

Kerslake Commission evidence submission

Emmaus Leeds

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?

We are an organisation that provides accommodation, meaningful 'work' activity and support in Leeds. I believe Leeds has a good working relationship between council/housing/housing options with the Street Support Team and many of the agencies within the city, which meant that joint working kicked in at an early stage. Staff at services were redeployed quickly to meet the different needs i.e. within the hotels. Street Support team in Leeds is robust and already carried out frequent street counts which meant this everyone in approach could occur quickly.

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

Due to lockdowns, it was imperative that information was shared. At times, the different more fluid approach necessary was hard to navigate with certain services closing or redesigning the approach they take. Getting this information for signposting was a challenge, offset slightly by the Homeless Charter which operates in Leeds and operated as an information giving service for a few of its meetings. We did have an incident where someone was referred to our service who was in one of the hotels, he was interested but realised it was not for him before making referral. However, he was worried as if he seemed to knock back the offer of progressing with us, other support would be ended with him, and there were similar situations at the height of the Everyone In.

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.

Having the available housing stock to place people in. Continuing to maintain the levels of external wraparound support going in if they are offered tenancies. Changing mindsets of individuals who have become accustomed to hotel living.

4. And finally, what do you think needs to be put in place to embed the good work that developed

As above answer, really. There seems to be a drive for the Housing First model, which I understand and can be successful, however, no one size fits all, and there is a need still for all sorts of ongoing opportunities moving forward. We have found that the sense of community that Emmaus offers

during the pandemic, or improve upon it?

has been useful through the pandemic and we did take someone in from a hotel setting. They had never been in stable accommodation before, but it was the right time for him and to come somewhere with a structure and future work opportunities was what he wanted.