

Manchester City Council

Cllr Joanna Midgley - Homelessness pressures and temporary accommodation



Housing Pressures – Manchester

- Manchester 1 of 10 LAs in Greater Manchester – centre of conurbation, growing & international city
- 125 homeless applications per week (3rd highest in country)
- 10.5k applicants on social housing register with reasonable preference Band 1 & Band 2 (2134 social housing lettings made in 23/24)
- 5 year plus wait for social re-housing if join register today with 2 bed need on Band 2 (main duty) banding
- No realistic prospect of social re-housing if join register today with 4 bed need on Band 2
- Only 3 out of 32 wards have 30% + PRS properties that are LHA affordable

TA numbers – February 2023

- 3300 households in TA
- 808 households in B&B
- 227 families in B&B
- 131 families placed in B&B for longer than 6 weeks
- Gross nightly spend on B&B - £63k
- Projected £23m gross annual spend on B&B

TA Numbers – September 2024

- Manchester has bucked the national trend
- Number of households in TA – 2765
- Total B&B – 17
- Families B&B – 0
- Nightly spend on B&B - £1200
- Reduction in gross annual cost of around £22.5m

Manchester Approach

- Daily TA panel - chaired by Assistant Director of Homelessness
- Attended by Housing Options, Rough Sleeping, MCC TA and MCC commissioning
- Match people in B&B to alternative available TA
- Case checks at Housing Options
- Check 500 cases per week
- Weekly 'Struggle to Find Accommodation' panel
- Whole directorate approach – culture shift

Manchester Approach

- Social Housing Allocations Policy amended
- Homeless applicants who accept a PRS tenancy retain priority banding
- Strong preference in Manchester for social housing - PRS seen as 'stepping stone' to social re-housing
- Preferable to be in PRS, awaiting social housing, than B&B
- Make 100 PRS lets per month

Manchester Approach

- Leasing additional units of family TA through private providers
- HB subsidy limited to 90% January 2011 LHA rate
- Net cost of 1785 dispersed properties - £11m per year
- Agreeing 10-year plus leases with some landlords and holding stock in HRA – this means they qualify for higher rate of HB

Future Work

- 10-year leases - take 2 years to complete programme (just begun this work so early days)
- Focus on social landlords with high voids and re-let times
- Looking at direct let opportunities linked to expediting void turnaround
- Maximise letting to homeless households on new build schemes in city
- Using RTB receipts to purchase properties to integrate in council housing pool
- Replicate Wigan model on empty homes

Future work

- Continue to improve homelessness prevention work – encourage people to seek help early – work with schools/community hubs
- Identify surplus or disused council accommodation to convert to TA (some of this is underway – 6 in pipeline)
- Reduce out of area placements – work to increase number of TA in south and central of the city
- Manchester's 2022-2032 Housing Strategy commits to building 36,000 homes of which 10,000 will be affordable by 2032
- Work with government to find solutions!

Manchester Approach – asylum/refugee pressures

Proud LA of Sanctuary committed to being a place where people can find welcome & refuge

Significant increase in number of new refugees presenting/sleeping outside Town Hall since end of last year – regularly 50+ between Nov & Feb. Approx 75% got LTR decision outside Manchester.

Opened 32 bed ‘rest centre’ in Jan for refugees & commissioned Mustard Tree charity to set up ‘hub’ offering holistic support - housing, benefit, employment, home office advice, ESOL and food support. MCC housing solutions staff part of the team on site

Pressures continue – vital that LGA & new govt work together to develop a place based, collaborative approach with sustainable funding for this.