



## Key Achievements & Learning Report

### Introduction

The [WMCA Homelessness Taskforce](#) was successful in securing funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Rough Sleeping Initiative for a three-year period covering 2022/2023 to 2024/2025, with a combined value of £1,491,707. This funding to the WMCA from MHCLG was awarded in addition to Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding allocated to individual local authorities and followed an award of £1,220,692 for the period 2020/22.

The breakdown of funding by year is as follows:

- 2022/2023 - £537,058
- 2023/2024 - £534,019
- 2024/2025 - £420,630

The primary objective of the RSI Fund is to:

- Help people sleeping rough off the streets;
- Help those who have moved off the streets to successfully progress away from rough sleeping; and
- Prevent those in crisis, and at imminent risk, from sleeping rough.

The WMCA RSI Programme 2022/2025 seeks to build upon the good work achieved in previous years by testing innovation, capturing learning, promoting cross regional practice and above all adding value to the work of our local authority partners. This report focuses on the work, investments, learning and achievements for the period 2023/2024.

To ensure relevance and strategic fit, the Homelessness Taskforce and Rough Sleeping Task Group, which includes rough sleeping leads from the seven local authority areas and other statutory and non-statutory agencies, jointly agreed the following regional priority needs for RSI investment:

1. **Preventing and tackling rough sleeping at the earliest opportunity** – including continued investment in a spot purchase fund to enable tailored, flexible and personal interventions.
2. **Preventing recurring rough sleeping** – through integrated prevention and investment in testing how accommodation can be sustained through engagement with community activities and the creation of new supportive social networks.
3. **Access to Good Employment** – continued investment to test innovation in supporting individuals to access good quality employment that acts as both a protective factor in preventing homelessness, repeat homelessness and a sustainable route out of homelessness, ensuring rough sleeping is a brief and non-recurring experience.
4. **Information, Advice and Guidance** – continued investment to promote our alternative giving scheme, [Change into Action](#), and ongoing investment to further develop the eight [Street Support Network](#) microsites, reflecting the shift of emphasis from crisis to prevention.
5. **Supporting the development of frontline staff** to enhance knowledge and skills, and to help build resilience through investment in a [regional training offer](#) for people working in homelessness and housing-related organisations; and continued investment for training staff to be psychologically informed in their approach and interactions with people experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping

and homelessness.

## Investment

In 2023/24 funding worth £534,019 was invested across two distinct areas of activity, namely the ongoing delivery of existing initiatives and investment into new activity:

- The **ongoing delivery of** our employment support **projects** providing bespoke support to people at risk of rough sleeping into sustainable, good employment; continued investment into our Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) Plus offer placing clinical psychology at the frontline.
- **Ongoing** promotion of our alternative giving scheme, [Change into Action](#), and further development of the [Street Support Network West Midlands](#) resource, enhancing the region's **information, advice & guidance** offer; a comprehensive [regional training offer](#) for people working in homelessness and housing-related organisations.
- Ongoing funding of key regional roles such as the **Faith & Communities Development Officer**, ensuring momentum is maintained across the positive work achieved to date with faith and community groups to make the shift from crisis activity to prevention and the **RSI Project Co-ordinator** role, bringing the 7 local authority leads together and helping to promote the sharing of best practice and key learning from innovation across the region.

## New Investment

- Applications were sought from relevant organisations to deliver **flexible, personalised interventions** to enable individual solutions, with eleven projects being commissioned.
- Three new **social networks** projects were commissioned, testing how supportive social networks can be nurtured to help people to sustain tenancies.

## Objectives

In total, 13 organisations delivered 19 projects with RSI funding in 2023/24, in line with the national [Ending Rough Sleeping For Good Strategy](#) focused on delivering three key outcomes:

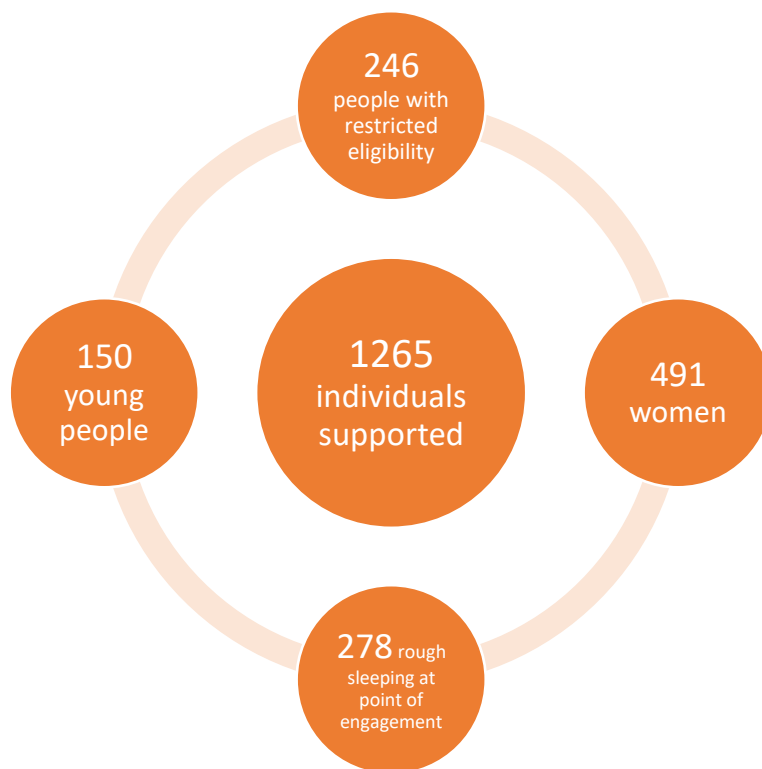
- Preventing rough sleeping wherever possible, so that it is rare - people at risk of sleeping rough are helped to retain or secure sustainable accommodation and support.
- Ensuring that rough sleeping is a brief experience - people sleeping rough are supported to quickly move off the streets and start their journey towards a sustainable life.
- Rough sleeping is a non-recurring experience - people who have slept rough previously are supported to reduce the risk of repeat homelessness and helped to retain or secure sustainable accommodation and support.

## Outcomes and outputs

This section highlights some of the outcomes and outputs we have achieved directly and indirectly through our investment in the programme in 2023/2024. The number of individuals directly supported via our commissioned providers increased by 29% when compared to activity in 2022/23, reflecting 14 new projects commencing delivery this year: 11 Spot Purchase Fund projects and 3 Social Networks projects, and that all other projects were fully mobilised.

The first part of this section highlights the numbers of people supported directly by the projects we funded and the second goes into greater detail for each of the main investment areas.

### Individuals Supported



The diagram above shows that a total of 1265 individuals were supported through our RSI investment in 2023/2024; the diagram below shows the demographic breakdown of those individuals:

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The tables below demonstrate the wide range of positive outcomes achieved across the whole programme and through specific interventions:

### Overall Impact of Interventions

Outputs and Outcomes	Individuals Supported	%
Number of individuals helped to retain or secure sustainable accommodation	497	39%
Number of individuals who have developed support networks reducing the risk of repeat homelessness	282	22%
Number of individuals supported to develop the protective factors that help them avoid homelessness in the future	248	19%
Number of individuals supported to quickly move off the streets and start their journey towards a sustainable life	209	16%
Number of individuals who have increased engagement due to involvement in community activities	161	13%

### Impact of Intervention – Social Networks Innovation Projects

Outputs and Outcomes	Number of Individuals	%
Number of unique individuals supported	176	-
Number of community organisations engaged with	92	-
Number of individuals sustaining tenancies for at least 6 months	85	48%
Number of individuals reporting improved social networks to draw on for support - promoting recovery and a move away from rough sleeping	84	48%
Number of individuals retaining or improving tenancy management and accommodation	74	42%

## Impact of Intervention – Employment Support Innovation Projects

Outputs and Outcomes	Number of Individuals	%
Number of unique individuals supported	117	-
Number of individuals supported to develop the protective factors that help them avoid homelessness in the future	116	99%
Number of individuals engaging with employment focused services and training, or achieving accredited qualifications	79	68%
Number of individuals helped to retain or secure sustainable accommodation	59	50%
Number of individuals supported to quickly move off the streets, starting their journey towards a sustainable life	55	47%
Number of individuals supported into good quality, sustainable employment	31	26%

## Impact of Intervention – Spot Purchase Fund/Personal Budgets

Outputs and Outcomes	Number of Individuals	%
Number of unique individuals supported	972	-
Number of individuals helped to retain or secure sustainable accommodation and support	377	39%
Number of individuals supported to reduce the risk of repeat homelessness	259	27%
Number of individuals relieved from homelessness and rough sleeping	116	12%
Number of individuals reported feeling safer	104	11%
Number of individuals reported feeling more in control of their lives	50	5%
Number of individuals having improved material conditions in terms of income and accommodation	50	5%

## Outcomes and learning from specific investment themes

### Innovation Projects & Personal Budgets:

The three prototype **Social Networks** projects mobilised this year, and after initial difficulties in volunteer recruitment for some of the projects, started to deliver strong outcomes, with almost 50% of those engaging in the projects sustaining tenancies for at least 6 months and developing and maintaining supportive social networks.

Some of the barriers encountered by people engaging with the projects included a lack of trust in those providing community activities, motivation, difficulty and confidence in communicating, organisational skills, financial barriers, challenges with being able to access IT, the stigma associated with rough sleeping and homelessness as well as personal well-being and struggling in group settings.

Challenges for our commissioned providers included people not identifying building alternative social networks as an area that they would like support with or admitting to social isolation. Providers also

reported that building confidence and trust with people was a slow process that required time. One of the ways that this was overcome was to include low key, ad hoc work with individuals with less formal appointments to build trust and group work around topics to build a support network, as well as preparatory work around developing soft skills before moving onto activities within the community.

Further challenges experienced included the stigma associated with rough sleeping and homelessness meaning that some community organisations are reluctant to visit homelessness services to deliver activities, which underlines the need for projects to think beyond bringing activities to people and to think creatively about how to support people to engage in activities in the community.

An ongoing challenge is getting volunteers to be available when activities take place, for example mid-week and during the middle of the day.

Examples gathered in the first year of delivery about what works well include digital inclusion, and using those skills to then source local community activities; light touch therapeutic interventions such as being involved in theatre groups, music and art to build confidence and engagement; registering with a community library as part of an induction to access community classes, social groups and volunteering - all examples of good practice that have helped to develop supportive social networks and to increase an individual's self-confidence.

Furthermore, having a dedicated support worker with lived experience of homelessness who can co-ordinate activities and accompany individuals to activities within the community helps to build confidence, as do peer support and volunteer befrienders. Co-production work around the barriers to accessing community activities help to build confidence and a support network, and 'planning my diary' sessions, redesigning a well-being space are examples of activities which have helped to ease anxiousness that individuals may have.

Key learning also includes making sure that the right connection is made for someone i.e. matching the person with the right member of staff to build rapport. Our projects have also shown that it is beneficial if support workers are full-time to be able to provide the right level of support needed.

Projects have found that it is not about having funding to put on or to access community activities that makes the difference, but having resources to travel to those places and having someone to go with them is imperative to creating strong, sustainable social networks.

Post RSI, one project is incorporating some aspects of their work on creating social networks into peer support and befriending services, which will be made up of a client led team of people with lived experience.

Our assessment is that there is clear evidence that building strong, supportive, sustainable social networks away from homelessness and rough sleeping services does help people to maintain their tenancies and to develop the skills to build an independent life away from homelessness service provision. The process of building up trust and confidence is slow, and the development of social networks is a need which is often overlooked, but evidence from our projects shows that it does make a difference.

Strong outcomes have also been delivered by our three **Employment Support** projects as demonstrated in the table above.

Learning from our project which includes an employment support worker being situated within the local authority rough sleeping outreach team demonstrates the importance of having a good relationship with the local authority. Being based within local authority offices works well both in terms of the number of referrals and for ensuring smooth referral processes. The ability to foster and build good relationships with local authority colleagues before a project starts is helpful to raising the visibility of the project, making the referral process clear and effective, and enables relationships to be built with those people who are currently sleeping rough.

The importance of going slowly and building trust with individuals is key and providing 1-2-1 specialist support has been vital, as well as providing a welcoming environment to reduce feelings of intimidation. Outreach appointments work well, often people do not want to travel to city centre locations. Having access to 'barrier-breaking' support funds to help people with clothes or travel to interviews, or for basic necessities is key too.

Ensuring that aftercare support is available to the employer after recruitment is important. Appealing to employers' Corporate Social Responsibilities can facilitate recruitment of people who have experience of rough sleeping and homelessness.

Using a psychologically informed and trauma-informed approach with both employees and employers is fundamental to ensuring engagement and a consistent approach.

It is worth noting that we did not agree high outcome targets with our Employment Support and Social Networks projects due to the many and complex barriers that this group of people face and which need to be overcome before making such big steps forward to enable a life away from the streets. Despite this, some good outcomes have been achieved particularly around sustaining tenancies, entering and maintaining good quality, sustainable employment and developing protective factors to avoid homelessness in the future,

During 2023/24 our **Spot Purchase/Personal Budget** funding supported a total of 920 individuals, often with complex challenges to either sustain a tenancy or to quickly move off the streets. This fund has provided personalised and practical interventions, such as obtaining identification documents where lack of ID is a barrier to accommodation, mobile phones pre-loaded with credit so that people rough sleeping have a way to engage with local agencies and travel cards for those at risk of rough sleeping or those currently rough sleeping to attend appointments with support services.

These small, monetary interventions have been life-changing for many people experiencing rough sleeping, with individuals reporting positive impacts including feeling safer with the security of a new home, and some having gained employment, actively seeking employment or attending training.

### **Cross-Regional Activity:**

We delivered 17 courses as part of our **Regional Training Offer**, with over 300 frontline staff, volunteers, managerial staff and trustees from over 60 different organisations attending, indicating this intervention's wide reach.

Courses on offer covered themes such as:

- Budgeting
- Stress and vicarious trauma
- Managing wellbeing
- Developing fundraising strategies
- Welfare benefits
- Migrant homelessness
- Modern Slavery

Findings from our training audit showed that the training offer was an invaluable resource especially for smaller charities, and that cross-sector training provided an invaluable opportunity for peers to share good practice, learning, ideas and knowledge.

Our [Street Support Network West Midlands](#) resource demonstrated an increase in the number of page views and overall users by 44% and 62% respectively over the last year. During 2023/24, the Street

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Support Network Co-ordinator and our local authorities worked together to review each microsite for quality and accuracy, agreeing processes for adding new information and raising the local profile of this digital resource with the support of local authority Comms teams.

The impact of a campaign run by Street Support Network over Winter, encouraging members of the public to give help effectively, using Street Support Network's unique 'Give Help' facility, including through donating items to foodbanks, giving money to charities, or offering up time to help through volunteering was evaluated. This found that there was an increase in engagement with Street Support West Midlands throughout the campaign.

A case study of one organisation who Street Support Network promoted via X and Facebook that needed volunteers and clean underwear for their service users, resulted in an increase in underwear donations. The organisation fed back that having the link to their online shop on platforms such as Street Support Network was very important as it allowed their supporters to see exactly what items were currently needed so that they can offer their support quickly and effectively to the people who need it most.

With some support from the Centre for Homelessness Impact, work also began on assessing the impact of Street Support Network West Midlands, using a Theory of Change model. Key learning, and a full assessment of the impact and effectiveness of this investment will be incorporated into the full review of the WMCA Rough Sleeping Initiative Programme due Autumn 2024.

**PIE Plus** activity continued across the region, with a specific focus on developing and delivering action plans with each local authority to collaboratively work with their own staff and key organisations to create Psychologically informed Environment (PIE) approaches for individuals who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. In 2023/24, this investment delivered:

- 35 Psychology Partnership Days for local authorities and key organisations with 94 people attending at least one session.
- 26 client clinics with 22 clients and 30 support staff attending.
- 6 Homeless Prevention workshops with 97 people attending.
- 3 PIE Foundation Days with 19 people attending at least one PIE session.
- 21 Reflective Practice Sessions with 57 team leaders/managers attending.
- PIE for Resilience – the first cohort of 25 staff from the Housing Solutions Directorate at Birmingham City Council benefitting from bespoke training.

Psychology Partnership Day delivery came to an end in this year with 94 individuals attending at least one session. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Staff expressed both their enjoyment in partaking and praised the practical value and skills they picked up throughout the sessions. A broad scope of topics and skills have been covered within the workshops, in line with the objectives of the PIE action plans. These include skills in formulation, motivational conversations and empathic listening. Workshops have also broadened knowledge of psychological factors, such as trauma, ACEs, cycles of change, among many others. Staff have also been supported to guard against compassion fatigue.

Clients have had the opportunity to attend a one-off psychological assessment with their support worker in client clinics. When clients have not attended, staff have had the opportunity to enhance their application of PIE skills and review action plans by engaging in a case formulation. Both clients and staff have expressed gratitude and gained useful insight through the opportunity to attend these sessions.

Due to the wide range of potential groups and geographical boundaries, a workshop was designed that was accessible and engaging for a wide range of professionals from outside of the homelessness sector and across the WMCA region. The **Homelessness Prevention workshops** are intended to provide a compassionate insight into the structural, societal and individual reasons that result in an adult having no home. The aim is that from this psychologically informed perspective, participants will be less likely to



make negative judgements and further exclude those people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping or homelessness.

Five workshops were delivered in Autumn 2023, both online and in person. 97 people attended representing 36 different organisations. After the workshop, 96% of those who attended reported increased confidence in applying the C-Change Values Framework with individuals with multiple complex needs, who are at risk of homelessness; 92% had a better understanding of some of the challenges that those at risk of homelessness may present with; 91% of those attending had a better understanding of the impact of trauma on those at risk of homelessness; 68% agreed that the workshop helped to challenge negative stereotypes about homelessness; 59% felt that they could use what they learnt from the workshop when supporting people and 46% had a better understanding of the housing system so that they could provide better information, advice, guidance and signposting.

The content of the workshops seemed to be generally well-received and most of the feedback was positive. Attendees seemed to find the C-Change Values Framework, reflective activities and introduction to other PIE concepts useful and applicable to their roles. Development of a more 'fitting' title and improved communication about the purpose and content of the workshop was a repetitive theme that should be incorporated into the next stage of this project.

The Homelessness Prevention product has now moved into the next phase, the manual for training delivery is being reviewed and marketing options are being explored. A formal name for the workshop is being market tested.

Feedback across all PIE delivery has been positive and the consensus is that PIE Plus input has benefited both individuals and teams across the organisations that have received PIE training.

The focus in the final year of the **PIE Plus** offer will be on the transition from the delivery phase into the learning, evaluation, dissemination, and post RSI sustainability phase.

## Faith & Community Groups

Our main focus in 2023/24 was to build on our early work with faith and community groups to support them to make a paradigm shift in their contribution to Designing out Homelessness for people at risk of rough sleeping. Our aim has been to coproduce a change in focus from crisis to prevention activity, in particular emphasising the potential role of the sector in the Universal Prevention space of our [Positive Pathways Model](#).

Working in collaboration with the West Midlands Faith Strategic Partnership Group (FSPG) we organised a number of successful events across the region designed to open up a meaningful dialogue within the sector aimed at helping groups maximise their contribution to the prevention of rough sleeping. Concomitantly opening up discussion about how groups in the sector can move away from their current focus on crisis work.

These events helped us to maximise the impact of our briefing paper '[Preventing Homelessness with Faith Communities – Making a difference together](#)' and were an important element of our ongoing work to engage with groups across the whole of the WMCA region rather than just on activity focussed on the larger conurbations. In addition, we worked with a range of faith groups to complete and disseminate an accessible [video](#) highlighting the benefits of shifting focus from crisis to prevention. The video compliments the existing [Designing out Homelessness with Faith Communities Booklet](#) and acts as a starting point for discussions with faith and community groups about the shift in focus that needs to be made if groups are to maximise their impact on rough sleeping.

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To support this high-level work we identified a number of practical ways in which we could help groups make the transition from crisis to prevention activity. For example, we identified that groups in the sector were not taking up opportunities for funding from our RSI Spot Purchase Fund which is designed to promote prevention work. Following discussion with groups, we redesigned a part of that fund so that groups were able to bid for much smaller investments and simplified the application process, including allowing applications in a range of formats. In doing so we removed barriers that had been identified and the redesign of the process led to 3 groups accessing the funding, covering Coventry, Dudley & Solihull local authority areas.

Our analysis is that the work in 2023/24 has continued to lay the foundations for a potentially transformative shift in focus and effort in the sector from crisis to universal prevention. The feedback from many faith and community groups, and from contextual evidence, is that they are keen to make the paradigm shift from crisis to prevention work and that the approach we are taking is having traction. It is also clear that this is not always an easy transformation for groups to make and that ongoing support and encouragement are essential if the shift is to be accelerated and sustained. It is also apparent that we need to be flexible about how we engage with groups and encourage them to take up opportunities to maximise their impact, e.g. the way we redesigned the Spot Purchase Fund process.

With that in mind our planned work for 2024/25 is focused on building on this learning and on ensuring that we are reaching, listening and actively engaging with the sector right across the region.

## Cross Cutting Learning

An important element of the WMCA RSI programme is to draw out key learning and challenges that emerge from the projects that we invest in and to reflect on how these investments add value to the work of our local authorities and partners throughout the region. We aim to use the learning to improve the region's expertise in designing and commissioning innovative rough sleeping services, to ensure that rough sleeping is prevented wherever possible, so that it is rare, and where it cannot be prevented, that it is a brief and non-recurring experience.

We have captured learning from specific investment themes earlier in the report. This section focuses on key learning points emerging across different projects and an analysis of case studies submitted by providers throughout the year is included in the appendices below.

Having a **three year funding programme** has enabled us as commissioners to work in a more collaborative and thoughtful way with the providers we have invested in. Allowing us to increase our focus on outcome-based approaches; enabling providers to feel confident to test out innovations in project design and allowing time for projects to demonstrate their potential long-term contribution to making rough sleeping rare, brief and non-recurrent. This longer-term approach is congruent with our stated aim of creating systemic rather than piece meal change.

As we note above the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce's role is to **add value** not replicate what local authorities are doing or investing in and our analysis suggests that this role is continuing to have an impact and enabling the region as a whole to benefit. For example, we have been able to invest in work that no single authority would have the capacity to take on – the PIE Plus Prevention work noted above is a good example of this. Furthermore the Regional Training Offer and Street Support Network are good examples of the way in which we can add value.

We have also been able to invest in **innovative projects** and areas of work that are focused on prevention of rough sleeping before it occurs (rare) and after it has occurred (non-recurring), we believe we are uniquely placed to do this kind of work partly because we do not have to manage the daily challenge of direct service delivery to people sleeping rough. Our contention is that it is much easier for

the WMCA to invest in more experimental projects such as the social networks or employment support activity than it is for any local authority.

As part of our **regional convening role** we have successfully brought the RSI leads from across the region together to share challenges, learning and insights. Helping to develop shared responses to shared challenges, as well as sharing the learning from the WMCA investments quickly with colleagues in our local authorities.

The RSI Co-ordinators group is using **data analysis** from the [Ending Rough Sleeping for Good framework](#) to measure the region's progress. Our ability to pull together the data being submitted by the seven local authorities across the eight core indicators, enables us to develop a strategic overview and insight into rough sleeping trends and patterns across the WMCA region.

Looking forward we think these unique contributions, our role and focus on prevention of rough sleeping, will play an important part in helping the region to make rough sleeping a rare, brief and non-recurrent experience for our citizens.

## Conclusion & Next Steps

Our aim when developing the WMCA RSI Programme was:

To add value to the work of our local authority and wider partners and not to duplicate effort

- To create economies of scale, by investing in cross-regional initiatives to develop skills and capacity
- To invest in and test out innovative approaches to ensure that rough sleeping is prevented wherever possible, so it is rare, and where it occurs it is brief and non-recurring

Our analysis to date (based on feedback from partners, providers and other stakeholders) is that we are achieving these aims and that the WMCA RSI programme is making a valuable contribution to the work of local authorities in the region. In the coming year we will be undertaking a more detailed review of the impact of the WMCA RSI programme.

Our analysis also indicates that there is still significant work to be done:

- To build and sustain the work to date e.g. the work with faith communities in making the paradigm shift from crisis to prevention activity.
  - To embed the cross regional work we have invested in e.g. Street Support Network West Midlands being funded post 2025.
  - To use the learning and evidence from innovative investments to encourage new ways of working e.g. the employment support projects being supported and delivering through local investment.
  - To use the learning from investments to drive systemic change and influence wider stakeholders e.g. the PIE Plus work influencing the way Mental Health Trusts deliver support to people at risk of rough sleeping.
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Taking on these challenges will be the focus of our work in 2024/25 as well as continuing to promote and support the broader and critical task of embedding prevention in all the work of the wider partnership in the sector and the wider service eco system.

### Further Information

<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Diana Bowers</b> Project Coordinator - Rough Sleeping Initiative <a href="mailto:diana.bowers@wmca.org.uk">diana.bowers@wmca.org.uk</a>
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## Appendix 1: Case Study Review & Analysis

Case studies from our RSI projects in 2023/24 aim to take some of the personal narratives of the individuals supported, to inform a better understanding of the key presenting themes, barriers faced and emerging issues that could be used to inform future plans and services commissioned to tackle rough sleeping across the region. A summary analysis of the case studies is given below:

<b>Key Stats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of 33 detailed case studies were collated, of which:</li> <li>• 14 were women, and 19 were men.</li> <li>• 8 individuals had limited or no recourse to public funds.</li> <li>• 10 individuals were supported by the Employment Support (Innovation Projects).</li> <li>• 17 individuals were supported by the Spot Purchase Fund/Personal Budgets.</li> <li>• 6 individuals were supported by the Social Networks (Innovation Projects).</li> </ul>
<b>Presenting Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were several cases in which women were <b>fleeing domestic abuse</b>. Due to the perpetrator having financial control, this left the person facing destitution. For some, the feeling that they had a lack of options meant that they felt they had to turn to <b>sex work</b> to earn income. In addition, these individuals were often now single parents with dependent children, meaning there were concerns around childcare when seeking employment options.</li> <li>• <b>Complete isolation/relationship breakdown</b>. In most instances, those supported did not have any family support to turn to. Some were <b>care leavers</b>, and some had been asked to leave the family home or had lost their home due to the death of a close family member. Others who were fleeing domestic abuse had been forced to isolate from their family/social networks by the perpetrator.</li> <li>• Experiencing <b>destitution/homelessness/rough sleeping/sofa-surfing</b>. All the individuals supported were either rough sleeping, had a history of rough sleeping and/or were currently at risk of rough sleeping.</li> <li>• <b>Drug/Alcohol Misuse</b>. This was either caused by or contributed to individuals being or becoming involved with unhelpful social circles. In some instances, this led to being forced into other criminal activity such as modern slavery.</li> <li>• <b>Unemployment</b>. Staff reported that individuals were often experiencing low confidence and motivation, a lack of basic skills and work experience. People reported feeling stuck with little options available to them. One person with autism felt that this was holding them back from being considered for job opportunities.</li> <li>• <b>Distrust in services</b>. This was often due to mental ill health and trauma responses that were frequently caused by previously feeling let down by services. This distrust in services led to some people dropping out of services and/or rejecting offers of support.</li> <li>• <b>Financial abuse</b>. When individuals did not have their own bank account and were exploited, this led to them not being able to support themselves or afford accommodation.</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers and Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Financial barriers</b> were cited quite frequently as a significant hurdle. These were often due to unemployment/living chaotic lifestyles which led to feelings of insecurity and self-doubt. These financial barriers led to <b>digital exclusion</b>, often people were unable to afford Wi-Fi or mobile/ laptop devices that would enable them to apply for relevant jobs/training opportunities, or even to seek appropriate financial support that could be available to them.</li> <li>• <b>No recourse to public funds</b>. Many people were facing financial difficulties due to their immigration status acting as a barrier to accessing housing support/benefits (i.e. those seeking asylum).</li> <li>• <b>Language barriers</b> were described as a key challenge, where some people presenting had no proficiency in English, and an absence of necessary paperwork. This made it difficult for staff to understand how best to support them.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff reported that the individuals they were supporting were often engaging with <b>unhelpful social circles</b>. These were exacerbating mental health issues, addiction problems, financial difficulties, and chaotic lifestyles.</li> <li>• The deterioration of <b>mental health</b> was cited as a significant barrier to support, some of this occurred as a result of facing unemployment and financial difficulties, living in unstable and insecure accommodation (e.g. getting into arrears, facing evictions, or receiving sanctions from DWP).</li> <li>• <b>Inconsistent engagement</b> due to falling back into chaotic lifestyles caused by integration with unhelpful social circles, and distrust in services. This made it difficult for support staff to offer support when people would drop in and out of services or would not be contactable.</li> <li>• There were several cases where individuals had a physical <b>disability</b> or had neurodivergent conditions which acted as a barrier to engagement, employment or accessing the correct benefits.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Changes and Outcomes achieved</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support to access mental health/addiction services.</b> This helped to overcome some of the barriers faced where individuals were not sustaining engagement with services and substantially improved mental wellbeing, helping to improve personal circumstances. This led to people feeling much more positive about their future development, goals, and ambitions, and improved their self-confidence.</li> <li>• <b>Providing safe accommodation and funding for food/ basics/essential household items</b> often helped to improve trust and rapport, improving engagement. In addition, helping people to make accommodation feel more 'homely' meant they were more likely to enjoy their accommodation, wishing to remain there and therefore less likely to resort back to rough sleeping/sofa-surfing (keeping them away from unhelpful social circles).</li> <li>• <b>Support to access immigration advice</b>, as well as providing translators and English lessons, helped to overcome some of the language barriers that were faced. Additionally, being offered support to apply for settled status, Universal Credit applications and benefits, and offers of financial advice helped to overcome these initial barriers.</li> <li>• Some were supported to <b>gain employment</b>. Financial support to help with travel to relevant appointments such as training courses and job interviews, and bus passes to allow travel to work before wages were received, helped to make the transition easier. Funding also supported people to obtain relevant documentation such as ID that enabled them to apply for jobs, pay rent deposits and apply for bank accounts, enabling greater independence.</li> <li>• Many individuals were supported to <b>access benefits</b>.</li> <li>• In addition, individuals were supported with <b>digital inclusion needs</b>. For example, by providing access to laptops/ mobiles/tablets, people were able to access support services online, apply for benefits or housing advice, update their CVs, and access training and job opportunities. This was a positive way of breaking down the barriers that were faced in being aware/unable to access appropriate support that was available to them.</li> <li>• <b>Clients were supported with English lessons</b>. This helped to break down language barriers, improving trust in services. Following lessons, individuals were able to speak English competently, which eventually led them to obtain employment and consider suitable housing options. It also helped staff to work with individuals to self-identify their own personal goals.</li> </ul>



## Insights and Learning

- All of our delivery partners cited that having funding to be able to support people with their financial struggles, and provide **suitable accommodation, basic essentials, and tailored support** had been invaluable in gaining trust and improving the circumstances of those most in need and preventing rough sleeping from occurring.
  - **Co-ordinating plans with agencies (integrated working) was the most effective in enabling wrap-around support.** For example, understanding which agencies are appropriate to signpost people to, led to the most positive results. This demonstrates the importance in staff training/awareness of available support. It was also highlighted that in some instances, services (i.e., mental health services) were not able to provide support for people, therefore having an array of options available for back up in these instances was crucial to ensure individuals did not drop out of services.
  - Learning also included transitioning support services from and co-ordinating a safeguarding plan with a city outside the area.
  - **Consistent and positive relationships between support staff and individuals is key to ensuring sustained engagement and positive outcomes.** Staff were aware that individuals are usually initially distrustful of services and tend to engage sporadically at first due to the chaotic lifestyles they are living. However, they stressed that with empathy, persistence and a small amount of funding to enable people to purchase essential items/ basics (food, household essentials etc, an overnight stay in a safe space) helps to build confidence.
  - Staff also stressed the importance of **tailoring support to individual needs.** Though people may have similar complex needs, they are all individuals with different personalities, needs and requirements. Staff worked best with people when they met them in places that were suited to the individual (i.e., meeting on the ground floor for those with disabilities, or attending doctors' appointments with them if they felt unable to attend these independently).
  - Staff also stressed the importance in individuals recognising their **goals** and feeling **empowered** to rebuild their lives and better their circumstances. They stated that when people are motivated and ready for support it is important to facilitate this. Having a clear goal outlined and working cooperatively with staff led to better engagement and more positive outcomes (i.e. employment opportunities) that allowed them to gain independence and move away from rough sleeping for good.
  - **Volunteering opportunities** can lead to increased self-confidence and positive engagement, as well as providing a pathway into employment.
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## Appendix 2: Case Study 1

<p><b>Describe the person's story at the point you started working with them.</b></p>	<p>When I first started working with BH, he was living in a HMO but had a history of rough sleeping. He was struggling with his mental health - diagnosed with depression and had a history of self-harm and suicide ideation. BH was working with a navigator to support him to find mental health services for this.</p>
<p><b>What were the presenting issues when you started working with them?</b></p>	<p>BH had medication for his mental health condition but he had stopped taking this as he did not think it was helping him. He was struggling in terms of sleep which was impacting his overall mood and causing aggressive outbursts. BH approached me as he wanted to get involved in fitness classes. He had a gym membership in the past but could not continue paying for this as his only income was Universal Credit. He asked me if I could find some low cost or free fitness classes to improve his mental health and wellbeing.</p>
<p><b>What work did you do alongside the person?</b></p>	<p>To start our work together, we began looking at BH's priorities. One area that he wanted to focus on was meaningful use of time. This is because BH did not have a regular routine and other than coming to the centre, he would stay at home and play games online.</p> <p>Another area that he wanted to focus on was his social networks and relationships. This is because he had some positive relationships in his family but few friends. He was trying to distance himself from his friends from the past as they were involved in unhelpful behaviour that he didn't want to be involved in anymore.</p> <p>We decided that attending a boxing gym would be beneficial for him as he could get the physical exercise as well as help with regulating his emotions. The gym session that he was referred to is for anyone who has experienced poor mental health and is ready to make a positive life change.</p> <p>As well as boxing, there were also workshops that BH could access that discuss topics like managing stress and anxiety. BH was nervous about attending at first as he shared that he was reluctant to start something new. As the gym is close to the centre, we offered for staff to walk BH over and introduce him to the session and to the staff there so that he felt more comfortable.</p> <p>This was offered to BH multiple times but not taken up initially. However, BH was reassured that this would benefit him and that the sessions will be a good start in establishing routine. He was then accompanied to attend the session. He then came back to the centre after and said that he really enjoyed the session and would like to go back regularly.</p>
<p><b>What changes and outcomes have you and the person achieved so far?</b></p>	<p>BH continues to attend the gym regularly and his mental health has improved because of this. His levels of emotional distress have decreased and his behaviour has changed in terms of his aggression. We also looked at other community activities for him but he preferred to go to the gym regularly as he is now comfortable in that environment.</p> <p>BH has also engaged more in other recovery activities at the centre such as art sessions and the 'get your week ready' workshops where he could plan and organise his goals for the week. BH also has a new respect for himself in terms of his physical health as I supported him to go to the dentist for a check-up which he has not done since childhood.</p>

	BH now has a regular routine and overall, his wellbeing has improved drastically and is now more independent from the service.
<b>What are the person's chances of sustaining any changes and outcomes they have achieved?</b>	With continued support and contact from us, albeit less frequently we believe that his chances of sustaining this are good. Should he encounter any barriers he knows that he can return to us for additional support
<b>How have you helped to ensure this person has continued to engage with services?</b>	We have continued to provide him with sessions with his social networks support worker and he is also able to attend some of our recovery sessions on a weekly basis if he chooses.
<b>What barriers did you encounter in helping the person? <i>Structural and /or personal.</i></b>	Due to financial constraints, BH was unable to engage in potential activities to increase his wellbeing and manage his mental health. He also struggled with confidence to engage with these things independently.
<b>What learning or new insights have you had as a result of the work?</b>	Sometimes starting off with something simple can be transformative and initially starting with gym membership has encouraged BH to broaden his horizons and start to feel more hopeful about his future.
<b>Do you feel this learning would change the way you work with a person in a similar situation needing support in the future?</b>	It emphasises that this is the right approach to take and that it needs to be facilitated at a pace that the person is comfortable with. Some people need to come into the centre and engage in on-site activities before they are ready to attend activities in their local communities.

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## Appendix 2: Case Study 2

<p><b>Describe the person's story at the point you started working with them.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presented as rough sleeping for 2 years</li> <li>• Single male</li> <li>• Sleeping in a van during that time</li> <li>• Receiving basic amount of Universal Credit</li> <li>• Homeless following a relationship breakdown</li> </ul>
<p><b>What were the presenting issues when you started working with them?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No access to any other funds</li> <li>• No support from family/friends</li> <li>• Not enough food to last between benefit payments</li> <li>• Unable to pass credit checks for PRS due to not being in employment</li> <li>• No funds for rent in advance</li> <li>• No recent tenancy references due to leaving family home where the tenancy was in the name of his partner</li> <li>• Poor mental health due to circumstances</li> </ul>
<p><b>What work did you do alongside the person?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported to contact Social Housing provider to re-activate homelessness application</li> <li>• Supported to re-activate Social Housing account</li> <li>• Supported to express interest on properties</li> <li>• Provided food to take with him and access to the organisation's food service</li> <li>• Provided information on other relevant services with regards to mental health support</li> <li>• Secured a general needs property and RSI spot purchase fund supported with the rent in advance</li> <li>• Supported to set up direct rental payments from benefits</li> <li>• Supported to set up all utility bills at the property</li> <li>• Supported to gain items for his property</li> </ul>
<p><b>What changes and outcomes have you and the person achieved so far?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secured a general needs property</li> <li>• Mental health has now improved</li> <li>• The person is now looking for employment</li> <li>• They state they are now very happy and feel settled in their new home and incredibly grateful for the support received</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are the person's chances of sustaining any changes and outcomes they have achieved?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremely high chance of maintaining the positive changes that have been made.</li> <li>• This individual is very motivated and can set goals and achieve them to continue to progress.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How have you helped to ensure this person has continued to engage with services?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement has slowed down with the service as he now has everything in place that he needs to maintain his tenancy and gain employment.</li> <li>• When he does attend the service, he reports that everything is still going well and that if he has any support needs that he will inform us.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What barriers did you encounter in helping the person? <i>Structural and /or personal.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially it was difficult to secure a tenancy due to the person being a single male on benefits which led to affordability issues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What learning or new insights have you had as a result of the work?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An insight with this case was that without the RSI spot purchase fund being available we would have really struggled to house him due to him not</li> </ul>

	being in employment, with no access to financial support and no funding available locally to pay rent in advance for single males.
<b>Do you feel this learning would change the way you work with a person in a similar situation needing support in the future?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We knew that the above may be an issue due to the circumstances that our client had presented with. We hope that funding will become available locally in the future as there is a high percentage of people rough sleeping in our area that have similar circumstances and are not able to go into hostels for several reasons.</li></ul>



## Appendix 2: Case Study 3

<p><b>Describe the person's story at the point you started working with them.</b></p>	<p>I met RS when she was seeking support to apply for Universal Credit.</p> <p>RS had just returned to the UK from abroad due to her new EU status; she had moved abroad 9 years ago to be nearer to her daughter. RS had found herself homeless and had moved in on a temporary basis with old friends as she had been told by the council that they would not accept duty for her as she had not been in the area for a long time and had no local connection to the area.</p> <p>RS worked up until the week before she returned to the UK. RS has a vast amount of knowledge and experience in health and social care.</p>
<p><b>What were the presenting issues when you started working with them?</b></p>	<p>Homelessness and not in receipt of benefits.</p>
<p><b>What work did you do alongside the person?</b></p>	<p>I supported RS to apply for Universal Credit and to look around property agencies for suitable affordable accommodation. RS was offered a private rented room, using her small amount of savings for 3 months' rent as she was still not in receipt of benefits. At the end of that month, RS was told she is now eligible for Universal Credit so was able to claim the rent back.</p> <p>I referred RS to the National Careers Service for support in updating her CV. I submitted an application on her behalf for a job. RS attended an interview and was offered a support worker role for 30 hours a week. RS had also applied for work in a housing scheme. RS attended an interview and was offered an 18-hour weekly contract as a senior support worker. RS was unsure which role to take, and we had many discussions with her best interests at heart.</p> <p>RS decided which job offer to accept but also discussed bank hours with the other job offer to enhance her weekly hours, which they accepted. RS received her DBS and reference back and at the time of writing was waiting for an official contract and start date. I am in regular weekly contact with RS for support and advice when needed.</p>
<p><b>What changes and outcomes have you and the person achieved so far?</b></p>	<p>RS is now receiving Universal Credit to support her financially while she is waiting to start employment. RS has successfully obtained employment and is waiting for her contract. RS feels more positive and mentally stable now as her mental health had been deteriorating. She was offered a tenancy with a local housing provider and is waiting for confirmation for a viewing.</p>
<p><b>What are the person's chances of sustaining any changes and outcomes they have achieved?</b></p>	<p>RS is focused on sustaining her employment once she has started her new job and on eventually getting more sustainable accommodation.</p>
<p><b>How have you helped to ensure this person has continued to engage with services?</b></p>	<p>I have arranged regular face to face and telephone appointments with RS who engages very well. RS is aware that she can call me any time during my work hours for any support or advice needed.</p>
<p><b>What barriers did you encounter in helping the person? <i>Structural and /or personal.</i></b></p>	<p>RS said her mental health was deteriorating due to being unemployed, having no income and unstable insecure accommodation. RS's financial status made it difficult for her to travel to access services.</p>
<p><b>What learning or new insights have you had as a result of the work?</b></p>	<p>I have tried to lower cost of travel for RS due to her financial status by continuing engagement over the phone and offering to meet in a coffee shop nearer to her home.</p>

**Do you feel this learning would change the way you work with a person in a similar situation needing support in the future?**

I do feel that this learning will allow me to make better decisions to work out how best to support individuals in the future.

