

## **Kerslake Commission evidence submission**

Connect Housing Association

**1. Thinking about the response to rough sleeping during the pandemic, which measures, policies, practices or joint working do you think worked well and why?**

The impetus and inertia to work together, the additional funding to allow this to happen, the shared purpose, the wider public and political support, which allowed a positive media picture of the use of hotels and other accommodation. Willingness of statutory, voluntary/community/faith (including housing associations), private sectors to work together get the job done and address issues this created later - enabled by the promise of full funding from govt. Dropping of eligibility, priority, banned, excluded, no recourse to public funds, local connection, non-engaging, etc. reasons not to help people - focus on getting everyone in. Once people were in, the multi-agency working in many settings, led to quicker responses, better joint working and communication, and the opportunity to repeatedly try direct approaches to those people previously regarded as hard to reach or non-engaging. Instead of a referral form, meeting, and attempt at appointment it could be 'let's pop upstairs now and knock on her door and start work' and if necessary 'let's try again later'. Key services on-site or easily reached, not months of waiting list away.

**2. In contrast, which measures, policies, practices or joint working do you think have not worked well and why?**

The scattergun approach worked, it did lead to some duplication, but that is preferable to missed opportunities, but with more time we would have a detailed map and allocation of resources. The placing of large numbers of people with high needs and/or behaviour that was disruptive to others in one place (e.g. big hotel) reinforced that this is not a good model and reminded us why we moved away from large hostels. Not good for the clients, staff or the community, as they needed significant management and lost support from neighbours.

**3. Please describe the specific challenges, and opportunities, in the next phase of the Everyone In programme and helping people to move on from hotel accommodation.**

Finding accommodation, particularly high need for one bedroomed accommodation. Prioritising those moving from hotels assisted this, but then disadvantaged others in high need who were also waiting for this type of accommodation.

**4. And finally, what do you think needs to be put in place to embed the good work that developed during the pandemic, or improve upon it?**

Funding for services and for accommodation. Remember the 'can do' approach, build on this, do not re-erect barriers or complex systems. Fund services to meet low level need early, not wait for crisis. Move to models that get people into services when they need then and are ready to engage, rather than when the service is ready to offer an appointment. Provide adequate and flexible funding. Incentivise the provision of one-bed accommodation (in addition not instead of other needs). Do not expect people to fit services, but provide the services people need.