Warwickshire Housing Related Support Research

Housing-Related Support Statement

Homeless Link have been commissioned to undertake research into Warwickshire’s Housing Related Support Programme. This includes assessing the likely future need for these services, assessing the impact of what has been provided to date and identifying potentially alternative ways of meeting these needs in the future for consideration.

1. What is Housing Related Support?

1.1 Housing Related Support is assistance to people who:

- are 16 or over years old
- and are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or otherwise in unsuitable housing situations,
- and are experiencing some vulnerability which makes it difficult for them to resolve this without some form of support
- and have the capacity to live independently after receiving time-limited support

1.2 The primary aim of housing-related support is to enable people to secure, and sustain settled, suitable housing that enables them to develop an appropriate degree of independence skills.

1.3 This is important because settled and suitable housing is a fundamental building block to help people maximise their health and well-being and engage positively in the community.

1.4 In order to successfully sustain settled and independent housing there are a number of other key things that people need to have in place. These could be referred to as “secondary needs” and include:

- Sufficient income and any debts being under control
- Employment or some other form of meaningful engagement/activity
- Positive family relationships
- Physical health or the capacity to manage any ill-health with assistance from appropriate services
- Mental health or the capacity to manage any ill-health with assistance from appropriate services
- Access to appropriate social networks
- Opportunities to develop individual potential
- An ability to communicate effectively
- A sense of safety and security

Housing-related support services therefore work with people to ensure that any problems in relation to the above list can be addressed. This is because this makes it more likely that they will then be able to sustain independent housing.
1.5 Housing-related support needs to be personalised i.e. respond in a targeted way to individual need and strengths i.e. build on people’s existing skills, capabilities and resources.

2. Implications for Needs Assessment

The vulnerabilities that might justify a housing-related support intervention include:

- Inexperience due to being young
- Institutional experience
- Addictions or substance misuse
- Offending behaviour
- Mental or emotional ill-health
- Physical ill-health or disability
- Experience of violent or sexual abuse
- Having recently acquired the right to remain in this country
- Long-term homelessness

Any needs assessment, therefore, aims to identify the numbers of people falling into these categories who in a year, present as homeless, at risk of homelessness or as living in unsuitable housing situations.

3. Implications for Impact Assessment

Based on the description of housing-related support given above we would suggest that the main way of assessing the impact of the services would appear to be as follows:

3.1 The principal output measure should be the number of people who at the end of the period of service are living in settled and suitable housing.

3.2 The principal immediate outcome measure should be the extent to which any risk to independence generated by the identified list of secondary needs has been reduced by the end of the service.

3.3 The principal long-term outcome measure should be the extent to which those receiving the service are still in settled, suitable housing after a specified elapsed period of time (6, 12 or 24 months?)

3.4 The principal ways of assessing value for money should be around cost effectiveness – how much does it cost per successful output or outcome. Particular care has to be taken, however, to ensure that any cost effectiveness comparisons take into account the full cost rather than a single funding contribution and take account of the different levels of need / risk presented by the recipients at the beginning of the service.

Mark Goldup