

BRISTOL TRIAGE PROPERTY

Understanding needs and matching people to suitable properties.

Background

Bristol is our largest area for supported accommodation where we provide over 170 bed spaces for vulnerable people experiencing homelessness.



The people we help often present with a range of challenging behaviours including:

- Drug or alcohol addiction
- Complex trauma
- Entrenched rough sleepers
- Sex workers
- Victims of abuse
- Victims/perpetrators of exploitation

The challenge:

Anti-social behaviour amongst our houses was relatively high and stable houses could very quickly become unstable and chaotic by the arrival of a new person moving in, causing a negative shift in the balance of the house. Placements were made by Bristol City Council and The Housing Network were not involved in the process of matching service users to properties. It felt that an important part of the process was missing, with placement happening without sufficient information around the individual needs and circumstances of service users.

A proposed pilot:

The Housing Network proposed a triage system to the Council to reduce anti-social behaviour in the properties which in turn would reduce the number of warnings and evictions. The concept behind the triage system was to allocate a room in a triage property to all males who were being accommodated by Bristol Council following a homeless presentation.

The triage process:

The following process would be initiated:

- Service users are allocated a room and given a time to arrive at the triage property
- The service user is met by a member of The Housing Network staff and shown around the property and issued keys to their room.
- A welcome meeting and assessment of needs meeting takes place to allow THN staff to understand any specific needs or vulnerabilities. • Service users are allocated a room and given a time to arrive at the triage property
- The house rules are explained, and the licence agreement is signed.
- Staff then observe behaviours for 24/48 hours so that as a team a decision can be made on where the most suitable property would be to move them into.
- Service users are then allocated a room and THN staff assist them to move in.

Key principles:

The key principles of the triage solution was to help The Housing Network make informed decisions. Observing behaviours in the first 24 - 48 hours and understanding the service users' needs would allow us to make better, more informed decisions when placing people into houses.

The Council agreed that the concept was an interesting proposal, and a pilot scheme was set up. The Housing Network sourced a 12-bedroom house with an office which would allow staff to be based in the building.



The solution:

The accommodation was opened as a male triage house in October 2022.

Wherever possible, we can now achieve the following in our accommodation:

- Maintain stability and keep houses balanced.
- Try to ensure that people are matched to the makeup of the service users already in our accommodation.
- Reduce the number of service users who are isolated due to language barriers, age and other factors by matching them to houses that may have people who speak the same language or houses that are accommodating similar age residents.
- Reduce anti-social behaviour by being aware of our more challenging service users. This allows us to put extra resources into the more demanding houses. • Staff then observe behaviours for 24/48 hours so that as a team a decision can be made on where the most suitable property would be to move them into.
- Improve outcomes for our service users by actively trying to make the right placement for them. This can help to reduce the risk of abandoning the accommodation.

Positive results:

We are still in the early days of evaluating the triage service, but staff report a reduction in evictions and a higher confidence in the successful placement of service users.

We are also able to offer the Council a later move in service because all male service users are coming to one location. We have extended our move-in times to 7pm which allows more flexibility for the Council and reduces the need to book people into B&B accommodation if they present as homeless later in the day.