

and secure environment and away from the high need and costly levels provided at crisis stage.

Resourcing the hub

The hub is ultimately about using current resources but more effectively and efficiently. All partners who signed up to the hub were initially not asked to contribute funding but to commit to transferring existing resources, in essence different staff and cultures, to work together.

The ultimate rationale for adopting the hub and developing a series of other localised hubs is all about improving outcomes for families and vulnerable people. However, the long-term savings and resource efficiency realised through this approach can't be overlooked.

By rolling out this approach over 10 years, it is anticipated that a saving of £1.2 billion will be made Norfolk wide.

Contact: Liam Pickering
South Norfolk Council
lpickering@s-norfolk.gov.uk

Supporting information available at
<https://www.local.gov.uk/housing-our-homeless-household-case-study-resources-south-norfolk>

TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Teignbridge is a semi-rural district council in Devon of around 57,000 households. The council area includes the towns of Newton Abbot, Ashburton, Dawlish and Teignmouth. Although not an area with a huge homelessness problem, historically a high proportion of households who were accepted as homeless were placed in B&Bs, due to lack of other provision.

Teignbridge has developed a number of strategies to tackle homelessness better, including:

1. Conversion of a former GP's surgery into a well-managed hostel

Albany House is a new purpose converted GP's surgery in the centre of Newton Abbot which houses both homeless families and single people in a calm and well managed environment. The hostel can accommodate up to 10 placements at any one time. It is significantly higher quality than B&B, provides tailored support to the households living there, and is financially advantageous to the council. The success of the project is now leading to consideration of further accommodation developments.

Homeless households typically stay in Albany House for less than three months, where their needs are assessed and help provided. They might for example then move to fully self-contained private sector leased (PSL) accommodation for six to nine months before securing social housing or private rented sector (PRS) accommodation.

The conversion cost a total of around £670,000 (including £311 purchase costs), of



which £200,000 was provided by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) empty homes fund, allowing the refurbishment to be carried out to a good standard.

Full consultation was carried out with relevant local stakeholders and permission was gained from the Department of Health (DH) for a change of use.

The property is managed by the council, and a weekly meeting is held with support and other staff to discuss each case in Stage 1 temporary accommodation.

2. Initiatives to access private rented sector property for homelessness prevention

Plymouth Access to Housing (PATH) have been working with Teignbridge for around seven years and have built up a portfolio of 100 properties in the area, which contributes to Teignbridge's annual figure of between 250 and 300 homelessness preventions into the PRS – the rest being obtained by housing options officers and through a self-help scheme, which supports people who find their own properties.

PATH employs a resettlement worker who is co-located at Teignbridge and provides a free lettings agency service for landlords, with support provided for each tenant for up to two years. Discretionary housing payments (DHP) and charitable funding are both used to fund deposits and rent in advance, and tenants are supported to access a credit union.

Pre-tenancy training sessions are held once a quarter covering issues like tenant and landlord responsibilities and budgeting skills.

To date there have only been three claims

on a deposit out of 100 properties, which generate about 50 lettings per year. Very few landlords have dropped out of the scheme to date, but a number are worried about the introduction of Universal Credit and the new rules for landlords introduced by government.

In addition to the PATH scheme, Teignbridge reaches out to landlords directly through well attended landlord evenings, social media, emails etc. Part of the service provided is to keep landlords informed of changes to relevant legislation.

The council also actively seeks to bring empty homes back into use and provides grants where necessary, partly funded from resulting increases to the New Homes Bonus.

3. Work with Young Devon on youth homelessness

Voluntary sector organisation, Young Devon, have worked with Teignbridge Council to provide an enhanced service to young homeless people. They have established a multi-agency Youth Enquiry Service in Newton Abbot, which sees at least 100 young people a year with housing issues and doubles as a crash pad providing accommodation with 24 hour cover to up to five young people. Joint assessments are carried out by Young Devon and children's services, and work is done with young people leaving care to ensure that they do not become homeless.

The service is able to access shared accommodation in the PRS and also makes successful use of around 15 units of supported lodgings to accommodate young people, as a better alternative to conventional temporary accommodation or hostel provision.

Teignbridge has embraced the DCLG/St Basil's youth homelessness positive pathway and have no young people under 18 in B&Bs.

4. Joint working and co-location

Teignbridge's housing needs service is jointly managed with Exeter, which among other things allows pooling of resources, such as temporary accommodation, when needed. A number of different services are co-located with the service, including the PATH PRS access scheme, and Jobcentre Plus in the near future.

- a support worker from Sanctuary Supported Living provides a resettlement service to people housed in temporary accommodation
- the council is developing a new offer for landlords and have shared their thinking to date, and have expanded their PSL scheme
- Teignbridge is also setting up its own housing company to hold property.

Contact: Nicola Forsdyke
Teignbridge District Council
nicola.forsdyke@teignbridge.gov.uk

Supporting information available at
<https://www.local.gov.uk/housing-our-homeless-household-case-study-resources-teignbridge>

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has seen one of the steepest falls in use of B&B with an approximately 90 per cent drop in the number of families in B&B between June 2015 and September 2016; from 238 to 21. Over the same period, families in B&Bs for over six weeks reduced from 174 to zero.

This has happened through a sustained effort backed by both officers and elected members of the council, and has been achieved without an extensive move into placing households outside of London, which averages 3 per cent of cases, all of which are within easy travelling distance.

Like other councils, Tower Hamlets was affected severely by welfare reforms from 2011, which in their case was added to by the effect of the 2012 Olympics in pushing up demand for accommodation.

The bulk of Tower Hamlets temporary accommodation was private licensed accommodation (PLA) which is used by a number of local authorities as an alternative to private sector leasing (PSL) accommodation, as it gives more flexibility for both parties to the agreement, as the PLAs were on 28 day rolling licence agreements rather than fixed term leases. Tower Hamlets lost 30 to 40 per cent of their PLA accommodation over an 18 month period, as their supplier agents and landlords could get a better deal elsewhere, and had to move heavily into more expensive nightly paid accommodation and B&B at greatly increased cost.

The borough has been a staunch supporter of the London Inter Borough Accommodation