



Pathway Practice Report

Pathway COVID19 Response - Brighton and Hove

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Background

The worldwide pandemic of COVID19 coronavirus reached the UK in late January 2020, with the first death reported in early March.

The Pathway/Faculty for Homelessness and Inclusion Health annual conference 'Pathways from Homelessness' took place on the 11th and 12th March just prior to the UK lockdown coming into effect on the 23rd March. The conference timetable was rapidly re-arranged in order to publicise the first version of the 'Test-Triage-Cohort-Care' plan written by Professor Andrew Hayward, Professor of Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Inclusion Health Research at UCL, and Dr Al Story, Clinical Lead of the pan-London TB Find & Treat service.

This plan outlined an approach of appropriately testing, accommodating and caring for people who were rough sleeping or currently in unsuitable accommodation, so they could effectively socially distance, self-isolate or shield, as directed by government guidance.

On 17th March the UK Government announced the 'Everyone In' policy and emergency funds of £3.2 million, directing local authorities to get all rough sleepers into accommodation quickly; which many sought to do. Rental accommodation and hotels left empty by the restrictions on travel were used in many areas to achieve this. Pathway centrally, and local teams regionally, assisted with COVID19 - Command groups and the triage of people into COVID-Care, and COVID-Protect groups. Working alongside the local government housing services, health services, street agencies, voluntary organisations, drug and alcohol services and other local organisations a massive amount of work was undertaken to accommodate all those who needed it.

Brighton and Hove

On 20th March Brighton and Hove City Council published 'Changes to Support for Rough Sleepers During the COVID19 Pandemic'. This outlined the plan previously announced to offer accommodation to all rough sleepers in the city, along with other measures such as closing the weekend night shelter in order to promote social distancing. Housing and Adult social care departments worked together to identify suitable accommodation.

Negotiations were entered into with hotel, hostel, and other accommodation providers.

Health input, including triage and cohort guidance was provided by ARCH Healthcare (the local specialist GP service for people who are homeless). This was developed as a Brighton specific model to reflect local accommodation options, staffing models, and homeless cohorts, but also drew advice from the Test-Triage-Cohort-Care plan, (but without testing as this was not available until much later).

Triage and assessment documentation were produced to help workers and clinicians cohort patients into lower, high, and very high-risk categories.

Services involved

Brighton and Hove City Council negotiated contracts, and provided the accommodation, leadership and co-ordination of the COVID19 command group, Adult Social Care input, and Public Health leadership. It also funded the security presence at each accommodation site, a part-time infection control nurse and transport for clients.

St Mungos provided street outreach, co-ordinating finding rough sleepers and transport to the new accommodation, staff and management at the sites, and client assessment.

ARCH Health provided Primary Care leadership, cohort and triage guidance, 7 days a week triage, clinical and health advice, and GP/nurse cover to the hotels. It also employed the part-time infection control nurse.

CGL provided an on-call nurse prescriber to provide rapid assessment and substitute treatment for opiate dependence, and alcohol assessments.

Sussex Community Foundation Trust (SCFT) Homeless Nursing Team- provided follow up for existing patients, and as needed input with nursing, physio, and OT.

Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT) Mental Health Homeless Team- provided advice and assessment regarding mental health issues and concerns.

Multiple voluntary organisations provided food and other support.

Accommodation Provision

Initially 56 rooms were secured in five different guesthouses.

After multiple attempts at securing accommodation had fallen through, the accommodation listed below was secured.

Food is provided three times a day. All rooms have en-suite facilities. Security is present on all sites.

Minimum levels of alcohol needed to prevent alcohol withdrawal syndrome are provided for people who are shielding and diagnosed with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome after clinical assessment.

All clients/patients are assessed by St Mungo's staff initially, and then triaged, if needed, by ARCH.

Youth Hostel Association (YHA) - CARE facility/Symptomatic patients - 49 rooms. CARE facility for all symptomatic patients to move to from hotels, supported accommodation, and emergency accommodation if they were unable to self-isolate in their current placement. St Mungo's staff are trained to monitor temperature and oxygen saturations. This facility has also been used to take suspected COVID patients discharged from hospital. Maximum number of patients at a time has been 8. Once the PROTECT HIGH hotel re-opens to the public this facility will become Protect High (contract until September).

King's Hotel - Protect High/Very high risk - 90 rooms. This facility has been the busiest and has almost reached capacity (contract to end of June).

Brighton Hotel - Protect High/High support needs - 30 rooms. At capacity (contract to September).

Britannia Study Hotel - Protect Low/Low support needs - 51 rooms. At capacity. This facility is used to house lower risk patients without support needs. As it was a student residence prior to lockdown and some overseas students could not leave, it has retained some of its original tenants alongside the ex-homeless residents (contract for a lower number of rooms until September).

Old Ship Hotel - Women only/safeguarding concerns, small numbers, now closed.

Phoenix Halls- (potentially 295 rooms). University of Brighton Student Accommodation intended for low support/low risk residents to move to from other facilities once lockdown eases and hotels revert to commercial use (contract to September).

The number of rough sleepers left on the streets was low (perhaps 5 or 6).

The total number of people accommodated is approximately 160.

Plans for the future

All the services involved are all committed to ensuring that as many people as possible move from the hotels to secure accommodation and not back to the streets. This is already taking place with priority for places in supported accommodation being given to those currently in the hotels, and some clients having been secured private rented accommodation already.

The Brighton Hotel, YHA and Phoenix Halls contracts are secured until September, which gives breathing space.

Alternative premises are being looked into for CARE accommodation. The most likely option is a 15-bed B+B hotel in Brighton.

The local authority is working with landlords in the private rented sector to place people currently in the hotels into accommodation which has become available during the pandemic as not taken up by others, including students.

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