

**Aldgate Connect BID - 6 month progress report:
Welcome Area and Resource Centre**
Reporting period: September 2021 – February 2022



Introduction

Providence Row's Welcome Area and Resource Centre has continued to serve the homeless population in East London and the City over the past six months to ensure that people rough sleeping are; welcomed into a safe space, have their most immediate health, hygiene and wellbeing needs met and are supported on a road to recovery away from homelessness.

We are grateful for the support The Aldgate Partnership have provided via the Aldgate BID funding. During September 21 – February 22, The Aldgate Partnership have contributed £15,000 to support the Welcome Area and Resource Centre to run.

The pandemic has continued to provide challenges to our service delivery due to the vulnerable nature of our client group. Whilst Providence Row's day centre support services are open and running, we are still having to deliver some services off-site and limit the number of clients on-site at any given time. We are managing the number of clients on-site by operating a gated service enabling people rough sleeping to access our resource centre facilities as and when needed, takeaway food is served at specific times and a pre-booked appointment service is in operation for all specialist support services.

Project report

During the reporting period - 1st September 2021 – 28th February 2022:

Providence Row has supported a total of 721 people experiencing homelessness. All clients have passed through the Welcome Area/Reception, were greeted by our friendly team, registered for their appointments with our specialist support workers and were provided information and guidance. 146 new referrals were received for people known to be rough sleeping; they are now being supported by our Advice and Support team to begin their road to recovery.

378 individuals benefited directly from the Resource Centre services, having their most immediate wellbeing, hygiene and health needs met through the provision of food, access to washing facilities, toiletries, clothing, internet, phone, a care of address and access to support information.

727 breakfasts and 1,300 lunches were provided and the washing facilities were accessed on 246 occasions. There were 173 uses of our IT facilities; clients use computers to contact family and friends, check their universal credit journal and emails and apply for jobs. 84 people made use of our Needle Exchange service.

5 Health Hubs were held at Providence Row's day centre. Each Health Hub provides an opportunity for vulnerable clients to access vaccinations and get support with physical, mental and sexual health needs. Across the health days; 44 COVID vaccines (1st/2nd or booster doses) and 8 Flu vaccines were administered to protect clients from these deadly viruses. 13 people were tested for STI's, 2 people had Hep C screening and 20 people were screened for HIV. 12 people registered with the outreach GP team and received health checks.



Throughout March 2022, we carried out a satisfaction survey with clients. 100% reported feeling better informed about their options and how Providence Row can support them. 90% reported feeling reduced loneliness and isolation as a result of being part of a community.

The following additional feedback was recorded:

“I feel good, I feel better informed, I have support with my situation”

“The staff here is extremely welcoming, nice and professional”

“The food really helps get through the day, thank you”

“Just keep doing what you're doing to help people because Providence Row are good at it.”

Case study: Ethan*

Ethan had been rough sleeping in Tower Hamlets for seven years. Our outreach teams had multiple attempts to engage with Ethan and after a while determined that he had a complicated immigration status and had lost his documentation. Whilst we supported him to resolve his immigration status, he was provided with breakfast and lunch each day at our day centre and given access to our resource centre facilities such as toilets, showers, laundry facilities, phone and internet.

Due to Ethan's regular attendance at the day centre, and access to our resource centre and food service it enabled our support teams the opportunity to build trust with Ethan and offer him further support. We were able to help him secure temporary accommodation at Luke House, which is also the hostel we support with daily food deliveries. Ethan is still engaging with our services and because of this we have been able to link him to further support on his road to recovery.

*Ethan's name has been changed to protect his identity.

Project updates

A Winter Provision Worker has been recruited to assist the Welcome Area Coordinator in managing the resource centre and coordinating health hub days. They also provide additional support to our Advice and Support Team, who have a demanding caseload, with tasks such as applying for birth certificates or passports, registering with local GP's and signposting clients to specialist support services. Alessandro joined the Welcome Area and Resource Centre Team in February 2022. Funding was granted for this post for 4 months from Tower Hamlets local authority, we hope to raise additional funds in the year ahead to continue this vital post.

This service is also supported by volunteers who help out on a weekly rota. During the reporting period 10 Volunteers and 2 Peer Mentors (clients with lived experience) provided over 500 hours of support to the Welcome Area and Resource Centre.

Looking ahead

Due to the vulnerable nature of our client group Providence Row continues to observe COVID-19 safety procedures such as social distancing, mask wearing and limiting site access on the advice of Public Health England. We hope that later this year we are able to lift some or all of these restrictions. We were delighted to remove the need for takeaway food service in March, and are now serving breakfast and lunch on site.

We are expecting the need for our services to increase in the coming months as the economic impact of the rising costs of living puts pressure on many people living on the brink of homelessness.

If you have any questions about this report or would like to find out more information about Providence Row's wider work then please don't hesitate to get in contact with Emma Kreeger, Head of Corporate and Community Fundraising at: ekreeger@providencerow.org.uk.