Harlow Homelessness & Rough Sleeping (Strategy)

Partner Agencies

Survey Analysis Report July 2019

Harlow Council

Working together for Harlow

Introduction

The purpose of the Survey was to establish Partner Agencies views on the key aspects to be considered by the Council in shaping its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Strategy will be designed to help tackle homelessness issues, specific to Harlow, and sets out how the Council and its Partners will tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next five years.

The survey covered the following areas:

- Organisation name
- Key principles
- Key challenges
- Any other comments

This analysis provides a transparent account of partner's views on the above areas.

Methodology

The Survey was undertaken using Smart Survey. Smart Survey was commissioned following a benchmarking exercise to find a new system that was GDPR compliant.

In accordance with GDPR and Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, a privacy statement was included in the Survey with information of where to find the Council policy on GDPR/DPA 2018

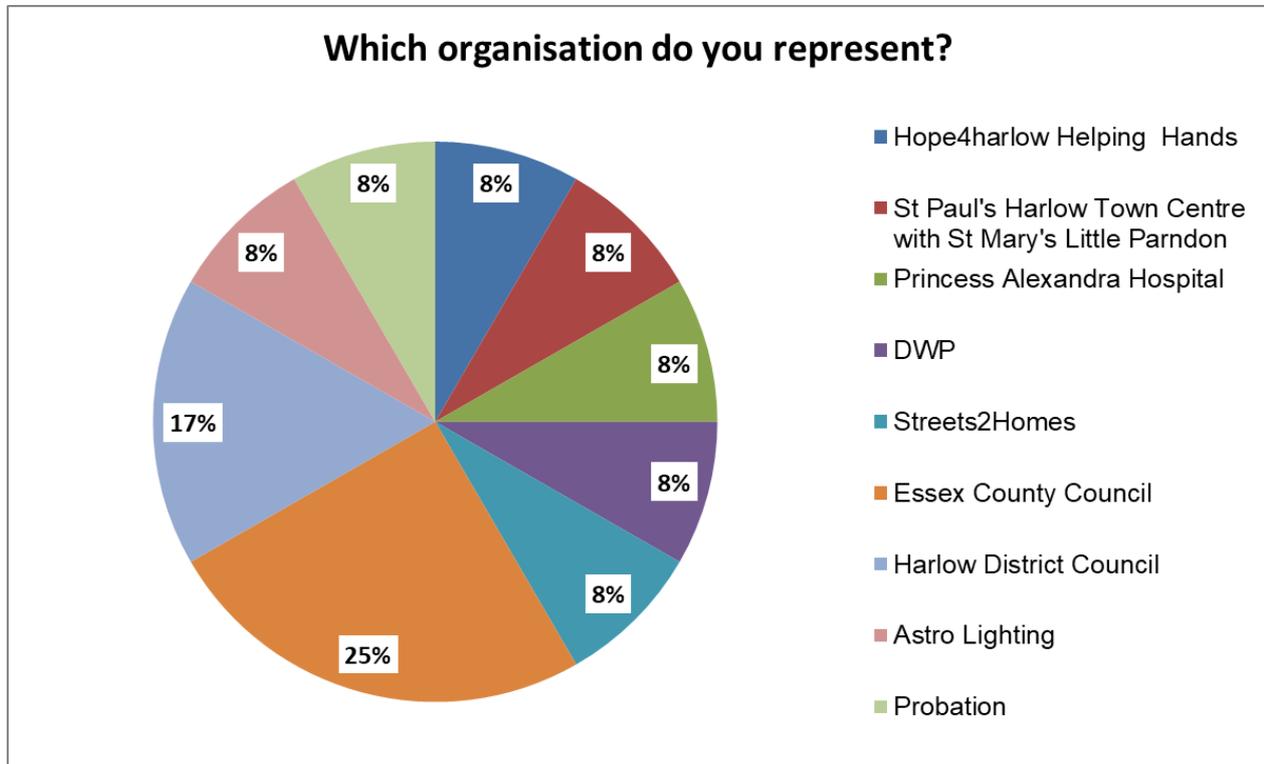Partner Agencies were invited by email to complete the Survey, which included a unique link.

The Survey was issued on 25 March 2019 and closed at Midnight on the 16 June 2019.

Findings

A total of 12 (41%) responses out of 29 invitations were received. The analysis of the 12 responses is shown in the following charts and tables.

1. Organisation

A summary of the responses by organisation are shown in the chart below. The responses came from 9 different organisations. The organisations with the most responses were Essex County Council (25%) and Harlow District Council (17%).

Which organisation do you represent?

Legend:
- Hope4harlow Helping Hands
- St Paul's Harlow Town Centre with St Mary's Little Parndon
- Princess Alexandra Hospital
- DWP
- Streets2Homes
- Essex County Council
- Harlow District Council
- Astro Lighting
- Probation

2. Key Principles

Partner Agencies were asked to indicate whether they agreed or not with the Council's 4 key principles, which will inform the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The 12 respondents all agreed with the Council's 4 key principles.

The Council has identified the following 4 key principles that will inform the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.	Yes	No	Response Total
Prevention - to stop homelessness and rough sleeping	12	0	12
Intervention - helping those in crisis with swift targeted support	12	0	12
Recovery - helping to rebuild lives	12	0	12
Partnerships - collective working to tackle homelessness in Harlow	12	0	12

3. Key Challenges

Partner Agencies were given a list of 'key challenges' identified by the Council and asked to select their top five challenges. The 'key challenges' were ranked in order of most responses. The top five 'key challenges are shown in the table below.

Top Five 'Key Challenges'
Lack of housing and affordable housing
Widespread mental health/mental capacity issues and prevalence of clients with complex needs
Extensive permitted development sites, many of which are being bought up by London & neighbouring boroughs
Placements by other councils in Harlow, meaning less housing stock available for Harlow Council to use. Universal credit giving lack of flexibility, including reliance on digitalisation.
Landlord perceptions of the negative impact of letting homes to people on benefits.

Partner Agencies were given the opportunity to list any other 'key challenges' not listed. The comments provided are shown in the table below.

Other 'Key Challenges'
"Drugs resulting in challenging behaviour; in so far as not covered above, generic government cuts mean that more are pushed towards the edge of financial sufficiency and thus more fall over the edge."
"Many homeless fall between recognised boundaries. They can't access help for mental health or substance abuse issues as they are not 'critical enough'."
"There is not enough recovery support."
"The churches 'Hope4harlow' shows the value of provision during January / February. But the same need exists throughout the year."
"Perhaps we can learn from the Finland model whereby it's the only European country to reduce homelessness."
"Those out of area do not receive enough support."
"An increased need for accommodation to meet medical issues for a growing disabled and aging population (such as ground floor ramp entranced, bariatric safe accommodation, lifts large enough to accommodate the bed bound for hospital transport, etc.)"
"Substance misuse and alcohol"

4. Any Other Comments

Partner Agencies were asked if there was anything specific, they would like to see in the Strategy about tackling Rough Sleeping that has not already been identified or about Homelessness in general. The following comments were provided by the Respondents.

Any Other Comments
"Reopening Occasio House or similar would be a help for the young homeless"
"We need to tackle the issue of foreign nationals who often have no recourse to public funds. They still need to sleep, eat and live despite lack of eligibility."
"We need to support those with chronic substance abuse issues or mental health concerns that are not so acute to warrant hospitalisation but are unable to fend for themselves."
"Insufficient recovery courses are available to those in need."
"The local churches have a huge role to play in resolving these issues but are not being harnessed fully and do not have funding to help release their talent and volunteer base."
"Perhaps Harlow can embrace schemes such as 'Hope into Action'?"
"St. Paul's Helping Hands drop-in' regularly helps 20-25 guests each week; and 150+ guests annually. That shows the latent need in the community. If we can resolve housing and longer term support for these individuals we could make serious inroads to resolving Harlow homelessness."
"Discussion about a year round night shelter space for those not meeting criteria for help with housing with integral support services for mental health, drug and alcohol support."
"Need for on-going support"
"Working in partnership with other districts, county, customers and the voluntary sector in developing solutions to homelessness and the causes are often bigger than just a district level."