



## Preventing rough sleeping in Hertsmere



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A scheme to help people move off the streets and into longer-term homes will launch this month, following a successful bid for government funding.

In partnership with charity One YMCA, Clarion Housing Group and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), we have transformed a former under-used hostel at Shenwood Court, Borehamwood into a 24-room accommodation and complex needs support service which will help vulnerable people who have been sleeping rough or are at risk of doing so. The scheme builds on our proactive approach to rough sleeping, which launched with our No Second and No First Night Out scheme, aimed at ensuring no-one spends a night on the streets.

Funding for the project was secured from a successful £165,000 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Rough Sleeping Initiative bid. The government initiative seeks to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, by providing specialist services and ongoing support to those most at risk, and a route into settled accommodation.

Councillor Jean Heywood, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Transport, said: "This scheme represents more than just a bed to sleep in – for service users, it's a real chance to get back on their feet.

"Through this scheme, each resident will not only be given a roof over their heads but within 72 hours they will be allocated a dedicated support worker and their needs assessed. They will then be provided with a support plan that is centred around them and works around their needs.

"In the first 12 months of the pandemic, we helped provide temporary accommodation for more than 30 individuals and have already secured longer-term homes for six. For those six, particularly, the support we were able to provide them has been life-changing.

"We want to continue to reach out and support more people, who would otherwise face uncertain futures."

Mark Turner, Director of Operations at One YMCA, said: "The nature, amount and specialism of support provided to each of the residents in this new scheme will be not only life changing, but in many cases life saving.

"For those who have been trapped in a revolving door of homelessness for extended periods the trauma experienced presents, what to the individual can seem like, almost insurmountable barriers to progression.

"However, thanks to the amazing level of support, commitment and collaboration between HBC, HCC, MHCLG and our own One YMCA Housing Team we will now be able to support each resident to address that trauma as they progress actively towards independence and independent living."

Councillor Stella Nash, Executive Member for Adult Care, Health & Wellbeing, Hertfordshire County Council, said: "This scheme meets Hertfordshire's ambition for its residents to reach their potential, be healthy, and to live independently.

"We recognise that achieving independent living can be a struggle for some of our residents, who require support for many reasons often relating to life changing circumstances which can be difficult to resolve.

"We are delighted to be working with our partners to provide the right support for adults experiencing homelessness. Shenwood Court will provide a much needed stepping stone to help residents rebuild their lives."

Vicky Bonner, Director of Housing at Clarion Housing Group, said: "We are really pleased to have been able to facilitate this change in service at Shenwood Court, which will meet a key need in the borough and ensure our building is being put to the best possible use.

"This is an excellent example of collaboration between the local authority and specialist agencies to tackle homelessness and significantly improve life chances."

The scheme was retrospectively approved by our Executive at their meeting last month.

ENDS

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