

Encounters and conversations between people with lived experience of Temporary Accommodation and borough staff:

Learning from co-creating policy solutions to improve Temporary Accommodation in Kensington and Chelsea

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1. Project Background

London is grappling with the most severe homelessness crisis in the country. Record numbers of Londoners are living in Temporary Accommodation (TA). Street homelessness in the capital is spiralling. The pressure on London's local homelessness services is immense. London Councils estimates that 1 in 50 Londoners, including 1 in 21 children, are now homeless and living in TA arranged by their borough.

In response the London Housing Panel's Temporary Accommodation Working Group came together with the Greater London Authority and the London Housing Directors Group, with the Support of Trust for London, to fund a project to enable structured encounters and conversations between people with lived experience of TA and borough housing staff.

The aim of the project was to find ways that the existing experience of TA can change for the better. The present homelessness crisis creates a huge pressure on council staff and too often this pressure leads to an experience for service users that is more transactional and less human focused than the trauma associated with homelessness requires. This trauma is also difficult for homelessness staff who too often lack the level of professional training that those in social care may have. This can lead to the system treating people unequally or unfairly, and leading to the legal recourse being used more often than should be necessary.

In this context the project was designed to promote a better understanding of both sides of the delivery divide and help to build stronger relationships with community partners to work productively together. It was hoped this would reflect to staff the feeling engendered in users through use of their service and identify positive steps staff can take to improve user experience in the future.

The project was envisaged as a pilot to develop a model for structured engagement between service users and staff that could be adopted by other local authorities wishing to drive positive change in TA policy and process. This report summarises how this pilot was carried out and the lessons learnt. In particular it is important to highlight that the project has already led to a range of important changes to policy and practice in the pilot borough.

2. The project & process – Using Legislative Theatre

In 2024, Groundswell, in partnership with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and Home-Start Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham (Home-Start WKCHF), delivered the pilot project to facilitate conversations between borough housing staff and people living in TA, alongside and supported by staff and volunteers from a community partner organisation., using a Legislative Theatre (LT) process.



LT brings residents, policymakers and activists together in constructive dialogue, to co-create more equitable and effective policies and laws. Community members create and present plays based on their lived experiences, addressing policy issues. Audiences are invited to improvise alternative responses to systemic problems onstage and develop these ideas into feasible policy proposals. Following debate, and voting, policymakers and advocates carry these proposals forward to their respective offices – using theatre to spark concrete change.

Over a series of workshops and rehearsals, four residents living in TA in the borough, six staff from RBKC housing teams, and two staff from Home-Start WKCHF coproduced a performance. The performance highlighted several issues and scenarios, based on participants direct experiences of living and working in TA and informed by findings from Groundswell's [previous research](#) into the health impacts of living in TA.

The process culminated in an event where over 70 people watched the performance, suggested changes, wrote over 50 ideas for change, and worked with participants and a 'Policy Team' – a panel of five made up of senior RBKC staff, a local councillor, a senior Home-Start staff member, and a TA resident - to co-create solutions to the issues explored. You can read the policy actions and commitments made, and an overview of progress to date in our policy summary report below and in the appendix.

This report summarises the learning from this pilot, utilising feedback from those involved in the design and delivery of the project, the group of participants and those who attended the final event. The feedback includes:

- Reflections from the delivery team (six staff and facilitators directly involved in the project delivery)

- Participant reflections at the end of the event, at a post-project celebration and via online survey
- Reflections and learnings from key stakeholders involved in the Steering Group
- 31 feedback forms completed in person and online by event attendees

It aims to support local authorities, community organisations and others interested in adopting or learning from this approach to co-creating policy solutions. Footage of the process, performance and reflections from those involved is also available in a [short video here](#).

The process included several key phases of activities which were overseen by a Steering Group, made up of people from the voluntary and public sectors who met regularly to guide the project direction and decision making:

Development Phase	Delivery Phase	Learning Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with partners to design the participant recruitment approach, role description and support offer. • Four Workshops with participants (both RBKC staff and residents) focusing on building a safe space, sharing experiences, prioritising key issues and coproducing the performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final intensive rehearsals and live performance. • Audience participation in proposing solutions. • Policy Team reviewing solutions, theming, refining and making commitments. • Final audience vote to determine key policy priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback surveys for audience members and participants. • Feedback session with steering group. • Celebrations and reflections session with participants. • Development of testimonials video and this report. • Follow up with policy panel on actions taken.
Regular Steering Group meetings		

3. What we heard – reflections and feedback

Illuminating tensions and developing a shared understanding

The development workshops provided a space for participants to come together and discuss their experiences and priorities, laying the foundations for the performance. The initial workshops focused primarily on the experiences of residents living in TA. As engagement from housing team staff grew, it was evident that there were tensions between different staff teams who often felt competing pressures and faced varied challenges. This meant that workshops not only provided opportunities for a shared dialogue to better understand the divergence between resident and staff experience, but also increased focus on the **unique perspectives of staff members and teams working within different parts of RBKC systems**.

Whilst this led to some challenging discussions, it also illustrated the necessity of opportunities for different teams to share an understanding of the unique and shared barriers faced. This was a vital part of the process in ensuring that the issues highlighted within the performance were built on an understanding of how systems work or don't work together, providing the context of various teams allowed for an exploration of the system as a whole.

"We definitely saw a greater understanding grow between service providers and service users. The workshops were aimed at everyone having a chance to explain what challenges they are having with TA and it was interesting to watch certain thoughts and beliefs being challenged in a really supported way," (Facilitator).

Throughout the process, the groups cohesion and development of a shared understanding led to more constructive dialogue. Participants described gaining a better understanding of how others felt or experienced living and working within TA and an appreciation of everyone's role in contributing towards a better system.

"That working together staff and residents we can archive more," (Participant).

"All residents and staff want to see a positive change and recognise it is needed," (Participant).

The importance of bringing together a range of people to develop an authentic narrative was also reflected in feedback from those who attended the live performance. Audience members discussed being encouraged by the 'mix of residents and staff' and noted that the issues illustrated resonated with a range of audience members, several of whom also worked within RBKC.

"The way it brought perspectives from residents, frontline staff, managers and other practitioners together in a way where all those perspectives had equal airtime and validity," (Audience member).

"I was impressed by the range of stakeholders in the room and by the bravery required of both users of the service (those in temporary accommodation) and providers of the service (RBKC housing officers, officials) to engage authentically with this event. I also liked how I couldn't immediately tell who belonged to what group- there was a sense of equality permeating this event that doesn't usually happen elsewhere," (Audience member).

The level of openness and honesty from participants during the process and the performance was noted as a key factor for success. This was crucial to meeting the aim of the project to facilitate conversations between staff and residents. Audience members and steering group members reflected on the 'value in the interaction itself' through the performance, in addition to the series of conversations during the development, delivery and learning phases which took place.

"I very much appreciated individuals' openness to share their experiences and challenges," (Steering Group member).

Building the confidence and ability to speak up

Participants reflected not only on the effectiveness of working together to create an authentic performance, but also the individual benefits they gained from taking part.

"It was a great experience to engage with residents and socialise. It helped my self-esteem by getting out of my comfort zone," (Participant).

On reflecting on the process, participants described developing new skills around acting and active listening – 'to listen and speak less', as well as increased confidence and emphasised the importance of having opportunities to meet new people.

"I suggested to management to use LT to improve communication and create bonds between colleagues and teams. It can be a creative way to try solving issues at work, and may provide a voice for some who feel shy to speak up," (Participant).

Participants also discussed the process leading to an increased understanding of the complexities of the system and a better appreciation of different realities.

Whilst the majority of participants experiences of taking part were described positively, the need for an increased number of sessions was also recognised. Some people noted additional sessions would have helped to build trust and ensure those who felt less confident with the process were supported to engage. This would have also provided greater flexibility in the process to support participants to catch up when they needed to miss workshops or sessions.

Bringing complex and difficult issues to light

Overall, the performance and policy event was positively experienced by both the participants performing and the audience taking part. 33 audience members and seven participants provided feedback, and of these, 70% rated the overall event as 5/5 (excellent).

Particular praise was given about the performance being able to bring a complex and contentious issue to life in a way that was both entertaining but also honest and powerful.

“The honesty of the performance with some added absurdity to make it theatrical. It was great to see colleagues working in housing perform, which shows dedication to their roles. I loved how the audience was given a chance to participate in the performance as spectators. A new twist to team building on a wider level including residents/customers. Legislative theatre could work in any organisation,” (Audience member).

“The format was fun and new and brought a new angle to a difficult issue,” (Audience member).

Audience members enjoyed the creative and engaging approach and discussed an appetite for more opportunities to use these sorts of approaches for other organisations or communities.

“I left feeling that we need to try and tackle issues in more creative ways,” (Audience member).

There was a specific interest in opportunities to continue utilising these approaches within RBKC, with many people noting the transferable nature of this approach to shared decision-making, both organisationally and for collaborating on policy decisions.

“I want to see more of this model in RBKC, especially in restorative and culture change work. But it could apply in any part of the council's work,” (Audience member).

“Please could this be hosted at least on an annual basis. Instead of sitting in a meeting room/or virtually attending a meeting to discuss changes that could be implemented, this is a great way of interacting with staff and our residents for change,” (Audience member).

A unique opportunity for policy creation and engaging with decision-makers

Several people discussed how this approach provided a unique opportunity for the audience to directly contribute to a policy process and engage with senior decision makers in a positive way. One audience member acknowledged:

“The opportunity to feed into, and hear the people and the scenarios, and get properly involved in co-creating some solutions in the moment and to meet people and speak with them and notice my own responses to the event also,” (Audience member).

The value of seeing policy makers listening, responding to and committing to action, and being held to account for upholding and feeding back on commitments was also reflected as a key strength of the approach and performance.

“I really liked the end commitments, live taking notes and then boiling them down to achievable actions for the Council to take,” (Audience member).

Whilst people noted the strength of having a policy panel engaged in the discussion, with representation from senior council staff in housing, others reflected that it would have been welcomed to see more representatives from RBKC Housing Teams in the audience.

Developing new perspectives and reaffirming existing ones

For most people who responded, they stated they gained a new perspective or understanding, and benefitted from clearly seeing the issues from both the workers’ and residents’ perspective. Many described the performance as magnifying realities, humanising and inspiring solutions.

“By seeing simultaneously “both sides” of the issue, I think is really important and really powerful,” (Audience member).

People also noted that this was helpful in demonstrating that solutions to complex issues were possible and practicable, particularly using a new and creative participatory approach to identifying solutions.

“It magnified some issues, and showed that many were solvable,” (Audience member).

We heard that this process helped shift mindsets about issues and where the causes lay, significantly, moving away from individual blame and mass assumptions about ability or agenda of individual staff and seeing that the system isn't working for both sides.

For example, one resident reflected that they felt more willing to work with housing officers after viewing the performance.

“I am more willing to engage with supporting the local authority officers to deliver rather than assume they will be incompetent or unwilling,” (Audience member).

Those who didn’t experience a shift in mindset described the power of the event in reaffirming existing issues and being able to see them clearly demonstrated.

“As a housing officer, I am already aware of all the issues. But it’s just good to hear people express and talk about them in different ways, validating existing views I have about the way we work and what could be improved,” (Audience member).

Participant feedback

Following the process, participants fed back that they developed and liked:

- Individuals highlighted they built their **confidence and ability to meet people**, through the process and the development of acting skills.
- Participants fed back that they **benefited from listening to the other sides**, listening and speaking less, which gave a **greater understanding of different realities**.
- Participants had a greater understanding of the realities of being in TA, and how complex those systems are for people, how the systems “do not seem to be designed for the benefit of anyone”.

- In particular, all the participants – residents and council staff – felt they **worked well like a team, in a coproduced and equitable way.**

4. The Policy Commitments – and changes so far

A key outcome of the LT process was the policy proposals that were drafted and amended at the event and the commitments made by RBKC, via the Policy Team.

The **Policy Team** consisted of senior staff and stakeholders within the council, able to drive forwards and be accountable for the commitments made: and their role was to collate, summarise the audience's proposals (over 50 separate proposals for change were drafted by the audience) and present these back to the audience, to be voted on. The Policy Team for this event were:

- Councillor Claire Simmons
- Dan Hawthorn, Executive Director of Housing and Social Investment, RBKC
- Robert Shaw, Housing Strategy and Policy Manager
- Thienhuong Nguyen, Home-Start WKCHF Service Manager
- Sarah Colbourne, Counsellor & RBKC resident

Subsequently, several tangible changes have occurred as a result of the process.



The full Policy Report is in the appendix to this document (page 11 onwards).

A summary of the key proposals is as follows:

Proposal 1 – A whole council approach to resident experience

Services need to ensure they recognise diversity and take a human-centred approach, ensuring residents are part of the decision-making process, and providing onsite and community-based support and advice.

Proposal 2 – Triage and monitoring

There needs to be improved triaging facilities, crisis support and specialist staff and services for families and individuals, providing appropriate, immediate crisis support.

Overall, the council, community partners and stakeholders need to ensure the voice and rights of people in TA are understood, championed and strengthened.

Proposal 3 – Staff & Systems

Staff should receive better and consistent training in approaches, processes; greater support and capacity; better represent the community at all levels; and have more opportunities to feed back and inform issues with the systems.

Underpinning each of these proposals were clear actions.

In addition, each of the Policy Team members took on specific actions themselves, summarised in the appendix.

The Changes Made

12 weeks after the event, we're pleased to share some real tangible changes have been made.

To date, these include:

- Re-location of the TA Team to downstairs alongside other Housing Teams in the office.
- Increased staff resource to improve triage process as the first point of contact for RBKC residents requesting help with housing.
- Staff survey and review of existing forms to help reduce the number of forms required to be completed in a resident's journey.
- Work underway with HR colleagues to pilot structured options for recognising the value of lived experience of homelessness in recruiting to key posts in the Housing Needs department.
- Schedule established for senior staff members to shadow a range of RBKC front-facing teams.
- Proposals created for a wellbeing and therapeutic space for TA tenants over a 3- month course.

Soon after the event, Dan Hawthorn, Exec Director, Housing & Social Investment, stated:

"I took on three actions in the end, and I'm happy to say I've completed all three. Specifically:

1. ***Understand the forms.*** *In the days after the event, I sat down with the team working on the review of forms... It has combined surveys of staff to collect critical insights, opinions, and suggestions for improvement from those directly interacting with residents; and 'resident journey' workshops to understand the experiences and journeys of different kinds of residents navigating housing and temporary accommodation services. We are on track to our goal of considerably reducing the forms by April 2025.*
2. ***Valuing lived experience in personal specifications.*** *Following my commitment, our Director of Housing Needs has commenced work with HR colleagues in the Council to pilot structured options for recognising the value of lived experience of homelessness in recruiting to key posts.*
3. ***Set up a schedule to shadowing front line teams.*** *I have put in place a varied schedule of visits with front line teams. I have already attended a case review meeting with the occupational therapists in our housing, health and disability team; sat with the receptionist on the front desk at one of our local housing offices; and accompanied one of our visiting officers on visits with council tenants in their homes. Between now and March 2025, I have a wide range of other sessions booked in or in the process of being arranged...*

I really appreciated the challenge at the event, which prompted these three commitments – all of which have been really valuable.”

And six months on, Kojo Sarpong, Director of Housing Needs, highlighted the progress now made:

*“I am pleased to say that **all of the recommendations derived from the legislative theatre, has been implemented by the Council.** Some of the actions are ongoing and are part of our cultural development within the service. We have received positive praise from a number of sources about the work and our willingness to open ourselves up to scrutiny with residents in this way.*

In terms of triage and monitoring, since the middle of February 2025, we have implemented our Homelessness Prevention Hub, which has multi-disciplined officers who are responsible for providing housing advice and preventing homelessness. In addition, the officers are responsible for triaging residents and providing support. There has been an improvement in the quality of service delivered to residents at the various access points; and the service remains under regular review for development.

And in terms of staff and systems, we have recently undergone a systems analysis of the service provided to residents and the volume of forms required to be completed. This work is ongoing to identify issues and identify practical solutions to improve service delivery.”

5. Summary

The summary is for organisations interested in learning from the experience and/or exploring how to adopt the approach taken in this pilot project.

This process can create policy, rebuild trust and make real change

- Perceived barriers and differences between people with lived experience and those working for a local authority (an ‘us versus them’ mindset) can make starting conversations together challenging; and similarly, tensions within the council, between teams, can be tricky and take time and trust to overcome. However, **this process is highly effective in overcoming conflict and breaking down barriers**, leading to meaningful participation and solutions.
- For this project, K&C council faced the challenge of the Grenfell tragedy, with the publishing of the inquiry report just weeks before the final event. This led to heightened sensitivity and anxiety this project may ‘open a tinderbox’.
- However, as evidenced above, this is **a unique, valuable and effective process when there's conflict, tension, intractable policy challenges or a mandate to rebuild trust.**

Senior buy-in, wider engagement and timing is important

- **Senior buy-in with staff who stay involved is key for partners to engage** - and where possible, a monetary contribution from councils ensures greater buy-in, leading to shared responsibility and greater accountability.
- **Identifying and highlighting the benefits to councils and partners is vital, and timing is important** – processes like this get greater buy-in if connected with a pressing council priority around the issue, or the possibility of feeding into, e.g. a new council homelessness strategy.
- **Early advertising and casting the net wider for participants** – it can be hard for just one council team or community partner to engage participants – we recommend starting wider with a big group then narrowing down.

Accessibility and support needed for all

- **Practical support is a priority consideration for participants** – for example, with this project, given the focus was on families in TA, childcare support and/or the option of bringing children to workshops was a priority.
- **Emotional support is a priority consideration** – the resharing of experiences can be challenging, and the right support and facilitation expertise is vital for both those involved and attending to avoid re-traumatisation
 - *In both instances, we worked with skilled, experienced facilitators, and closely alongside the community partner, to always ensure a psychologically safe environment, and a community partner staff member in attendance to support.*
- **An engaged audience is a key component** - ensure the workshops and event is as accessible as possible.

Diversity and representation across the issue

- **Achieving a balance between staff and residents is important** – with senior staff involved, and a better balance between staff and residents.
 - *For this project, initially there was no staff engagement due to poor initial council promotion, but then the balance tipped the other way, with an increase in staff sign-up in the last week – which meant the majority of final event participants were staff.*
- **Wider community engagement earlier on** – for this project, only one community partner was engaged, focused on families in temporary accommodation. The community partner had limited time and resource, and working with families in TA had other priority issues. This led to limited residents participating, and in future, more community partners should be engaged with to avoid too much burden on a single partner.
- **Diversity and representation has to be considered across all areas of this process** – diversity and representation of lived experience was a priority in terms of our facilitators, the participants, and our policy panel – for this project, this included a diversity of lived experience, from the borough, and diversity in terms of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, caring responsibilities, council position, and representation of the borough.

Resource and time needed

- **Processes like these take time and the right people to do properly and meaningfully** – Access and participation arrangements take time, and this needs to be factored in at the initial stages.
- **Funding and resource should be realistic and proportionate to partner engagement to enable meaningful sustained work and not be extractive/tokenistic** – whilst this process had some of the issues highlighted above, which meant it occurred over a longer timeframe, and costs in salary time were more than expected - in future projects, this may be reduced, with greater council and community partner engagement.

Accountability

- **Ensuring there is someone to follow up with the policy team is vital for accountability.**

6. Acknowledgements

For this process, we worked with

- Katy Rubin, who has been delivering Legislative Theatre processes with various local and regional authorities across the UK over the past five years, and internationally, prior to that. See [The People Act](#) for more information.

- LaToyah Gill as a co-facilitator, with several years experience of Legislative Theatre, living and working in RBKC
- The council teams and staff from Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, including councillors, senior staff and frontline staff from housing teams
- Home-Start Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham, who's staff and volunteers participated and supported the project as the key community partner
- Westway Trust and the Tabernacle who provided space for the delivery of the workshops and final event
- Thanks to funders and supporters, Trust for London, London Housing Directors' Group, and the GLA
- Thanks also to London Housing Foundation who contributed towards the cost of venue hire and an additional facilitator.

"The Legislative Theatre event on temporary accommodation made me look at the issue in a new way. The most powerful thing for me was how the approach gave equal weight to every participant's perspective. This turned the work into a genuinely team effort, simultaneously honouring and getting the most out of the significant differences in experience and perspective in the room," (Dan Hawthorn Executive Director, Housing & Social Investment, Kensington & Chelsea).



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Appendix 1 – Policy report and commitments

Encounters and conversations between people with lived experience of Temporary Accommodation and Borough Housing Options Teams

Policy report and commitments – 15.10.2024

Summary

On 15th October 2024, in a public Legislative Theatre (LT) event, local audiences watched a co-produced play. The play focused on a scenario in a Housing Options service on a Friday, where residents in temporary accommodation are waiting to be seen by the Housing Options team.



All based on real experiences of residents and staff involved in and acting in the project, the play highlights issues such as limited staff capacity, no housing, over-complicated systems and processes, which all lead to the residents not getting the support they desperately need. One parent with child has to return to their rat-infested temporary accommodation, another waits hours only to be told her case lead is off sick, and another waits all day only for her turn to be missed and to be told to come back Monday – despite having nowhere to go over the weekend.

What needs to change?



The audience then improvised and tested policy interventions; and drafted proposals to improve experiences of temporary accommodation (TA) in Kensington and Chelsea (K&C). They then debated and amended those proposals collaboratively with a Policy Team of policymakers, which included representatives from K&C, Home-Start and the TA Residents Panel. Finally, the proposals were prioritised via an audience vote, and policymakers were asked to make commitments to action.

This event was the culmination of a project commissioned by Trust for London, London Housing Directors Group and the GLA to facilitate conversations between housing options workers and people living in temporary accommodation. The event was also supported by funding from London Housing Foundation. Groundswell led this work, in collaboration with K&C, Home-Start and facilitators, Katy Rubin and LaToyah Gill.

This document outlines the key policy proposals and individual commitments the policy team made.

Proposal 1 – A whole council approach to resident experience

Summary of proposals and amendments

Services need to ensure they recognise diversity and take a human-centred approach, ensuring



residents are part of the decision-making process, and providing onsite and community-based support and advice.

The council should implement the following:

- Improved onsite facilities and community services - A welcoming and human environment in the town hall (including refreshments and services provided), and service delivery outside town hall, in locations that residents feel safe in.
- There should be advocates onsite at town hall and within the community, to support residents, or a citizens advice bureau in the town hall on certain days should be implemented.
 - These advocates must be legally trained, strong, powerful and include lawyers for people in TA to help with housing and community care. We should utilise the community-based organisations as advocates.
- Improved communication, information and resources – The council needs to take steps to ensure residents are fully informed and understand about the process, outcomes and timelines; including staff training around communications and transparency (see below).
- The council and partners must provide better resources, including ‘know your rights’ information – including multi-media and face-to-face ways of information sharing. Materials should be co-produced and co-designed with residents and their time reimbursed for involvement.
- Approach to residents in TA – The council should review approaches to cultural sensitivity training for staff, ensuring this is working and implemented; and making sure TA residents are valued the same way as permanent residents.
- The council should develop a stronger relationship between residents, the council, local voluntary organisations and communities - increasing use of multi-disciplinary teams
- The councils need to ensure policies are put into practice consistently. This should include a clear policy regarding local connection including clear communication with residents.
- Improved accountability and policies into practice - Accountability mechanisms must be in place, including a scrutiny team which is independent from the council.

Votes for proposal 1 = 22

Proposal 2 – Triage and monitoring

Summary of proposals

There needs to be improved triaging facilities, crisis support and specialist staff and services for families and individuals, providing appropriate, immediate crisis support.



This should include:

- Specialist roles - A new job role of Housing Crisis Specialist should be created to work specifically with families.
- Specific spaces - The town hall should have space for children and private rooms to help effectively triage people in a confidential environment.
- The waiting area should be monitored and an improved appointment system implemented.
- Tailored support - The process should be adapted to meet individual's needs, including vulnerabilities (e.g. neurodivergence, language needs etc.)
- There should be specialist services for people with a long history of homelessness
- Additional services and support - The council should implement a Citizens Advice Bureau in the town hall on certain days; and other organisations, charities and advocates should be involved.
- Language and terminology – various terminology should be changed, including:
 - o 'customers' should be changed to residents;
 - o language and perspectives around Temporary Accommodation should be shifted, given the length it is no longer 'temporary' for many people (for example, 'long-term TA' could be used).
 - o We need clarity on terms and there should be a glossary for residents and all stakeholders.
- Complaints and feedback - The council needs to streamline complaint and feedback processes for both staff and residents, improve how this is monitored as part of performance; and give a greater, transparent acknowledgment of where things go wrong.
- Streamlined monitoring – the council should ensure residents only have to tell their story once with better use of referral information; and have standardised data collection for race and identity.

Overall, the council, community partners and stakeholders need to ensure the voice and rights of people in TA are understood, championed and strengthened.

Votes for proposal 2 = 30

Proposal 3 - Staff and systems

Summary of proposals

Staff should receive better and consistent training in approaches, processes; greater support and capacity; better represent the community at all levels; and have more opportunities to feed back and inform issues with the systems.



This should include:

- Improved processes and communications training - Staff should be trained in the processes to ensure they are consistently understood and applied, with a strong focus on prevention, not just reactive approaches; and formal qualifications for staff working in senior management.
- Staff training on better, efficient, person-centred, trauma-informed communication with residents – Being sensitive with residents about the situation and process, alongside honest and upfront communication about the housing crisis.
- Staff involvement and feedback - Staff should be empowered, individually and collectively, to understand where they fit in the bigger picture; have accountability (be held accountable and hold each other to account); and have more opportunities for staff to feedback on problems with the system.
- Senior management experience and diversity - Senior managers should have increased experiences on the front line, including a commitment to work in a frontline role once a month, to understand the issues residents and staff face, and be responsible for engaging at a community level.
- Representation across the staff team - There should be greater community representation and increased lived experience roles in leadership positions, improved diversity in the staff across the organisation and seniority, ensuring inclusive recruitment processes.
- Funding and capacity – The services need more investment on the whole, including increased staff capacity; and the council should lobby for enough funding to work effectively and building more social housing.
- Greater council and partner accountability – The council needs to ensure safeguarding policies are strengthened and it is not breaking the law regarding the provision and nature of temporary accommodation offered to residents; and there should be more accountability for charities who are commissioned by the council
- Improved multi-term working - There should be greater interdisciplinary and multi-teamwork across different issues, bringing together council, communities and charities in the borough.
- Streamlined systems and monitoring – The council should work to reduce amount of time taken on administration, particularly form filling.

Votes for proposal 3 = 56

Commitments to Action



- *Councillor Claire Simmons* – Escalate this process to scrutiny committee at the council. How will this get feedback from the committee?
- *Dan Hawthorn, Executive Director of Housing and Social Investment, RBKC* – Understand the forms. Valuing lived experience in personal specifications. Set up a schedule to shadowing front line teams.
- *Robert Shaw, Housing Strategy and Policy Manager, RBKC* – Working with residents on how they can engage with services and co-design of services and materials. Ensure this is paid for. Make more information available for residents (e.g. wait times, processes via leaflets and online.) Rob will chase specific staff.
- *Thienhuong Nguyen, Home-Start WKCHF Service Manager* – Invite housing staff wherever they may be to join the multi-disciplinary teams so that they are connected and supported for mutual accountability.
- *Sarah Colbourne, Counsellor & RBKC resident* - Go to RBKC and discuss what long term TA residents are feeling emotionally and long-term health and education. Chasing key decision makers and holding them to account.

Next steps

The Policy Team will be re-contacted in the coming months to see how their commitments to action are going and discuss progress against the proposals outlined above.

Photos thanks to Mahesh Pherwani