

Kerslake Commission evidence submission

North Somerset Council

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?

Removing the legislative barriers (priority need, local connection and eligibility - PN/LC/EL)) meant it was quicker to work with people, it was less of a challenge for those who needed help to get it and I feel it broke down them and us barriers too. Consistency from CEO/Leader to outreach worker all wanting the same outcome for this particular group of people and a sense of community when everyone in meant everyone helped too.

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

Not having outreach drug support during lockdown I feel did not help, poor engagement from people who just wanted housing and did not wish to address support needs, police frustrated at increased levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in areas of high volume placements of chaotic individuals. No buy in from landlords (Responsible Person and Private Rental) angry at the changes affecting them such as 6 month notices and courts closed meant many have decided to sell or not have 'risky' tenants in future so restricted move on. Still very difficult to access primary care services for mental health.

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.

As above - who wants to work with us? Not many - even when we have Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to offer intensive support and financial packages. Even RPs are being difficult. No move on in supported housing accommodation and struggling to procure more despite funds being available for bids. Limited funding streams 12 month projects mean everything feels short term too and can be difficult to get outcomes, get staff recruited and form a longer term vision.

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?

Flexibility in terms of homeless tests (PN/LC/EL) ring-fenced accommodation only for those on a rough sleeper pathway, ring-fenced funding and longer term funding for projects. We also had good support from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Homelessness Advice and Support Team (HAST) advisors.