

# Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme Navigator Funding To Barca-Leeds

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Report of: Head of Commissioning (Housing Related Support and Public Health)

Report to: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## Brief summary

To seek approval to receive £251,728 funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and award grants up to a total value of £344,508; including Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) up to a value of £251,728 and Homeless Prevention Funding up to a value of £92,780. The grants fund a number of Navigator posts and interventions with different organisations to support people rough sleeping.

## Recommendations

- a) The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment is recommended to accept the grant funding of £251,728 from DLUHC for the RSAP Programme for 2023-25.
- b) To approve the award of up to £118,811 RSAP funding (formerly known as Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) to Barca-Leeds for 3 Navigator posts for 2024-25.
- c) To approve an award of up to £92,780 Homeless Prevention Grant Funding as a grant to Barca-Leeds for 2 Navigator posts for 2024-25
- d) To approve an award of up to £40,000 for 2023-24 and up to £44,000 for 2024-25 as a grant to Barca-Leeds for 1 Navigator post to support with the LCC Purchase and Repair/Conversion Programme (RSAP Round 3)
- e) To approve an award of up to £48,917 for 2024-25 as a grant to Barca-Leeds for Navigator support for the LCC Purchase and Repair/Conversion Programme (RSAP Round 5)

## **What is this report about?**

- 1 The government published its national Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018. The national strategy includes the targets to halve rough sleeper numbers (from the 2017 baseline) by 2022 and to end rough sleeping by 2027.
- 2 The delivery of the proposed accommodation and specific workers identified in this report directly contributes to the Council's response to preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping. Furthermore, this funding will help to aid people's recovery, build positive lives, and prevent people from returning to rough sleeping. This is part of an Ending Rough Sleeping Strategy that has been produced with partners from the Silver Street Support Partnership.
- 3 The Council's Purchase and Repair/Conversion Scheme is a programme being led by the Inclusive Growth Team which is seeking to procure up to 38 single unit properties on the open market, to convert or repair to provide homes for people who are rough sleeping. In addition to this Commissioners have been working with partners to increase provision for people who are rough sleeping across the city. This has enabled us to increase provision to a maximum of 72 properties which is a mixture of landlord provision and other providers. DLUHC has provided funding for these properties under the NSAP and RSAP Programmes. Approvals to receive the capital have been given in other reports. This report focuses on the budget allocated for the support of the people living in these properties through Navigator posts.
- 4 The Navigator posts will support service users who have been rough sleeping and/ or begging and have been identified through the housing pathway, the Street Outreach Team and the Street Support Team as needing intensive support to maintain accommodation, reduce and prevent a return to street based life and to enable integration into the community. They will provide intensive work on small caseloads that will look to ensure the individual is supported in their recovery to find employment, undertake training, develop budgeting skills, cultivate positive social circles and be better equipped to maintain their accommodation and independence and avoid returning to the street. Once an individual has been identified as suitable for navigation support the Navigator will give continued support and be a single point of contact until the individual is settled and able to maintain their accommodation and independence.
- 5 Barca-Leeds are already delivering directly related services and have the necessary infrastructure, they are considered uniquely placed and suitably experienced to do this work. The grant will mean that there is more capacity in the service to provide intensive support for people with the most chaotic lifestyles. A team of Navigators and a Team Leader are already in place working within Barca for a number of years grant funded by DLUHC. The grant outlined in this report will provide continued funding for some posts as well as increasing the size of the team for specific targeted work.
- 6 The posts will work closely with the Police, Leeds Housing Options, Leeds Street Team, Forward Leeds and other relevant services.

## What impact will this proposal have?

- 7 The Silver Street Support Partnership Leeds produces an annual Rough Sleeping Action Plan that outlines the strategies in place to contribute to preventing single homelessness and ending rough sleeping. This document is signed off by Gold Partnership meeting and used by DLUHC to track Leeds's progress against the agreed objectives. The funding will enable the continuation of partnership work to sustain the outreach, safeguarding and accommodation offer and to reduce the number of people rough sleeping in Leeds.

## How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 8 Supporting individuals to stop rough sleeping and, if possible, sustain a tenancy has a positive impact on their health and wellbeing, and the community as a whole. The Navigators work directly contributes towards the strategic aims of reducing the risks of rough sleeping, reducing health inequalities, tackling poverty, and finding suitable accommodation and support for vulnerable people in an economy that works for everyone.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 9 Consultation has taken place with key partners working across the city with people who are rough sleeping to design a bid for the funding, identifying key activities and initiatives which would be eligible for the grant funding.
- 10 The initiatives suggested for grant support were developed in response to the feedback from people using services during the Covid outbreak and based on an analysis of action required to achieve the city's ambition to reduce the number of people rough sleeping completed as part of the bidding process. The recent successful Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) bid to DLUHC involved wide consultation with people who are rough sleeping and key stakeholders. On the basis of a Strategic Gap Analysis and the consultation findings, the SHAP review found that Navigators providing long term and intensive support working alongside clients in their own accommodation was the most effective way to support people rough sleeping.
- 11 The Executive Member for Housing has been consulted and is supportive of the proposals.

## What are the resource implications?

- 12 The grant monies will be paid to Leeds City Council by DLUHC via a ringfenced grant. The total value of the grants to be awarded is £344,508.
- 13 The activities listed in this report will be fully funded by the grant.
- 14 There are no longer-term resource implications, all providers are aware of the short-term nature of the funding and the proposals in this report can be scaled up or scaled down depending on future funding allocations.

## **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- 15 The funding listed in this report is being allocated to organisations to deliver additional support to people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. Should the organisations fail to deliver this support then there is a risk that Leeds City Council could have to repay the grant to DLUHC. This will be mitigated by payment in instalments, through robust monitoring by Adults and Health Commissioning Team and through ongoing updates and communication with DLUHC.
- 16 All the services outlined in this report are already delivered by the providers who have specialist knowledge in their field. They have received funding for similar purposes for several years. The grant for 23/4 and 24/5 is to extend the activity to end of March 2025.
- 17 Awarding the grants to the named organisations in this way could leave the Council open to a potential claim from other providers, to whom this grant could be of interest, that it has not been wholly transparent. However, the risk of this would appear to be low.

## **What are the legal implications?**

- 18 The value of the grants in total is below £500k, for this reason it has been determined that approval is a Significant Operational Decision and is not subject to Call-In. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.
- 19 As the Council will be entering into grant arrangements with the organisations stated, the Council will have no contractual control over enforcement of the terms. The only sanction available with grant payments is for the Council to claw-back grant monies unspent or spent on matters for which the grant wasn't provided.
- 20 There is a risk of challenge that a grant payment is not a grant. Legally there is some confusion about when a grant can and cannot be used as there is a fine line between a grant (which is not caught by the procurement rules) and a contract for services (which is caught by the procurement rules). Although no longer directly applicable due to the UK's departure from the European Union the preamble to EU Procurement Directive 2014/24/EU (from which the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 were transposed into English law) is still persuasive and the directive makes it clear at paragraph (4) that "the mere financing, in particular through grants, of an activity, which is frequently linked to the obligation to reimburse the amounts received where they are not used for the purposes intended, does not usually fall within the scope of the public procurement rules".
- 21 As such, unconditional grants are unlikely to meet the definition of a contract as set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015). However, where grants are used with strict qualification criteria and an obligation to pay back money if certain targets are not reached, the position is less straightforward and it is possible that an arrangement referred to as a grant could meet the definition of a contract set out in the PCR 2015 and, if it does, the PCR 2015 may apply. It is therefore extremely important to ensure that, if providing grants, the process followed does not fall within the definition of a "public contract" as set out in PCR 2015 which states –"contracts for pecuniary interest concluded in writing between one or more economic operators and one or more contracting authorities and having as their object the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services."
- 22 A Subsidy Control Assessment has been completed and found that the grants do not qualify as subsidies under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 .
- 23 Funding from which any grant payment is made must be designated as "grant" money. If the Council wish to make a grant, the money must be in the Communities, Housing and Environment "grant" block. If it is not, it can normally be moved from other blocks in the Council budget into the grant block.
- 24 There is no overriding legal obstacle preventing the award of the grants and the contents of this report should be noted. In making their final decision, the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents best value for the Council. Procurement and Commercial Services have inputted into this report.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

25 Consultation took place prior to the bid being submitted with colleagues from Safer Leeds, Silver Street Support Partnership, Leeds Housing Options and Adults and Health to agree the funding required to continue to provide support and accommodation. Ideas for funding have been co-produced with partners. The activity is already being delivered by Barca-Leeds who are best placed to provide this service and the report is to allocate continuation funding.

### **How will success be measured?**

26 Leeds City Council is committed to ending rough sleeping and it is key strategic priority for the city. This vision is underpinned by three key approaches: Prevention; Intervention; Recovery with the desired collective outcome being: People 'move in' to appropriate and suitable accommodation; People 'move-on' by accessing the right support at the right time, to aide their personal recovery and as a result fewer people return / end up on the street and more feel socially connected to their neighbourhood. To achieve this, a rough sleeping action plan is in place that has a suite of indicators to measure success, including:

- Reduce the number of people 'at risk' of rough sleeping
  - Reduce evictions and restrictions from emergency and supported accommodation
  - Support people with tenancies back to accommodation if found rough sleeping
  - Increase tenancy sustainment beyond 6 months for people with a history of rough sleeping
  - Ensure all who need it have a safe place to stay. Develop and extend choice of accommodation options
  - Develop new and improved options for emergency accommodation (self-contained with 24 / 7 support)
- The indicators will be monitored by the Commissioning Team, Adults and Health.

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

27 The properties form part of an existing programme of work which commenced in 2021 (RSAP) and 2019 (NSAP) and will continue until March 2025 as will the support provided by the Navigators proposed in this report. The Commissioning Team, Adults and Health will be responsible for implementation and monitoring. The measures will be implemented following approval.

## **Appendices**

- None

## **Background papers**

- Equality Diversity Cohesion Integration Impact Screening