



Invitation to Tender

A New Season for Night Shelters

*An evaluation of night shelter
provision during winter 2020/21*

January 2021

**Invitation to tender for the an evaluation of alternative
provision to winter night shelters in the 2020/21 winter**

Introduction

Housing Justice is seeking to commission an academic institution or consultants with expertise in the homelessness sector to review the seismic changes among night shelter providers in the winter of 2020/21, drawing lessons from the experiences of people using and providing those services in order to support night shelter projects to plan for the future in 2021.

An interim report produced at Easter followed by a full, final report in early June.

This document sets out the background, terms and principles of the tender and provides a form for applicants to fill in.

About Housing Justice

Housing Justice is a Christian ethos housing and homelessness charity working with churches, faith and community groups across England and Wales to respond to and prevent homelessness in safe and effective ways. The way in which it does this primarily is:

- Administering a network of winter night shelters training and advising grassroots groups on setting up winter night shelters and working with a range of partners to ensure the safe running of such projects
- A hosting project for destitute migrants
- Brokering relationships between Housing Associations and churches to develop affordable housing on church land

Housing Justice works in partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, The Greater London Authority, The Welsh Government, the Nationwide Foundation, the Oak Foundation, Commonweal Housing and a variety of local authorities, trusts and grant making organisations to carry out this work.

Context to the Evaluation

Voluntary led Winter Night Shelter provision in England, Wales and Scotland has increased three fold since 2010. More than 180 groups provided emergency shelter in some form over the winter of 2019/20.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic meant all winter night shelters in all three nations were closed in the final two weeks of March with people using the accommodation in these projects moved to self contained or single room accommodation to prevent transmission of the virus.

In Scotland and Wales communal night shelters, far fewer in number than England, have remained closed since March. In England the *Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government* published “Operating Principles”, setting stringent rules by which communal spaces could re-open. It also made available an initial £2m in funding to support providers of night shelters to move to COVID secure provision.

By January 2021, shelter providers had transformed their provision, moving from camp beds in Church halls to take on hotels, shared houses, disused care homes and other forms of accommodation. Approximately 1000 beds were available, with more than 99% of them in self-contained or single room accommodation. This compares to 2,600 beds that had previously been available in 2019/20, the majority of which were in communal sleeping spaces.

Purpose of the evaluation

The primary purpose of Housing Justice in commissioning this research is to provide an overview of the alternatives to dormitory style accommodation run by night shelter providers in the winter of 2020/21. The evaluation will investigate outcomes associated and the learning for the future for organisations providing night shelter accommodation.

Key question

What alternative provision did night shelter providers run in winter 2020, what results did this provision yield and what learning is there for the future?

Audience

Primarily the evaluation is aimed at informing night shelter providers about best practice and future outcomes. It may also be used by central and regional and local government, funders, the professionalised homeless sector and faith groups to inform decision making.

Focus

The evaluation will combine cumulative quantitative data collected by HJ with qualitative evidence from projects on the ground to analyse the differing impacts for providers and service users in communal versus self-contained accommodation.

The evaluation will have access to Housing Justice quantitative data from 2020/21 and a decade of historic data.

It is also envisaged that we would focus on a number of case study projects offering various types of provision e.g a project who operated in a communal setting, a project who operated a shared house etc. The experience people

using these projects is a crucial part of the evaluation and the decision making process for night shelters moving forward.

Questions the evaluation should answer:

- Define the key changes in service delivery in 2020/21 vs previous years, any correlations / variances with other data (street counts, CHAIN)?
- What is the experience of people using accommodation provided by night shelter organisations and any contrasts with previous years (guests/service users, volunteers and staff)?
- What were the health and wellbeing impacts of the provision (COVID and non COVID)
- How did the change in provision and / or COVID effect outcomes for guests/service users (move one, wellbeing etc)?
- Average costs of alternative provision, medium term sustainability (e.g financial viability, staffing implications, operating logistics)
- Consider any impacts of winter 2020/21 provision on particular groups, e.g NRPF
- What were the impacts of new types of delivery in particular: shipping containers, Pods and modular housing
- What were the effects on relationships with local authorities, other charities and key partners (incl local public health)
- What do local authorities think of past engagement with night shelters and what do they see as the role of faith and community based night shelters in the future? How does this relate to the local authorities strategic aims moving forward?
- What are the initial thoughts about the winter 2021/22 season (shelter providers returning to communal style arrangements)

Output

- A brief (less than 6 page) interim report presenting initial findings
- A final report, containing, Exec summary, intro, findings and discussion, recommendations. Approx 8-10,000 words including charts and analysis and input into a presentation to night shelters.

Selection process

Selection for the evaluation team is by competitive tender.

Timeline

Milestone	Date
Wednesday 13th January	Tender open to application
Monday 25 th January	Tender closed
Friday 29 th January	Tender awarded
Monday 12 th April	Interim report
Monday 7 th June	Final report

Budget

A budget of up to £10,000 is available for this project.

Further information

For further information or to discuss the brief please contact Hadrian Holloway, Best Practice and Innovation Resources Officer, h.holloway@housingjustice.org.uk

Application form

Please email completed form to info@housingjustice.org.uk

Organisation details

Name of lead organisation and details of the lead contact (phone number and email address):

Organisational expertise

Outline any the experience your organisation has in providing evaluations on services for people experiencing rough sleeping. (maximum 500 words)

Please provide a case study of previous work

Method statement

Please briefly set out your proposed approach to the project (maximum 300 words)

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Project costs

<i>Please provide details of your estimated costs for the project</i>
