

**Fresh Start**

**Accommodation**

**Service Specification 2023-2025**

**Commissioning service: Economic Growth and Prosperity**

 **Strategic Housing and Development**

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**1. Introduction:**

1.1 A service specification details the minimum requirements for a particular service commissioned by Cheshire East Council.

1.2 The views of service users, providers, Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and partners have been considered in the development of this Specification.

**2. Outcomes of the Fresh Start Service**

2.1 It is increasingly acknowledged nationally that taking a person-centred approach gives better outcomes for service users.

2.2 Data indicates that single homeless and people with mental health issues represent the greatest demand on services, across both accommodation and floating support. However, there is an emerging trend of increasing numbers of complex cases.

2.3 It has been identified in Cheshire East that there is a cohort of people for whom shared accommodation is not suitable and the current supported accommodation offer does not meet their needs. This is an identified gap in service that Cheshire East Council are looking to fill. Cheshire East are looking for 8 units of self-contained accommodation and the provision of high-level support. Ideally these should be based as follows: 5 in the Macclesfield area and 3 in the Congleton area of the borough.

2.4 Fresh Start approach is housing-led, providing accommodation to people whom may not be ready or suited to accommodation through existing accommodation pathways, but who are assessed as suitable for self-contained accommodation within the community with intensive, person-centred support. The service / provider will ensure the service user sustains their accommodation while progressing their support plan to gain independence

2.5 This is an existing service, with 8 units currently leased from private landlords and each of these is occupied by an existing service user. The procurement timeline includes a period for mobilisation, it is expected that the service will be transitioned as smoothly as possible with the least amount of disruption possible for the service users.

**3. Core Principles**

3.1 Our commissioning intentions are based on key core principles, which inform our approach to the delivery of services:

Enabling Service Users to be fully involved in their support plan, ensuring they can make choices and understand the consequences of these choices.

Working together to build in measures which support successful client pathways and journeys out of the service.

Services offer the right kind of accommodation and support to compliment other available services.

In promoting independence, positively strive towards promotion of a client’s health and wellbeing.

The aim is to develop pathways to move people into sustainable long – term accommodation from sleeping rough or at risk of rough sleeping.

We would want to see ideas / innovation in terms of linking support with long-term life opportunities.

Not grouping Service Users in terms of their primary support need, as they often have more than one issue where support is required.

A service which works to ensure Service User’s support needs are met in a timely manner to avoid an escalation of needs.

**4. Service Overview**

**Aims:**

4.1 The service will contribute towards the strategic objective of preventing and reducing rough sleeping in Cheshire East.

4.2 Fresh Start will provide 8 units of self-contained emergency accommodation for residents with complex needs/ mental health, whom have repeatedly failed in previous accommodation placements.

4.3 Residents will receive intensive support in the short term through a person-centred and trauma-informed approach, ensuring the service user is provided opportunities to access assessment, support, and treatment from relevant services. Residents are to be supported until they can move into move-on accommodation; be that their own independent accommodation or other step-down supported accommodation identified as being able to meet the needs of the residents.

4.4 The service provider will complete an induction programme with each new service- user and agree upon an initial support plan. The information from the initial support plan will form the basis for the development of a full support / action plan. The support / action plan will be devised and agreed with the service-user, principal support contact, and any agencies that the service-user would like to be involved, if appropriate.

The aims of the Support plan are to reduce over time the need for support and to promote skills to enable support users to access accommodation independent of support or requiring lower-intensity tenancy-related support. The support plans will maintain a person-centred approach, and promote the individuality of service users by supporting service users to:

* maintain social / community and family networks, and access local cultural and leisure activities
* identify and manage risk within their environment
* develop life skills
* always maintain their dignity and privacy
* achieve budgeting skills and enable appropriate expenditure
* assist in writing / designing their support plan

4.5 Specific tasks will be required of the service user as part of the support / action, which will help to increase successful outcomes:

**Health & wellbeing**

* + Support service-users to maintain personal health and hygiene within their personal environment, continence / incontinence, washing and dressing, and personal and oral hygiene
	+ Scheme induction / risk assessment / first week plan
	+ Support service - users to take prescribed medication
	+ Promote healthy eating and nutrition
	+ Support service - users to access GPs, dentists, opticians, chiropodists, and other providers of healthcare services
	+ Help with budgeting, paying bills and managing debts
	+ Help filling in forms (i.e., Welfare Benefits)

**Future planning**

* Help with applying for work, training, and volunteering opportunities
* Support accessing specialist agencies and support services
* Complete housing applications
* Assess and address barriers to housing, including any former tenancy arrears

**Advice** **on housing rights and responsibilities**

* + Help in accessing specialist services around mental health issues
	+ Help in accessing specialist services around substance misuse issues
	+ Support in developing shared living skills
	+ Help in accessing and maintaining suitable long-term accommodation

**Personal growth and development**

* + Help building self-confidence
	+ Continued support in accessing employment, voluntary and work opportunities, training, and education
	+ Consider cultural and religious needs
	+ Consider developing and maintaining family and social networks

**5. Contract Value:**

5.1 The successful providers will hold a contract with Cheshire East Council. The contract will be for 12 months, with the option to extend for two additional years.

5.2 The value of the contract accounts for the likelihood that this service is likely to qualify as supported exempt accommodation for housing benefit purposes.

**6 TUPE**

6.1 Please refer to the Terms & Conditions, RFQ Response document and Appendix D TUPE liability Information for further details in relation to TUPE

**7 How the Service will be delivered**

 **Who will access the service?**

7.1 The service will support qualifying individuals who are ordinarily resident within the Cheshire East Borough or are eligible to apply for housing in Cheshire East under the Allocations Policy criteria, local connection, Armed Forces covenant, for example. The residents will have previously failed in supported accommodation or shared supported accommodation is not suitable and will have complex needs.

7.2 The Service Provider will work in partnership with the Council to deliver high quality support services to service users, minimise and reduce demand and crisis, and develop a positive pathway approach.

 **Applications into the Service**

7.3 Applications are processed online through the Council’s [Single Point of Access](https://www.cheshireeastsp.org.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/275.aspx), which is administered, and contract managed by Cheshire East’s Housing Options.

7.4 The following information will be provided by the Council at the point of referral:

* Personal details of the Service User [household members if applicable] - name; address; date of birth and age
* Service User contact requirements, including any special communication needs
* Details of current housing status and other information – including risk information, which may be relevant to and / or may have a bearing on the services to be provided.
* All parties should ensure that where possible consent is gained from clients in order that they understand that personal information will be shared on a need-to-know basis between agencies involved in referring to and providing this service. Capacity will have already been ascertained. It is imperative that all parties comply with GDPR requirements and their own policies in relation to records management.
* The key factor is, as joint agencies, we ensure we are sharing information in the best interests of vulnerable adults and the long-term vision of improving outcomes.

7.5 The provider will accept all qualifying referrals made by Single Point of Access

 **Accommodation**

7.6 The service model will include the following accommodation principles:

* Support to Service Users will be based on individual needs / risk assessment
* Support will be provided in self-contained accommodation.
* The accommodation offer must include at least one property with disabled access in accordance with all relevant regulations, in DDA compliant accommodation
* The Provider will be required to source the accommodation units to deliver the contract. While the Council can introduce the Provider to possible accommodation providers where necessary, it will not specify exact location or enter into any agreements, however, please note ideally 5 of the units should be based within the Macclesfield area and 3 within the Congleton area
* In working together, the support provider and accommodation provider will develop a positive working relationship, agreeing a Service Level / Management Agreement, which clearly define the tasks of the support provider and provision of accommodation, including, if necessary, the housing management tasks administered by the accommodation provider, for example, repairs and maintenance, rent collection, legal notices, evictions, and security
* Consideration for accommodation need must be made in accordance with Equality and Diversity, particularly in terms of Protected Characteristics (age, gender, disability, etc.)

**8 Service Users Standards / Involvement**

8.1 The needs and wishes of the Service User are important to Cheshire East Council. The provider staff must unsure that Service Users are fully involved in the development and ongoing review of their support plans. Service users must also be supported to develop their potential to live successfully and independently in the community.

8.2 The Provider must ensure that the views of Service Users are sought when evaluating service delivery and service development. The Provider must ensure that the views of service users are taken into consideration and utilised where appropriate, when developing action / improvement plans.

8.3 The Council expects that Service Users are involved as much as possible in making decisions concerning the way in which the services are delivered through the Provider - managed on a day-to-day basis, subject to the Provider's rights to be responsible for the overall management of the Service being provided.

8.4 The Council recognises that involvement will depend on the ability and interest of Service Users and may be done informally, or by way of formal service user meetings, or by a combination of both methods. Innovative ways in which consultation can be undertaken should also be developed, for example, using social, media, online consultation, and peer reviews.

**Service provider knowledge & Skills**

8.5 The provider must ensure that in delivering this service they will possess as a minimum:

* A good knowledge of housing legislation relating to the client group. The Housing Act 1996 Part VII as amended by Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
* A good knowledge of supporting individuals with complex needs
* Further information regarding required skills is outlined in 9.4.

**9. Staffing & Staff Training**

9.1 Services will be flexible, and person centred. Service users should be able to exercise choice and control over their support. Staffing arrangements must be flexible to ensure that support can be arranged at a time suitable for service users.

9.2 In dealing with service users with complex needs, the service provider will aim to match staff skills, knowledge, and other attributes to service users’ needs and preferences. This will include a range of skills relevant to engaging with people from different backgrounds and circumstances.

9.3 The Provider shall ensure that staff are suitably inducted and trained, making them experienced and competent to execute their duties and tasks. Staff should have the necessary skills and experience and / or training required to deliver a quality service to a service user.

9.4 We expect all staff employed by the Provider to have completed or be willing to complete the following training, and must be able to demonstrate knowledge of, as a minimum standard:

* Safeguarding adults and Safeguarding children
* Child protection awareness
* Child Sexual Exploitation awareness
* Drug and alcohol awareness
* Self-Harm
* Managing Confrontation
* Life Skills
* The principles of rights, inclusion, choice, and independence
* Mental health awareness
* Mental Capacity Act 2005
* Awareness of issues facing rough sleepers
* Training in understanding and coping with challenging behaviour
* Self-injury awareness
* Working with people who are difficult to engage
* Health and Safety
* Modern Slavery
* Current data protection legislation
* Equality and diversity
* Benefits and debt awareness

**10 Performance Management**

10.1 The outcomes seek to measure progress towards increased wellbeing, improvements in social functioning and progress towards more independent living.

10.2 The service will be subject to key performance outcomes. Additionally, there will be regular review of outcomes.

10.3 Outcomes (quarterly review)

* Sample of Service Plan for the project
* Service user feedback
* Outcomes for clients including:
	+ health and wellbeing,
	+ future planning,
	+ housing rights advice,
	+ evidencing reduced barriers,
	+ evidence of support to reduce substance misuse
	+ improved access to health services (in particular mental health)
* Review of induction plans
* Review of support plans
* Case studies

**Induction**

At the move-in stage the service provider will complete an induction programme with each new service user to successfully induct them into the service being provided. They will agree upon an initial support plan. The information from the initial support plan will form the basis for the development of a full support / action plan. The support / action plan will be devised and agreed with the service user, principal support contact, and any agencies that the service user would like to be involved, if appropriate.

They shall issue documentation dealing with conduct and issues to be addressed prior to commencing delivery of Services to any Service Users.

The aims of the plans are to overcome barriers to housing and support service users to access longer term accommodation.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPI)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **KPI (measured quarterly** | **%** |
| 1 | Service user assessed and accommodated within 5 days of referral (Consideration will be given to limitations to this caused by in-patient referrals or prison releases) | 100% |
| 2 | Service user to receive induction on day of move-in (or during assessment). To include as a minimum a risk assessment, outline of what is expected of them, health and safety measures and contact details (including for key worker and out of hours assistance). Full induction completed in first month. | 100%100% |
| 3 | Average length of stay 6-12 months | 90% |
| 4 | Positive move on from the service  | 60%  |
| 5 | Refusals (unless agreed by Housing Options & Homelessness Manager) | 0% |
| 6 | Service Users supported to access services relating to support with substance abuse if required. | 100% |
| 7 | Service Users supported with financial inclusion, including maximising income and setting up bank accounts if required  | 100% |
| 8 | Service users receiving support to maintain good standards of hygiene in their accommodation  | 100% |
| 9 | Reports of ASB will be responded to within 2 working days and evidence of positive action taken to address the issue | 100% |