Case study

Purfleet Trust

Routes of the streets for people sleeping rough in Kings Lynn

Overview

A Homelessness Transition Fund grant enabled the Purfleet Trust to develop a range of services to help people sleeping rough move away from homelessness. Additional capacity meant that more focused key-working was embedded in the service to end and prevent individual’s rough sleeping.

New projects and partnerships were developed. Innovations include a new model of accommodation for single people in training flats, and establishing a trusting relationship with the police, for instance by addressing stigma between the police the homeless population.

“Over 18 months we have achieved a great amount. We have had a direct impact on rough sleeping levels and worked on preventing repeat homelessness. We have raised awareness of issues and people have become more supportive of our clients. We were here as a homelessness service already but we couldn’t meet people’s needs within our existing resources; the HTF enabled us to provide more structure but in a flexible way.”

Chief Executive, Purfleet Trust

Key Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Kings Lynn, East England</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>£106,277</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date</td>
<td>1/3/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client group</td>
<td>People at risk of or already sleeping rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported during the period of the grant</td>
<td>612 people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact details</td>
<td>5 St Ann’s Fort, King’s Lynn, Norfolk PE30 1QS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>01553767829</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:enquiries@purfleettrust.org.uk">enquiries@purfleettrust.org.uk</a></td>
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Chief Executive, Purfleet Trust
Identifying need

The Purfleet Trust has been operating in Kings Lynn since 1993. In 2012, they knew they wanted to develop the homelessness services they provided to single people. Kings Lynn had an ongoing issue with rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour related to street drinking. There were gaps in the services available, including provision for people who had been excluded from hostels or who had struggled to maintain tenancies in the private rented sector or social housing. The local Housing Options team were being regularly approached for help with homelessness by single people, but with few sustained positive outcomes.

The Purfleet Trust wanted to work in partnership with the local authority and others to create more effective routes off the streets for their clients.

“"The local authority was getting single homeless people presenting at Housing Options, taking up time but with few positive outcomes for this group. The police were reporting to the council that people were homeless and this was causing problems. We were saying ‘we need additional resources so we can help with this!’. We could see areas where we could work more effectively and build capacity.”"

Chief Executive, Purfleet Trust

The funding

The Homeless Link Strategy and Partnerships Manager for the East of England suggested that a Homelessness Transition Fund bid would be a good way to expand and develop the service. The Chief Executive of the Purfleet Trust developed a bid which was supported by the local authority. This was successful and they were awarded just over £105,000 over 18 months.

The funding was used for additional posts including two support worker roles in the Pathways Centre and a housing services manager role.

“"The HTF was the answer to our prayers. We were recognised as local experts in single homelessness but did not have the resources to develop the service further.”"

Chief Executive, Purfleet Trust

Achievements

Creating a pathway off the streets

The additional staffing within the Purfleet Trust’s Pathways Centre meant that a more structured service was provided to homeless clients. All clients had an Outcomes Star assessment and more time was put into casework, including organising accommodation and getting people engaged with services. This included preventing repeat homelessness amongst clients in accommodation as well as helping people new to sleeping rough.

“"Our partners see less of a ‘revolving door’ effect. A reduction in homelessness presentations from this group means we are reducing the burden on the local authority.”"

Chief Executive, Purfleet Trust

To further assist the work being undertaken to tackle rough sleeping the local authority were able to negotiate with the local hostel provider, four emergency direct access beds. This created a short term option while the best routes off of the streets were assessed. The Purfleet Trust, the local authority and hostel provider (Genesis Housing) then worked together to find the best housing solution for an individual and therefore reduce the risk of people returning to the streets.

“"One of the main differences is that as the statutory authority, we deal with all homeless people, statutory and non-statutory. We don’t have the ability to spend much time with people. The Purfleet Trust is able to spend more time with people and assist them into alternative accommodation. They can help with work, training and courses and give that time.”"

Housing Options Manager, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

The local authority believes that the work undertaken by the Purfleet Trust has made a significant contribution to overall efforts to reduce rough sleeping in Kings Lynn.

“"In the last two years we reported three people rough sleeping on a single night, about four years ago we had about 20. We have benefited from joint working with Purfleet Trust and others, including immigration services.”"

Housing Options Manager, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

A new model of accommodation

An innovation arising from the HTF funding at the Purfleet Trust is a new model of training flats. Freebridge Community Housing provided the Purfleet Trust with three shared houses for single people to stay. Residents benefit from key working, training and building up a track record in maintaining a tenancy. Central to the ethos of the flats is the provision of training and support to increase tenancy sustainment in the future.

“"We don’t usually deliver housing, we usually link with other housing providers but we saw that once someone is excluded from one hostel, they are often excluded from them all. If they
are not in a position to hold down a tenancy without support they are a bit stuck. We created a model where people can access the training flats and engage with training, including life skills, tenancy training and employability and volunteering training."

Chief Executive, Purfleet Trust

The project has been successful and is due to be extended to include a property specifically for women. The local authority values the scheme and can sometimes assist in providing independent accommodation for tenants who have demonstrated they can manage a tenancy in the training flats – which would not usually be available for single people moving on from homelessness.

“The Purfleet Trust are working with the Local Authority and filling some of the gaps that we have in services. The training houses are a very good opportunity for people ... There have been ‘revolving door’ cases of people who have been through homelessness services and have been refused access to hostels for previous behaviour. The training flats have assisted in getting some of those people off the streets and turning things around.”

Housing Options Manager, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

Developing partnerships

The additional capacity generated by the HTF has enabled the Purfleet Trust to develop partnerships and maximise the potential of joint working across agencies.

The period of HTF funding saw developments in the relationship with the local authority. As part of creating a comprehensive pathway, the local authority assess all single homelessness people who present at housing options, and then refer those who are not in priority need or who are intentionally homeless to the Purfleet Trust.

“As a result of the HTF we have accessed funding from Norfolk County Council via the borough council. The local authority liked the work we had been doing through the HTF and asked if we would be able to put in a bid with them for a Pathways to Inclusion Project. This means we can work with people who have multiple needs in a way we couldn’t before, attending appointments and taking a Making Every Adult Matter approach, working with support services to get them to be more flexible.”

Chief Executive, Purfleet Trust

Another key partnership for the Purfleet Trust is with the local police. With no street outreach the police are a key partner in making contact with people sleeping rough and understanding what is happening among the street population. By promoting their service to the police and offering clients more structured support the Purfleet Trust has been able to provide an alternative to enforcement where appropriate. The police are able to bring people they find begging, for example, directly to the Pathways Centre.

A key element of working with the police has been to bridge the gap between the police and the homeless population to build up more trust and understanding and to challenge stigma. As part of the HTF project a new initiative for the Pathways Centre to host trainee police officers for a one-week placement was developed. This provides useful insight for the new police officers on the issues faced by people who become homeless, and also makes those attending the centre less wary of the police, having had positive interactions with trainees.

“Those who were assigned here are the people who will go on to be local police personnel in the area. They love it! It’s an insight into the person, the story of people before the police pick them up on the streets and arrest them. It breaks down stigma on both sides. It means people will go to police officers – if they don’t know them they don’t go to them as they don’t think they will help.”

Chief Executive, Purfleet Trust
Learning from the Purfleet Trust

The Purfleet Trust demonstrates how an opportunity to build capacity can be maximised through innovation and partnership.

Innovation

The Purfleet Trust have developed innovative solutions to gaps in services for their client group. Examples are the training flats, a completely new approach for the area and the trainee police placements. These new approaches involve a level of risk but have ultimately paid off as projects have succeeded.

"Initially people were unsure and not that happy about the training flats: is this a hostel, is it a House of Multiple Occupation? Once they saw the results, they wanted to work together."

Chief Executive, Purfleet Trust

Creating a track record to attract more funding

By successfully providing solutions like the training flats, the Purfleet Trust is in a good position to highlight gaps in services and propose solutions, thus becoming more sustainable. The HTF work led to development of the Pathways to Inclusion Project, and the training flat model has attracted interest from another organisation willing to provide properties. The Trust is well placed to be a key partner in any new strategies to address rough sleeping in the area.

A broad and flexible range of services for clients

The Purfleet Trust has diversified its range of services. At the core is a key working system, with an emphasis on ending or preventing rough sleeping for each person. Training in life skills, employability and providing access to volunteering opportunities ensure that the work seeks to address clients’ long term needs and prevent repeat homelessness.

Partnerships and relationships

The Purfleet Trust is more integrated into the work of the police and the local authority as a result of the HTF. They have also formed a partnership with a major local housing provider. These relationships have been crucial to the overall success of the Purfleet Trust and to ensuring a legacy to the HTF funding.

"The overall approach of the Purfleet Trust on the project was very positive with a big focus on joint working. With scarce resources, the only way we can work is in partnership with organisations like the Purfleet Trust."

Housing Options Manager, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
Joe
Helping Joe to find a place to call home

Joe is in his 40s. He has been known to the Purfleet Trust over many years. When the Pathways to Independence Project was established, Joe was targeted for the scheme due to his long term street homelessness and prolific offending, which was related to alcohol use. The presence of the housing services manager and Pathways to Inclusion worker gave the Purfleet Trust an opportunity to work with Joe in a new and more intensive way than had previously been possible.

“...I was sleeping up by the river... I had an ASBO order, I had boredom and depression. I would get moved on, end up in the police station. It was a vicious cycle. I had nowhere to go, I didn’t care.”

Joe agreed to take part in the Pathways to Inclusion Project while he was in prison. He describes taking part in a basic substance reduction course in prison as being a turning point for him, making him realise he wanted to make changes in his life.

After he was released, the housing services manager and Pathways to Inclusion worker at the Purfleet Trust spent time ‘building trust’, supporting him almost every day. An initial tenancy at one of the training flats lasted six months, during which time Joe didn’t drink. However, the tenancy ended due to an argument with another resident. He was supported into the private rented sector with intensive support on hand.

Joe is proud of the flat and reflects on being able to sit in the warm looking out at people on the streets while he is indoors, when he was previously outside all the time. Being accommodated and managing his alcohol use better has also helped his relationship with his parents.

“I didn’t care. I had nothing to aim for. Now I have house keys. Security and safety. My house is my HQ. My parents didn’t want to know me, now they are in touch with me... I’ve still got the card pinned up that says ‘welcome to your new home’. My mum and dad are pleased.”

Joe was also supported to take part in courses and volunteer in the local food bank.

There are ongoing challenges. Joe has to decide how to spend his time:

“If I come and see people (friends) every day I drink more but I feel bad if I stay at home all day.”

He is also finding it hard to budget to repay arrears and court fines from the past as well as meet his basic day-to-day needs. The staff at the Purfleet Trust continue to provide regular support to help him maintain the progress made.