

Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey



A Review by the Residents' Services Select Committee

Councillors on the Committee: Councillors Wayne Bridges, Colleen Sullivan (Member until May 2024), Scott Farley, Janet Gardner, Ekta Gohil, Sital Punja (Member until May 2024), Peter Smallwood, Darran Davies (Member from May 2024) and Kamal Kaur (Member from May 2024)

2023/2024

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Chairman's Foreword



On behalf of the Residents' Services Select Committee, I am pleased to present this report further to the Committee's Review of Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey.

The Review was undertaken with a clear focus on understanding the challenges faced by residents and identifying practical, cost-effective solutions to enhance their experience. Homelessness is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a coordinated and compassionate approach.

Throughout the Review, Members were acutely aware of the increasing demand for homelessness services, driven by factors such as evictions from private rental accommodations and the reduction in affordable housing. The testimonies and evidence gathered during witness sessions provided invaluable insights into the current state of homelessness in Hillingdon and the effectiveness of existing services.

The Review highlighted the importance of prevention and early intervention in addressing homelessness. Members noted the positive impact of partnerships with voluntary sector organisations like Trinity and Thames Reach, which provide essential support for rough sleepers and those with complex needs. These partnerships are crucial in ensuring that residents receive the help they need at the earliest possible stage.

The Committee identified the need for improved communication and empathy from housing officers, noting that training in trauma-informed issues and the use of appropriate language is essential to ensure that residents feel understood and supported throughout their journey. The reconfiguration of the Housing Reception Centre to create a more welcoming environment is a key recommendation that Members believe will significantly enhance the resident experience.

Furthermore, the Committee's Review underscored the importance of better systems and technology for case handovers, in addition to the need for continuous feedback from residents to drive service improvements.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank officers and partner organisations who have given up their time to help the Committee in reviewing this topic and commend them for their continued hard work to support residents in the Borough. Their insights and dedication have been instrumental in shaping the Committee's recommendations.

In conclusion, the recommendations set out in this report are designed to enhance the resident experience, manage expectations, improve staff support and training, and foster stronger partnerships and collaboration. It is anticipated that these actions will lead to a more effective and compassionate homelessness service in Hillingdon, ultimately improving the lives of residents.

Councillor Wayne Bridges

Chairman of the Residents' Services Select Committee

Summary of recommendations to Cabinet

Through the witness sessions and evidence received during the detailed Review by the Committee, Members have agreed the following recommendations to Cabinet:

1

Enhancing Resident Experience

1. All staff to refer to those applicants who approach the service for help as 'residents' rather than 'customers' or 'clients'.
2. Create a clearer Residents' Charter: a more accessible guide explaining each stage of the homelessness support process for new applicants, from intake to case closure. This guide will set expectations, reduce confusion, and address common questions. Consider new technologies for instant translation requirements.
3. Reconfigure the Housing Reception Centre to provide a more welcoming and empathetic environment within existing budget plans.
4. Continue unannounced random checks/management oversight of calls and correspondence to ensure a high-quality, professional, empathetic, and resident-focused service.
5. Continue to gather feedback from residents regarding homelessness services using a simple anonymous feedback form.
6. Actively promote the current suggestion box system to encourage staff to submit suggestions for improving service efficiency and resident interactions.

2

2. Managing Expectations and Process Efficiency:

1. Consider incorporating ways to help applicants check their eligibility on-line for assistance before applying formally. Preventative avoidance can stop unnecessary applications from those who are not entitled, saving time and resources for both the applicants and the Council.
2. For applicants in the process, to avoid processing delays, to explore the possibility of using automated text reminders for appointments and deadlines.
3. Explore the feasibility of introducing a self-check-in system for applicants at reception linked to service transformation.
4. Continue to review and update current documentation, guides and resident facing processes in relation to eligibility, case preparation and action planning.

3

Staff Support & Training

1. Ensure all Housing staff receive regular casework supervision and promote current Staff Welfare policies.
2. Consider implementing a comprehensive peer support and training programme in collaboration with a partner organisation. This programme

should include access to peer mentors with lived experience of homelessness and offer refresher training to staff. The training should also incorporate 'walk-in-my-shoes' sessions to build understanding and connection with residents.

3. Create a learning set of resources for staff to encourage the sharing of good practice.

4

Partnerships and Collaboration

1. Build on existing partnerships and further develop these with local organisations to create a wider support network for residents to access.
2. Assign named officers to be liaisons for relevant partner agencies for accountability and, to aid effective communications going forward, introduce a generic email as the primary contact and communication tool between them and the Council.

Background to the Review

Aim of the Review

At its meeting on 16 January 2024, the Residents' Services Select Committee agreed to undertake a major review of the Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Service, with a particular focus on the residents' journey through the system and experience of customer service.

The Review aimed to consider ways in which the customer journey could potentially be improved to better support residents during this process and improve residents' satisfaction with the way in which they accessed advice and support to prevent homelessness.

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference were agreed for the Review:

- To gain a thorough understanding of the Council's Homeless Prevention Service and the resident's journey through this process.
- To scrutinise the service delivery and review its effectiveness.
- To review service users' feedback to explore the challenges faced by residents accessing the service.
- To look at other local authorities that may have different models of service delivery for best practice, including research and findings from charities, housing bodies, regional bodies and organisations, e.g. GLA.
- Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose practical and deliverable actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

Context and Key Information

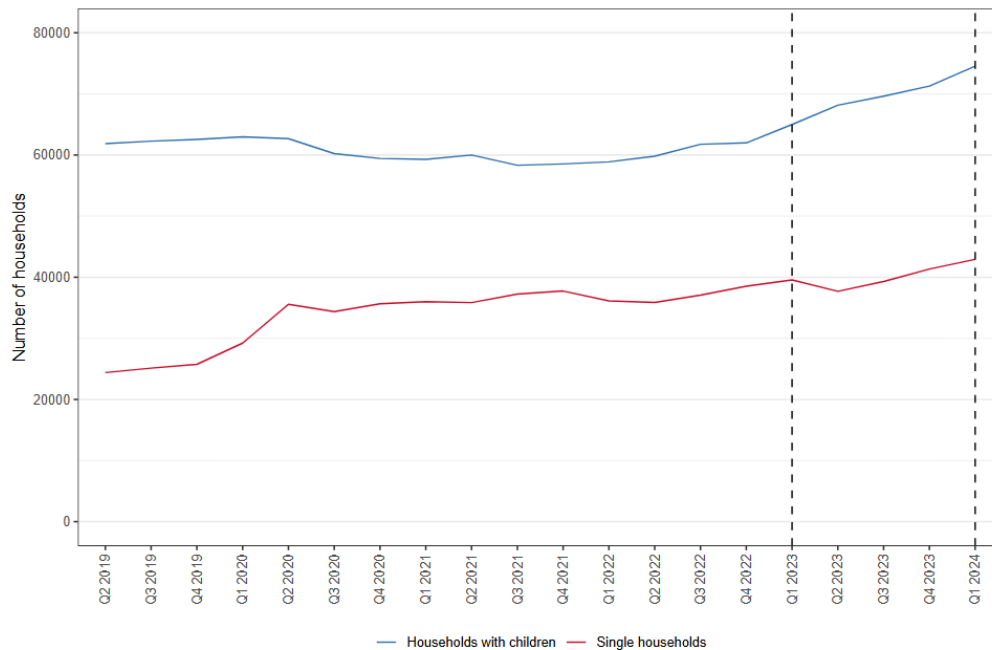
National Context

The quarterly data published by the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) shows that, across England, demand for affordable housing has risen sharply in recent years, with homelessness presentations to local authorities a particular pressure. At the end of June 2023, nearly 139,000 families with children were living in temporary accommodation across the country – 7,430 more than at the end of March of the same year.

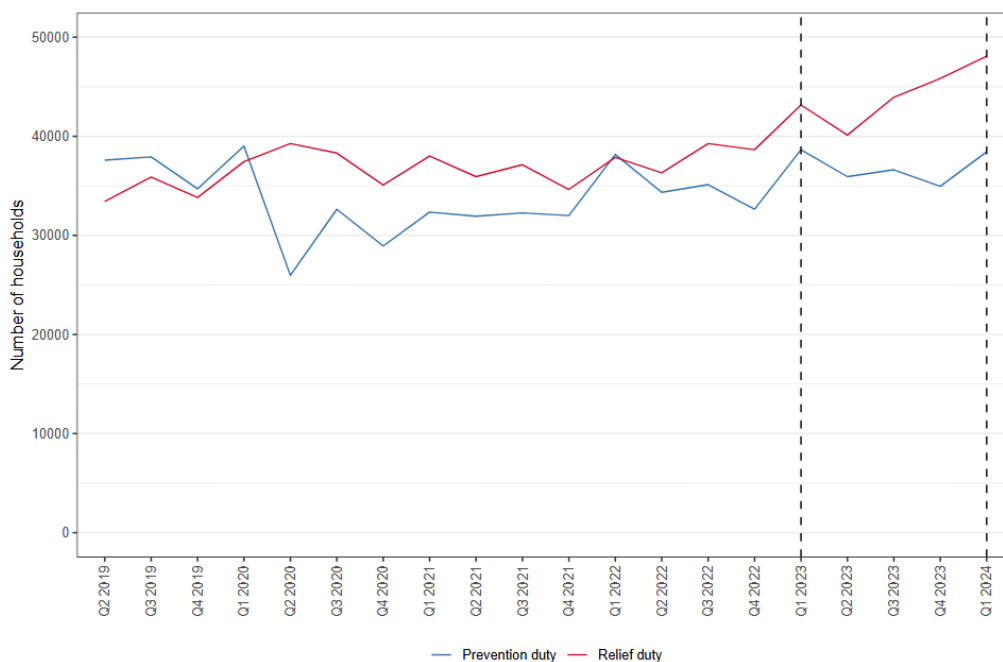
Moreover, a report by Crisis dated 29 February 2024, titled [“Rough sleeping rises by 27% as the homelessness crisis deepens across England”](#) states that there has been an exponential increase in the number of people sleeping rough across the country. As highlighted in said report, on a given night in Autumn 2023 it was found that:

- 3,898 people were sleeping rough across England, an increase of 27% on the previous year.
- The number of people sleeping rough was 61% higher than it had been ten years previously and 120% higher than when data collection began in 2010.
- Street homelessness was rising among women with 568 seen to be rough sleeping that autumn; up from 464 – a rise of 22%.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government’s quarterly statistics release [“Statutory Homelessness in England: January to March 2024”](#), emphasises the dramatic increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation from Q2 2019 to Q1 2024:



Additionally, the aforementioned report highlights the time series for the number of households owed a prevention or relief duty since Q2 2019. Once again, a significant increase is apparent as set out in the chart below:



With regard to London figures, in August 2023 170,000 Londoners were found to be homeless and living in temporary accommodation arranged by their local authority. Turbulence in the private rented sector is a critical factor behind the growing numbers of homeless Londoners. A Shelter

article titled [“At least 354,000 people homeless in England today”](#), emphasises the problem both nationally and regionally and considers the areas across England where homelessness is most acute. In this analysis, “London comes out worst, with one in 47 people homeless in the capital. The total number of people homeless in the city has risen 12% in a year, to a total of 187,000 people.”

The table below highlights the extent of the challenge in the capital:

Estimated number of people who are homeless as at a given night in 2024, by type of homelessness, by region of England	Est. no. of people homeless and living in TA arranged by them or homeless at home as at 30th June 2024	No. of people sleeping on the streets on a given night	Est. total no. homeless children	Est. total no. homeless people (adults and children)	Rate of homelessness (1 in X people)
North East	2200	19	89	810	2308
North West	20440	1017	369	10050	21826
Yorkshire and the Humber	7560	767	270	3350	8597
East Midlands	10090	452	287	4930	10829
West Midlands	26420	1562	256	14790	28238
East of England	23030	567	337	11490	23934
London	184080	1681	1132	91050	186893
South East	36460	392	670	17230	37522
South West	12610	548	488	5750	13646

Local Context

The London Borough of Hillingdon reflects the national picture having also experienced a significant increase in Homeless presentations in recent years. This issue is highlighted in an article by Hillingdon Vision News published on 7 March 2024 titled “[Rising Tide of Homelessness: Hillingdon Faces Soaring Numbers Despite Government Pledges, Advocacy Groups Urge Urgent Action.](#)” The London Borough of Hillingdon’s [Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2019 to 2024](#) reports that “accessing affordable housing in both the private rented sector and the social housing sector is a key underlying issue in relation to homelessness, exacerbated by the competition our residents face in accessing these scarce resources.” The Council has also seen an increase in households leaving asylum accommodation following receipt of their status.

Legislative Context

Homeless decisions must be made in line with the [Homeless Reduction Act 2017](#) and the [Housing Act 1996 Part VII](#) amended in 2002. To be entitled to a full homeless duty, residents must meet five criteria: homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, eligible, priority need, not intentionally homeless, and have a local connection.

Continuous Service Improvement

The Council has a homeless service improvement programme (Project Neptune) in place, implementing change across twelve workstreams. The Council has improved the customer journey through the reinstatement of the triage function. At the time of the Committee’s Review, work was also ongoing to review the website and ICT systems to reduce the administrative burden on staff. Additionally, a fresh training offer for staff was being developed.

Evidence & Witness Testimony

The Select Committee held a number of witness sessions at which Members had the opportunity to receive testimony from Hillingdon Council officers and from a wide range of external witnesses and experts.

Overview of Witness Sessions

The witness sessions conducted as part of the Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey Review provided valuable insights into both the challenges faced in Hillingdon's homelessness services and potential improvements thereto. The sessions featured testimonies from key stakeholders, including Council officers, representatives from voluntary sector organisations, and experts in homelessness and domestic abuse support.

1. The first session on 13 March 2024 focused on the increasing demand for homelessness services and the Council's strategy for prevention and housing supply. The importance of empathy and improved staff training were emphasised.
2. The second session on 16 April 2024 highlighted the challenges of unaffordable private rental accommodation and the need for better communication and support for residents. At this session the importance of a welcoming environment at the Civic Centre was also discussed.
3. The third session on 13 June 2024 featured representatives from Thames Reach and P3, who shared their experiences in supporting rough sleepers and young people. The need for effective communication and collaboration among services was underscored.
4. The final session on 18 July 2024 focused on the support for victims of domestic abuse. Additionally, the challenges of accessing housing support and the importance of consistent communication and empathy were highlighted.

For ease of reading, the detailed minutes and accounts of these witness sessions are available as background papers. They are briefly summarised below to provide a comprehensive understanding of the discussions and findings.

Witness Session 1 - 13 March 2024

The first witness session focused on the challenging situation regarding homelessness in Hillingdon. The Corporate Director of Central Services acknowledged a 27% increase in demand, driven primarily by evictions from private rental accommodation. It was noted that the Council's strategy emphasised homelessness prevention and boosting housing supply, including the purchase of 500 new homes. The Head of Housing Needs provided an overview of the customer pathway, detailing the stages from initial contact to case closure. Partnerships with voluntary sector organisations including Trinity and Thames Reach, which provided support for rough sleepers, were also discussed. Finally, the session addressed the need for improved staff training, particularly in trauma-informed issues, and underlined the vital importance of empathy when dealing with

residents. In summary, the following key issues were raised during this first witness session:

- **Homelessness Increase:** There had been a 27% increase in homelessness, with 100 people presenting as homeless each week, primarily due to evictions from private rental accommodations.
- **Affordable Housing Supply:** Over the last five years, there had been a 41% reduction in affordable privately rented accommodation supply.
- **Customer Pathway:** The process for customers seeking assistance involved multiple stages, including an initial online form, triage team assessment, and assignment to a case officer.
- **Temporary Accommodation Challenges:** Temporary accommodation for larger families was difficult to source and very expensive, leading to families sometimes being encouraged to remain in situ until a bailiff warrant was secured.
- **Partnerships and Support:** The Council had established partnerships with the voluntary sector, including Trinity and Thames Reach, to assist rough sleepers and provide support services.
- **Staff Training and Wellbeing:** There were concerns about staff training and wellbeing, with reports of officers being overloaded with work and the introduction of new training programmes to address trauma-informed issues and domestic abuse.

The full account of this session can be found in the meeting minutes [here](#)

Witness Session 2 - 16 April 2024

During the second session, the Corporate Director of Central Services discussed the reduction in private rental accommodation and the increasing unaffordability. Carys Hedley from Trinity detailed the organisation's support for families and individuals, highlighting challenges such as stagnant service due to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. The session emphasised the need for better communication and empathy from housing officers, in addition to improvements in the Civic Centre environment. The importance of correct referrals and comprehensive support to prevent a cycle of homelessness were also discussed. The session concluded with recommendations for better systems and technology for case handovers and the need for a more welcoming environment at the Civic Centre.

In summary, the following key issues were raised during this witness session:

- **Homelessness Challenges:** The Corporate Director of Central Services highlighted the reduction in private rental accommodation and increasing unaffordability, making it difficult for non-priority individuals to access affordable housing.
- **Support from Trinity:** Carys Hedley from Trinity discussed the provision of supported spaces and long-term unsupported accommodation, emphasising the challenges faced due to Local Housing Allowance rates and the reluctance of people to move away from their support network.
- **Specialist Housing Needs:** Trinity planned to create a new service offering a specialist housing programme with full-time live-in support for individuals with complex needs, including drug, alcohol, and mental health issues.

- **Empathy and Communication:** The session highlighted the need for better empathy and communication from housing officers, suggesting retraining on language used with clients and creating a more welcoming environment at the Civic Centre.
- **Staff Wellbeing:** Concerns were raised about the mental health of housing staff, recommending well-being measures such as regular team meetings, flexible working hours, and enforced rest periods.
- **Prevention Strategy:** The Corporate Director emphasised the need for a strong prevention strategy and a healthy supply of affordable housing, acknowledging the challenges faced in achieving this.

The full account of this session can be found in the meeting minutes [here](#)

Witness Session 3 - 13 June 2024

The third session featured representatives from Thames Reach and P3, who shared their experiences and perspectives on homelessness. Sophie Murray from Thames Reach outlined the team's work with rough sleepers and collaboration with various agencies. P3 representatives, including Zara Street, Laura Lawson, and Nicola Tallon, discussed their support for young people and families, highlighting challenges in moving young people to appropriate accommodation. The session emphasised the importance of communication and the need for a platform for all services to communicate effectively. The challenges faced by housing officers due to high demand and the need for better support for tenants to sustain tenancies were also highlighted.

In summary, the following key issues were raised during this witness session:

- **Homelessness and Accommodation:** The session highlighted the challenges faced by Thames Reach and P3 in supporting rough sleepers and young people. The lack of options for accommodation and high support needs of many rough sleepers were significant issues.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** There was an emphasis on the importance of communication between the Council and partner organisations. The need for a platform where everyone could communicate effectively was highlighted, as well as the challenges faced due to changes in case work without the knowledge of partnership workers.
- **Support Services:** P3 discussed their supported accommodation services and the challenges of moving young people on to appropriate accommodation due to the limited supply of affordable housing. They also highlighted their work with various partners within the Borough.
- **Staff Wellbeing:** Concerns were raised about the mental health of housing staff, recommending well-being measures such as regular team meetings, flexible working hours, and enforced rest periods.
- **Prevention Strategy:** The Corporate Director emphasised the need for a strong prevention strategy and a healthy supply of affordable housing, acknowledging the challenges faced in achieving this.
- **Service Improvement:** The Corporate Director of Central Services acknowledged the need for continuous improvement in the service, including the implementation of an improvement plan and a workforce plan.

The full account of this session can be found in the meeting minutes [here](#)

Witness Session 4 - 18 July 2024

The final session included testimony from Sonia Stewart and Sultana Ahmed, who provided an overview of the Hillingdon Domestic Advocacy Service. They highlighted the evolution of the service to support victims across all levels of risk. Concerns were raised about the approach to housing for victims of domestic abuse, particularly the requirement for documentation and the impact of relocating victims far from their support systems. The need for consistent communication and updates for clients, better training for housing officers, and the importance of empathy and understanding in dealing with victims of domestic abuse were emphasised. The session concluded with recommendations for improvements in communication, support services, and streamlined processes to better serve residents.

In summary, the following key issues were raised during this witness session:

- **Housing for Domestic Abuse Victims:** Concerns were raised about the approach to housing for victims of domestic abuse, including the requirement for police involvement and documentation, which could be challenging for victims fleeing emergency situations.
- **Relocation Challenges:** Victims fleeing domestic abuse were often offered accommodation far from their support systems, exacerbating their vulnerability and impacting their jobs, families, communities, and children's schools.
- **Inconsistencies in Housing Services:** There were inconsistencies reported by clients when approaching housing services for assistance, particularly regarding the advice given about remaining within the Borough.
- **Sanctuary Scheme:** The scheme assesses properties to implement additional security measures for victims of domestic abuse who wished to remain in their homes. There was a lack of clarity around time frames for referrals and responses.
- **Staff Turnover and Communication:** High turnover of staff within the housing team lead to missed communications and unresolved issues. Consistent communication and updates for clients were essential.
- **Housing Reception Environment:** The environment at the Housing Reception was not welcoming, with victims spending the whole day there without amenities for them and their children.

The full account of this session can be found in the meeting minutes [here](#)

These sessions provided valuable insights into the challenges and potential improvements in respect of Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey in Hillingdon. The recommendations focused on enhancing resident experience, managing expectations, improving staff support and training, and fostering partnerships and collaboration.

Site Visits

During May 2024, and as part of the ongoing Review, Members of the Committee conducted unannounced visits to the Council's Housing Reception. These visits presented an invaluable insight into the experience of the resident and enabled Members to witness firsthand how individual customers and situations were handled by housing staff. Further to these visits, a number of areas for improvement were recommended; particularly in relation to staff training, and the Housing Reception environment.

Additionally, as part of the Review, Councillors undertook visits to the contact centre where they had an opportunity to listen in to live housing-related calls. Members reported that it was enlightening to witness first-hand the challenging work of the contact centre staff. They were particularly impressed with their dedication, professionalism, how they handled complex situations, and their ability to engage effectively with residents. It was noted that the call handlers were found to be excellent, but contacting back-office staff was challenging at times. An improved handover plan when housing officers were on leave or had left the Council was suggested.

Moreover, in collaboration with the Council's Counter Fraud Team, Members attended unannounced visits to two of the B&Bs in the Borough which are used to temporarily house residents. The Committee Members reported that these visits were both extremely useful and informative.

The Committee's Findings

General conclusions

Having heard from a variety of interested parties and having given due consideration to the entirety of the evidence presented to them, Councillors reached the following key conclusions:

1. **Increased Demand and Challenges:** The Review highlighted a significant increase in demand for homelessness services, driven primarily by evictions from private rental accommodation. It was noted that the reduction in affordable private rental housing had exacerbated the situation, making it challenging for the Council to meet the needs of residents.
2. **Importance of Prevention and Collaboration:** The Council's strategy focused on homelessness prevention and increasing housing supply. Collaboration with voluntary sector organisations such as Trinity and Thames Reach was crucial in providing support for rough sleepers and those with complex needs.
3. **Communication and Empathy:** The Review emphasised the importance of better communication and empathy from housing officers. Training in trauma-informed issues and the use of appropriate language were identified as essential to improve interactions with residents.
4. **System and Process Improvements:** The need for better systems and technology for case handovers, in addition to a more welcoming environment at the Civic Centre, were highlighted. Suggestions included the use of automated text reminders, self-check-in systems, and continuous feedback from residents.
5. **Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse:** The Review underscored the challenges faced by victims of domestic abuse in accessing housing support. The need for consistent communication, better training for housing officers, and a more empathetic approach were emphasised.

The Committee's recommendations to Cabinet

Further to the Committee's Review, the Chair and Opposition Lead met with officers to develop and shape the final recommendations from the review detailed below.

Firstly, the Review highlighted the importance of referring to applicants as "residents" rather than "customers" or "clients" to foster a sense of community and belonging. The need for a clearer Residents' Charter was emphasised to guide residents through the homelessness support process, reducing confusion and addressing frequently asked questions. Witnesses from Trinity and Thames Reach stressed the importance of empathy and understanding in interactions with residents, particularly those with complex needs. The reconfiguration of the Housing Reception Centre to create a more welcoming environment was recommended based on feedback about the intimidating atmosphere of the Civic Centre. Unannounced random checks and management oversight of calls and correspondence were suggested to ensure a high-quality, professional, and empathetic service. Continuous feedback from residents through anonymous forms and promoting the suggestion box system were also recommended to improve service efficiency and resident

interactions. On that basis, it is recommended:

1	<p>Enhancing Resident Experience</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All staff to refer to those applicants who approach the service for help as ‘residents’ rather than ‘customers’ or ‘clients’. 2. Create a clearer Residents’ Charter: a more accessible guide explaining each stage of the homelessness support process for new applicants, from intake to case closure. This guide will set expectations, reduce confusion, and address common questions. Consider new technologies for instant translation requirements. 3. Reconfigure the Housing Reception Centre to provide a more welcoming and empathetic environment within existing budget plans. 4. Continue unannounced random checks/management oversight of calls and correspondence to ensure a high-quality, professional, empathetic, and resident-focused service. 5. Continue to gather feedback from residents regarding homelessness services using a simple anonymous feedback form. 6. Actively promote the current suggestion box system to encourage staff to submit suggestions for improving service efficiency and resident interactions.
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The Review identified the need for applicants to check their eligibility online before applying formally to prevent unnecessary applications and save time and resources. Automated text reminders for appointments and deadlines were recommended to avoid processing delays. The feasibility of introducing a self-check-in system at reception was explored to streamline the process and enhance service transformation. Witnesses emphasised the importance of clear and updated documentation, guides, and resident-facing processes related to eligibility, case preparation, and action planning. The Review also highlighted the need for better communication and empathy from housing officers to manage residents' expectations effectively. On that basis, it is recommended:

2	<p>Managing Expectations and Process Efficiency:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider incorporating ways to help applicants check their eligibility on-line for assistance before applying formally. Preventative avoidance can stop unnecessary applications from those who are not entitled, saving time and resources for both the applicants and the Council. 2. For applicants in the process, to avoid processing delays, to explore the possibility of using automated text reminders for appointments and deadlines. 3. Explore the feasibility of introducing a self-check-in system for applicants at reception linked to service transformation. 4. Continue to review and update current documentation, guides and resident facing processes in relation to eligibility, case preparation and action planning.
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The Review underscored the importance of regular casework supervision and promoting current staff welfare policies to support housing staff. Witnesses from Trinity and Thames Reach highlighted the challenges faced by housing officers due to high demand and the need for better support. A comprehensive peer support and training program in collaboration with partner organisations was recommended, including access to peer mentors with lived experience of homelessness. Refresher training and "walk-in-my-shoes" sessions were suggested to build understanding and connection with residents. Creating a learning set of resources for staff to share good practices was also recommended to enhance staff support and training. On that basis, it is recommended:

3

Staff Support & Training

1. Ensure all Housing staff receive regular casework supervision and promote current Staff Welfare policies.
2. Consider implementing a comprehensive peer support and training programme in collaboration with a partner organisation. This programme should include access to peer mentors with lived experience of homelessness and offer refresher training to staff. The training should also incorporate 'walk-in-my-shoes' sessions to build understanding and connection with residents.
3. Create a learning set of resources for staff to encourage the sharing of good practice.

The Review emphasised the importance of building on existing partnerships and developing new ones with local organisations to create a wider support network for residents. Witnesses from Trinity, Thames Reach, and P3 highlighted the value of collaboration in providing comprehensive support for residents. Assigning named officers as liaisons for relevant partner agencies was recommended to ensure accountability and effective communication. Introducing a generic email as the primary contact and communication tool between partner agencies and the Council was also suggested to streamline communication and improve collaboration. These recommendations were formed based on the insights and evidence gathered during the witness sessions, aiming to enhance the overall experience and support for residents, improve process efficiency, provide better staff support, and foster stronger partnerships and collaboration. On that basis, it is recommended:

4

Partnerships and Collaboration

1. Build on existing partnerships and further develop these with local organisations to create a wider support network for residents to access.
2. Assign named officers to be liaisons for relevant partner agencies for accountability and, to aid effective communications going forward, introduce a generic email as the primary contact and communication tool between them and the Council.

About the review - witnesses and activity

The following Terms of Reference were agreed by the Committee from the outset of the Review:

1. To gain a thorough understanding of the Council's Homeless Prevention Service and the resident's journey through this process.
2. To scrutinise the service delivery and review its effectiveness.
3. To review service users' feedback to explore the challenges faced by residents accessing the service.
4. To look at other local authorities that may have different models of service delivery for best practice, including research and findings from charities, housing bodies, regional bodies and organisations, e.g. GLA.
5. Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose practical and deliverable actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

Witnesses

1. Dan Kennedy (Corporate Director of Central Services) – LBH
2. Melissa Blower (Housing Improvement Programme Manager) - LBH
3. Debby Weller (Head of Housing Strategy and Policy) - LBH
4. Maggie Nelson (Head of Housing Needs) - LBH
5. Carys Hedley (Director of Services) - Trinity
6. Sophie Murray (Lead Manager of the Hillingdon Outreach Team) - Thames Reach
7. Zara Street - P3
8. Laura Lawson - P3
9. Nicola Tallon – P3
10. Sonia Stewart (Independent Domestic Violence Manager) - LBH
11. Sultana Ahmed (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) - LBH
12. Rachel Bulley (Social Prescribing Link Worker) - Colne Union PCN, NHS

References

[“Rough sleeping rises by 27% as the homelessness crisis deepens across England”](#); article published by Crisis dated 29 February 2024.

[“Statutory Homelessness in England: January to March 2024”](#); Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government’s quarterly statistics release; published on 8 August 2024.

[“At least 354,000 people homeless in England today”](#); article published by Shelter on 11 December 2024.

[“Rising Tide of Homelessness: Hillingdon Faces Soaring Numbers Despite Government Pledges, Advocacy Groups Urge Urgent Action.”](#); Hillingdon Vision News published on 7 March 2024.

[Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2019 to 2024](#); London Borough of Hillingdon

[Homeless Reduction Act 2017](#)

[Housing Act 1996 Part VII](#) amended in 2002