as the following chapter outlines, there has been a consistent decline in funding for these services over an extended period and a range of specialist services have been lost.

This new funding is not enough to replace services which have already been lost. More must be done to ensure that floating support services are able to adequately support people to avoid rough sleeping for good, now and in the future.

St Mungo's has commissioned new research, which is due to report in 2019, on the changes to local authority spending on a much wider range of homelessness services over the past decade. This research will also reflect on the impact of changes to spending and how future funding arrangements can put services on a more sustainable footing.

³⁴ The National Audit Office (2018) *Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018* <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Financial-sustainability-of-local-authorities-2018.pdf>

³⁵ MHCLG (2018) *Rough sleeping strategy* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf

Chapter 4:

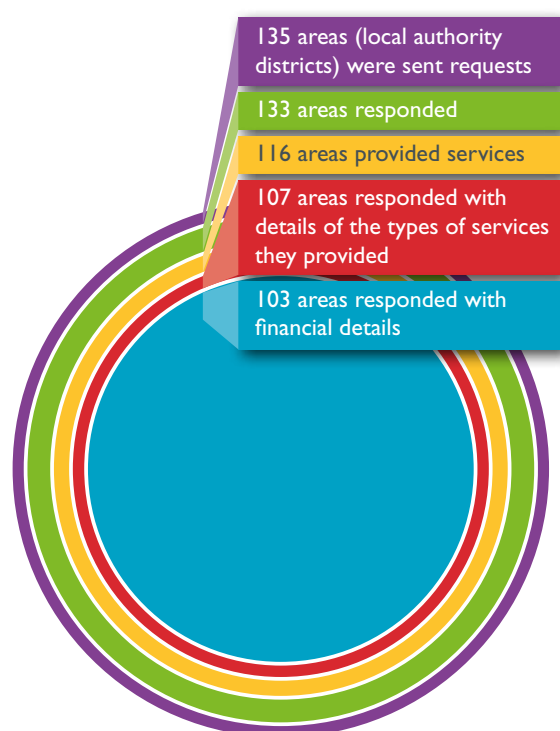
Funding for floating support services

Despite the clear benefits of floating support, access to these services has become restricted since 2009. The 69% reduction in local authority spending on housing related support services between 2010 and 2017 has inevitably led to the closure and decline of support services, including floating support.³⁶

In order to better understand the changes to funding for floating support services, St Mungo's issued Freedom of Information (Fol) requests to local authorities across England requesting details of floating support contracts in their area.

Evidence gathering

In total, we sought information from 135 local authority districts and unitary authorities in England (including London boroughs). These were areas which reported 10 or more people sleeping rough in the official rough sleeping counts and estimates from autumn 2017.³⁷



We also issued requests to all county councils and combined authorities which operate across the selected areas, as responsibility for commissioning housing related support services can sometimes lie with these authorities. The complexity of commissioning these services is explored in more detail below.

We asked the authorities to provide information on all floating support services that had been available in their local area since the 2013-14 financial year. As outlined in detail above, funding for services initially began to decline after the ring-fence was removed from Supporting People funding, and continued after funding was subsumed into the Formula Grant. This research aimed to determine whether funding cuts had continued after this initial period, up until the 2017-18 financial year. Floating support services are often not specifically designed for people with a history of rough sleeping, but can help to prevent instances of rough sleeping and be accessed by people with a history of homelessness. We were specifically interested in how funding for these services had altered over this period, and how the configuration of services had changed.

In addition to these requests, in-depth interviews were undertaken with four commissioners from a variety of regions, covering both rural and urban areas and different types of local authority.

³⁶ The National Audit Office (2018) *Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018* <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Financial-sustainability-of-local-authorities-2018.pdf>

³⁷ MHCLG (2018) *Rough sleeping Statistics Autumn 2017, England* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2017>

Responses

We received responses from 133 areas – all but two of the areas we approached.

These responses only covered floating support services provided or commissioned by the authorities. They do not cover related but separate service provision, such as services funded by housing associations or the voluntary sector, which are outlined in more detail in the following chapter.

Services were provided in 116 areas. In 17 areas (13% of respondents) no floating support had been available in the past five years. Commissioners in 103 areas provided the financial details of service contracts.

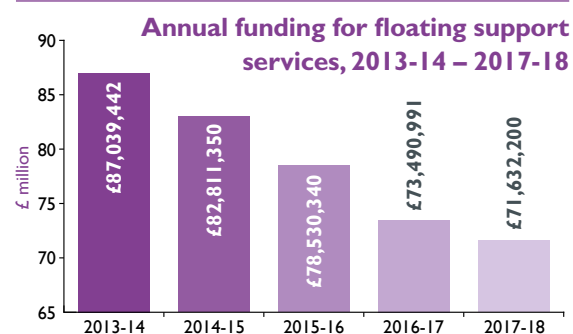
Funding changes

Our research found an overall 18% decrease in funding for floating support services across the 103 areas which provided the financial details of their contracts, between 2013-14 and 2017-18. The total annual funding for floating support in these areas was £15,407,242 lower in 2017-18 when compared to 2013-14.

This overall figure masks differences at the regional level. Across the 13 London boroughs which provided financial data and one pan-London service, there was a reduction of 41% from 2013-14 funding (a loss of £8,526,773).

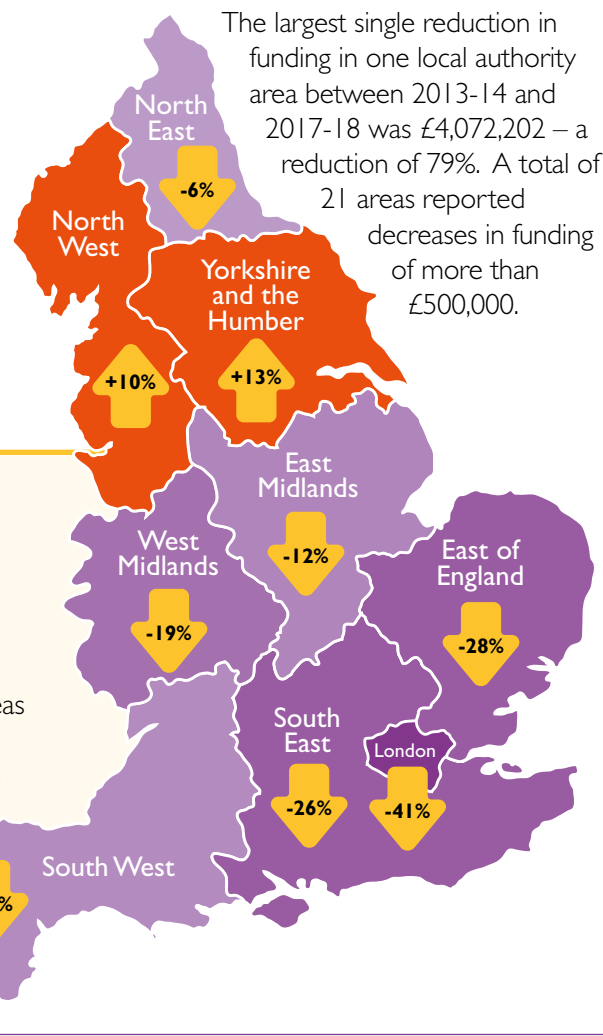
Percentage change in funding for floating support services in regions across England, 2013-14 – 2017-18

This diagram shows the regional variation in funding for services. Although two regions reported an increase in overall funding, the areas with the highest numbers of people sleeping rough across England – London and the South East³⁸ – reported dramatic declines.



Based on 103 responses to an FoI request from St Mungo's

We looked in more detail at the 10 areas with the highest number of people sleeping rough in 2017. Eight of these 10 areas provided information on the funding of their services. These eight areas reported a 25% reduction in funding (£1,610,720), despite reporting a combined total of 921 people sleeping rough. One area failed to respond, and the other had not provided any floating support services over the five-year period.



The largest single reduction in funding in one local authority area between 2013-14 and 2017-18 was £4,072,202 – a reduction of 79%. A total of 21 areas reported decreases in funding of more than £500,000.

38 Ibid

Reflections from commissioners

All of the commissioners interviewed for this report had been required to make funding cuts to services between 2013-14 and 2017-18.

Each spoke of the immense financial pressures facing their councils, which have been well documented elsewhere. Councils in England have seen an average real-terms cut of almost 26% to their funding since 2009-10,³⁹ and these cuts have largely fallen on non-statutory services such as floating support.

Interestingly, the commissioners we spoke to also stated that the most drastic cuts to floating support services were made between 2009 and 2012. This is likely to be the result of a very dramatic initial reduction in funding when the Supporting People ring-fence was removed, and the folding of funding for these services into the Formula Grant. The fact that services have continued to face significant cuts after this initial reduction in funding is a worrying indicator that services will continue to decline in the future, unless funding for these services are protected.

Local approaches to implementing cuts

Our research found that councils have undertaken different approaches for implementing these cuts. In one area, all floating support services were cut in order to retain supported accommodation services. In another, cuts were made based on support need, with some specialist floating support and accommodation-based services being decommissioned. A third area had been forced to negotiate mid-year cuts in contracts, and in one case built a 30% funding reduction into the

second year of a multi-year contract, requiring the provider to find savings upfront.

The impact of these cuts should not be understated. Many former recipients of floating support were moved over to more expensive social care services, increasing pressure on other parts of the council, while others are no longer able to access the support they need.

One commissioner commented that “not a day goes by without a social worker mentioning the loss of floating support” and noted that evictions from social housing had dramatically increased since floating support services had been lost.

Some commissioners said that their councils are facing such financial pressure, they are proposing to terminate all housing related support.

This pattern is being reported in other areas too, as demonstrated in recent public consultations on changes to local authority spending. In August 2018, West Sussex County Council announced a proposal to terminate all its existing housing related support contracts from April 2019. This would result in the closure of not just all floating support services but also all supported accommodation, which could have a devastating impact on some of the county's most vulnerable residents.⁴⁰ Hampshire County Council also recently held a consultation over a potential reduction of £1.8million from funding for homelessness services, which would largely fall on 'lower level' or 'move on' supported housing and community based housing support services, including floating support.⁴¹

³⁹ Institute of Fiscal Studies (2016) *A time of revolution? British local government finance in the 2010s* <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/comms/R121.pdf>

⁴⁰ West Sussex County Council (2018) *Housing Related Support Consultation* <https://haveyoursay.westsussex.gov.uk/policy-and-comms/housing-related-support/>

⁴¹ Hampshire County Council (2018) *Consultation on proposed changes to Homelessness Support Services in Hampshire* <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/Homelessness-Consultation-InformationPack2018.pdf>

Areas with funding increases

Of the 103 areas which provided financial data in response to our Fol request, 61% reported a decline in annual funding for floating support services and 12% reported that funding remained the same over the full period. However, 27% reported an increase in funding.

Further analysis of these figures revealed that the actual changes in funding are more complex.

Amongst the 28 areas which reported an increase:

- In 12 areas, services were reconfigured so that floating support services were no longer commissioned independently. Instead, they were included in wider contracts with other services such as supported accommodation or outreach. It is very unlikely that funding for floating support services alone in these areas actually increased.
- In two areas, funding subsequently decreased for 2018-19. This data was not actively sought and was not included in the overall data analysis.
- In two areas, funding was increased in 2015-16 but subsequently decreased in 2017-18. Although funding has technically increased since 2013-14, it is now in decline.
- In two areas, although funding increased in that district, the total contract level for floating support across the county declined significantly.
- In one area, funding increased for floating support as a direct result of the closure of several supported accommodation projects, which were lost due to reductions in funding for housing related support.

Therefore, only 9% (also nine in total) of areas reported an unambiguous increase in funding for floating support services over the five-year period.

Of these nine areas, two were in London, three were in the South East, two were in the North West, and two were in the North East.

None of the top 15 areas for numbers of people sleeping rough reported an increase in funding.

Number of services

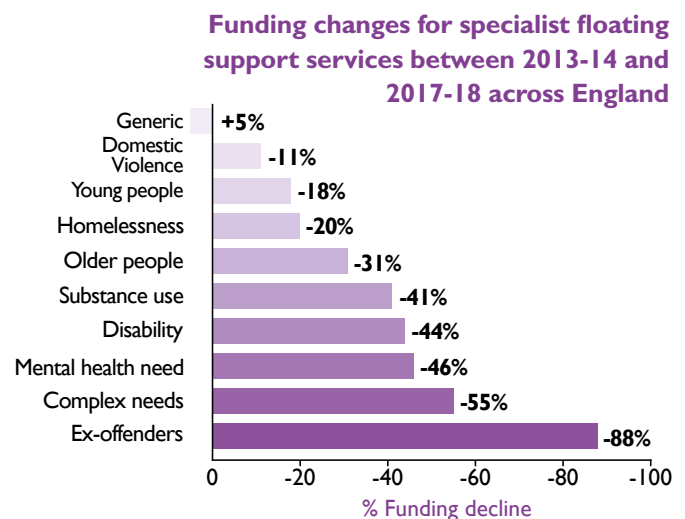
As well as revealing a decline in the total funding for floating support in the areas with the highest levels of rough sleeping, our research shows that the types of floating support services available have changed dramatically between 2013-14 and 2017-18.

The total number of floating support services declined by 31%, from 270 to 186 services across the 107 areas which provided sufficient details of their services for analysis. In two areas, all services were fully decommissioned during this time.

Specialist floating support services

There was a particularly large decrease in the funding of specialist floating support services, which target specific groups.

Generic services experienced an increase of 5% in funding between 2013-14 and 2017-18. During the same period there was a 41% decline in funding for substance use services and mental health services. Funding for ex-offender services declined by 88%.



Based on 103 responses to an Fol request from St Mungo's

The commissioners' view

The decline in specialist services was frequently mentioned by the commissioners who were interviewed for this report.

One commissioner from a London borough believed that the loss of specialist services had had a significantly negative impact on service users. For example, ex-offenders may require case workers with a very specific knowledge base to help them to cope with living in the community and find work. Similarly, services specifically designed for young people often include mediation services for families which would not be available in a general needs service.

Commissioners in more rural areas did not feel that providing specialist services was always necessary. Case workers in rural areas are likely to have clients dispersed across a wider area. Although specialist knowledge can be hugely beneficial, services designed for small groups can be very costly to deliver over large counties.

What does having fewer services mean in practice?

The reduction in the number of services available is not, in itself, problematic if the number of people being served remains the same. In some areas this happened as a result of rationalisation or mergers of existing services.

Following the introduction of Supporting People funding for floating support increased dramatically, but services were not always designed in a strategic way. One commissioner described the early system for commissioning as a "mess", while another described former services as "chaotic." In some areas there were multiple services for the same client group, provided by different organisations.

In these cases, the reduction in the number of services available simplified access to floating support, without a decline in the actual availability of support.

However, in most cases the decline in the number of services was directly linked to funding cuts, which led to a reduction in the number of people able to access floating support. When generic services were commissioned to replace a number of specialist services, the value of these new contracts generally declined. As a result, the number of people they were able to support also declined.

Anecdotally, commissioners reported that the specialist knowledge of case workers was not absorbed into more general services and the quality of data recorded about clients deteriorated.

Responsibility for commissioning

As well as demonstrating changes to the funding and structure of floating support, this research has also revealed that the commissioning landscape for these services is very confused.

In two-tier authority areas, we submitted the Fol request to both county and district councils.

County councils and district authorities hold different responsibilities, but commissioning arrangements are not always clear. In the majority of cases, county councils held responsibility for floating support services and commissioned these. However, some district councils commissioned small scale and local floating support services. District councils also hold responsibility for housing services, and so may have a good understanding of the types of homes that people occupy.



It is crucial that all housing related support services are commissioned in a strategic way in two-tier authority areas, with input from lower tier authorities where appropriate. Needs are likely to differ across different district areas, and this should be taken into account when commissioning county-wide floating support services.

Bidding for funding

Confusion over commissioning structures was also reported in unitary authority areas, particularly in relation to bids for central government funding. One commissioner reported that several departments within the same authority sometimes bid for the same funding streams, as they can be used for different types of service.

They felt that this type of commissioning – where a small amount of central funding is available for bids from across the country – actually makes local authorities less strategic in their approach to providing services.

Some funding pots were seen as too limited in scope. For example, the recent prospectus for the Government's *Move On Fund* for housing and support for people moving on from hostel and refuge accommodation was viewed by some commissioners as too restrictive. This was because the fund requires support to be provided for two years, which was not appropriate for the service one commissioner wished to fund. They stated that in their area the majority of people either had low support needs and would require only up to six months of support, or had support needs that were too high to qualify for this funding.⁴²

Instead, they advocated a return to increased grant funding for all local authorities, which would enable them to plan services more effectively.

⁴² MHCLG (2018) *Move On Fund Prospectus* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/move-on-fund>

Chapter 5:

Other sources of support

Significant funding cuts have led to local authorities drastically reducing the number of floating support services available to all people with housing related support needs in their area.

Housing associations and homelessness services often provide tenancy sustainment or move on support to their residents. In some cases, these services are local authority funded. However, access to such support is limited only to those who are either already residents of social housing, or in contact with homelessness services.

Such support is not commissioned strategically, and in some cases is reliant on services going above and beyond their expected duties to assist clients who would otherwise be left without the support they need.

Housing associations

Housing associations can provide some ongoing support for their tenants. A recent survey of 141 housing associations by the National Housing Federation found that 79% of respondents provided some form of tenancy sustainment support to their tenants, which may take the form of arrears management or income optimisation.⁴³

A significant minority also provided some form of mental health advice or support (44%), substance use advice or support (37%) or support for ex-offenders (30%). Some will provide this support using funding from the local authority, but many employ tenancy sustainment teams using funding from rental income.

However, it is not clear how intensive this support is, or how heavy the case loads of tenancy sustainment workers are.

Homelessness services

Homelessness services may offer ongoing support to people who are moving on from their services.

The 2017 Homeless Link annual review of support for single homeless people found that floating support is currently being offered by 48% of accommodation providers to people who are moving on from their services. Most of these services provided ongoing support for two to three months after someone left their service, but a proportion had no time restrictions in place and provided support for as long as people wanted to engage. Other providers noted that floating support was limited in availability, despite being key to successful move on.⁴⁴

Some homelessness services are funded to provide move on services, including floating support. However, it is also often offered outside of contracted services. Support workers and service managers are sometimes so keen to prevent returns to homelessness that they sometimes provide support beyond the scope of their service, even when additional funding is not available for this. For example, the manager of one large service estimated that their staff have 20% greater workloads than they are contracted for due to the need to support clients as they move on.

⁴³ National Housing Federation (2018) *Homelessness Survey: Discussion paper* http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pub.housing.org.uk/Homelessness_discussion_paper.pdf

⁴⁴ Homeless Link (2017) *Support for single homeless people in England Annual Review 2017* https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Annual%20Review%202017_0.pdf

Case study: West London Prevention Service

The West London Rough Sleeping Prevention Service supports people who are at risk of rough sleeping to remain in their current accommodation through mediation. Where this is not possible, case workers resettle clients into a stable environment. This service is funded by the MHCLG. It aims to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in west London by intervening before clients ever have to experience a night on the street.

It works across seven boroughs, taking referrals from local authorities. The service has helped roughly 150 clients over the past six months, and has a rolling monthly client list of around 50 – 60 people. The service aims to have re-housed clients, and closed their case, within three months of referral. The service receives no funding to support clients once they have been rehoused.

In four of the seven boroughs, no floating support is available to clients who use the service and in the other three areas the team has only just received access to floating support so this has yet to be utilised.

This has proven to be a real challenge for the team. Some of their clients have medium or high support needs, or are very young and living independently for the first time. They often struggle to maintain a tenancy. The team has begun to offer floating support to clients who should technically no longer be supported by the service. Without this support, these clients would simply be at risk of rough sleeping again a few months later when their tenancy failed.

The team's case workers also act as a point of contact for private sector landlords. They feel it is crucial to support landlords as otherwise they may not continue to accept clients into their properties.

This work goes above and beyond what is expected of the service, and they do not receive funding for it, but feel it is vital to keep people off the streets. The local authorities are aware of the issues and keen to support the team more, but currently have no funding available to do so.

Gaps in services

It is welcome that some housing associations and homelessness services are able to provide tenancy sustainment services and floating support.

However, these services are only available to those already living in housing association properties, or moving on from a minority of homelessness services.

This is worrying as the number of social homes let to single homeless people has decreased significantly over the past five years. Those who are at risk of rough sleeping, but currently reside in the private rented sector, would not be able to access these services.

Similarly, not everyone moving on from a homelessness service is able to access support, and it should not fall upon staff within these services to go beyond their remit to provide on-going support.

A strategic approach

Housing associations and homelessness services are not able to ensure that floating support is available to everyone who needs it. While many housing associations state that they provide some form of tenancy sustainment, fewer provide on-going support to their tenants with complex needs. Homelessness services are also able to offer some on-going support, but this is often ad hoc and pushing already stretched services beyond their remit. It is also not the responsibility of these services to help everyone in need of support in their local area.

Instead, local authorities must be able to access adequate funding which enables them to plan and deliver floating support services that meet the needs of everyone in their area, including people living in different tenures and types of accommodation, those who have previously interacted with homelessness services and people at risk for the first time.



Chapter 6:

Conclusions and recommendations

Floating support services have a key part to play in achieving the Government's pledge to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it altogether by 2027. By guaranteeing long-term funding for homelessness services, government action can prevent people from ever returning to the streets.

Floating support services provide clear benefits to people with a history of rough sleeping, those at risk of homelessness, landlords and the taxpayer. They enable people with support needs to live independently, and increase access to housing for those who may otherwise have limited options, while also reassuring landlords that their tenants will be supported to meet the requirements of their tenancy.

However, the availability of floating support services has declined rapidly over the past five years as funding has reduced. At the same time, homelessness and rough sleeping has increased dramatically.

If the Government is to meet its ambition of ending rough sleeping by 2027, it must urgently review and improve the services available to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. This must include improving access to floating support.

The Government has acknowledged the benefits of floating support in its new Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in August 2018, and is providing some funding for 'supported lettings' to

deliver tenancy sustainment and flexible support to people moving on from rough sleeping. However, our analysis of the funding and availability of services between 2013 and 2018 reveals that significantly more funding is required to reverse cuts and restore services that have been lost.

The £19 million promised for supported lettings in the Rough Sleeping Strategy will be spent over two years. Therefore, it will not be enough to recover lost floating support service provision.

Indeed, considerable investment is needed to enable local authorities to plan and deliver effective services which ensure people can move on from rough sleeping for good.

In order to be truly effective, these services must be responsive to local need, fully funded to enable people to access support for as long as they need it, and separate from housing provision. Crucially, people must be able to get this support regardless of the type of housing they live in. People must also be able to return to support if they find they need it again.

That's why we're calling on the Government to set up a new programme to provide guaranteed, long-term funding for homelessness services, including floating support.

In order to ensure that funding for these services is protected in the long term, the Government must:

Urgently review the decline in funding for housing related support services.

In August 2018, the Government announced that it would undertake a review of housing-related support, but has not yet detailed the scope of this evaluation. This review must include all services previously funded through the Supporting People programme (including floating support) and should examine the impact of funding cuts on service users, with a view to ensuring that support is restored and fit for the future.

Commit to guaranteed funding for local authorities to plan and commission homelessness services. This must include housing related support services, and ensure a tailored package of support is available to everyone who has slept rough.

The findings of the review of housing related support should be used to inform the creation of a new funding programme for homelessness services. This will require long-term investment in good quality services including supported housing, Housing First and floating support, and should ensure a tailored package of support is available to everyone who has slept rough. The funding must be guaranteed for long enough to enable local authorities to deliver this investment, and should encourage integration with other funding streams including health and social care.

Ensure that local homelessness and rough sleeping strategies include a focus on the provision of floating support. The Government's new rough sleeping strategy requires all local authorities to produce up-to-date homelessness and rough sleeping strategies by winter 2019. These strategies should include a focus on the provision of floating support for those moving on from homelessness and rough sleeping, and those who are at risk of losing their home. They offer an opportunity for local authorities to outline housing related support needs in their area, and how these will be met by commissioned services. There should be an expectation for these strategies to include an assessment of need for floating support and other housing related support services, plans for how floating support will be delivered, and a commitment to partnership working with other support services such as social care, health, and advice services. This should include clear referral pathways between floating support and these other support services.

If such strategies are not delivered, the Government should consider a new statutory duty which requires local authorities to undertake these assessments.

Everyone deserves a home for good. Access to floating support alongside safe, secure and affordable accommodation can help people to move off the streets permanently. By implementing these recommendations, and ensuring everyone can get the support they need, the Government will move towards achieving its goal of ending rough sleeping by 2027.



To join our **Home for Good** campaign, please visit www.mungos.org/homeforgood



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