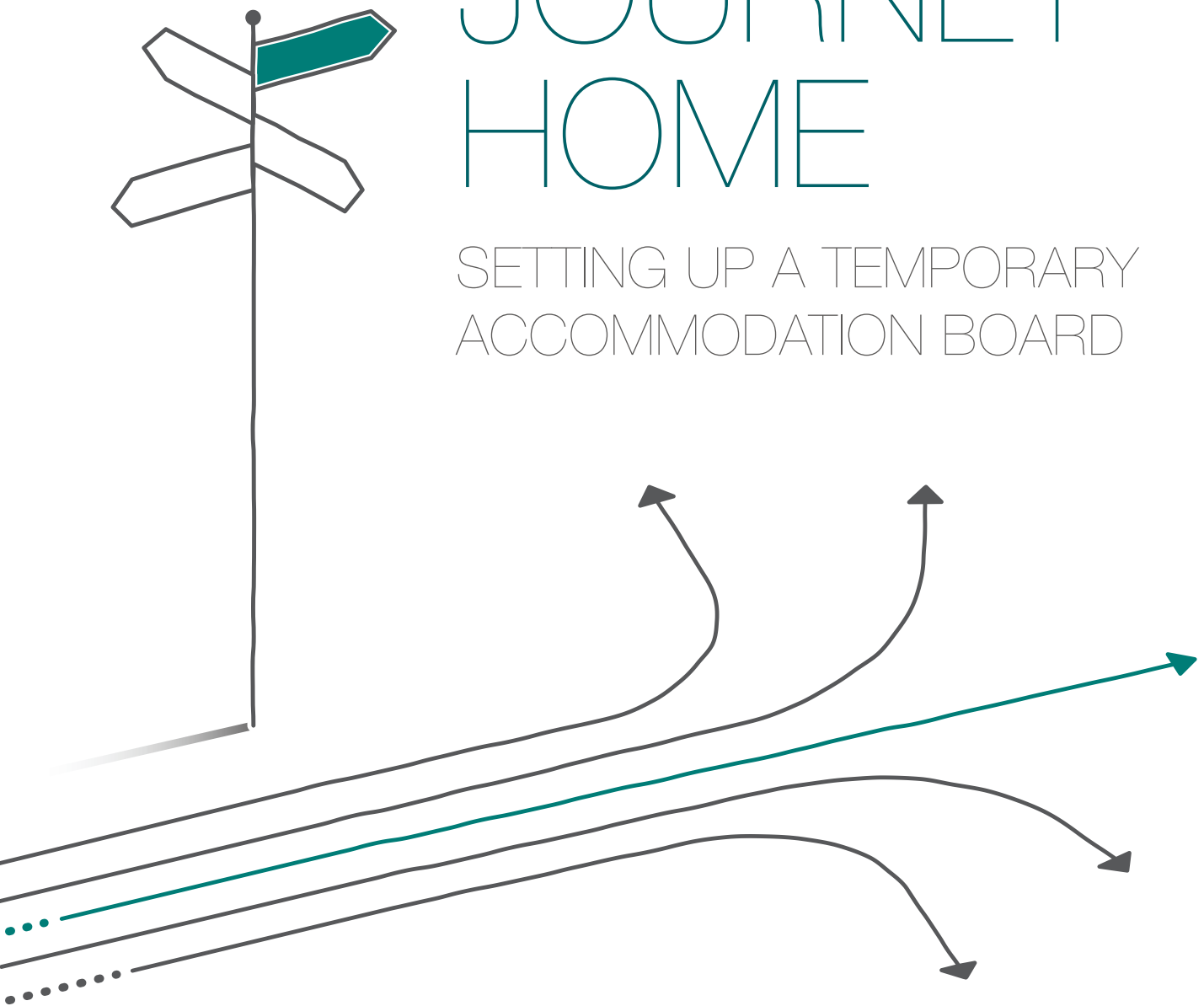REPORT

THE JOURNEY HOME

SETTING UP A TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION BOARD

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ABOUT IPPR NORTH

IPPR North is IPPR's dedicated thinktank for the North of England. With its head office in Manchester and representatives in Newcastle, IPPR North's research, together with our stimulating and varied events programme, seeks to produce innovative policy ideas for fair, democratic and sustainable communities across the North of England.

IPPR's purpose is to conduct and promote research into, and the education of the public in, the economic, social and political sciences, science and technology, the voluntary sector and social enterprise, public services, and industry and commerce.

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ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

IPPR North and Justlife's ambition is to empower local areas to tackle the issues highlighted and worsened by the existence of unsupported temporary accommodation (UTA). Our aim is to harness local will, resources, knowledge and lived experiences to bring about lasting positive change for tenants of UTA.

This handbook outlines practical steps on how to enact the recommendations set out in the *Journey home* final report, and in particular what to consider when setting up a local temporary accommodation board (TAB). Throughout our research, we have learned from geographical areas already working towards change for tenants of UTA, and from the many existing activities that support our recommendations. From these findings and a TAB pilot carried out in Manchester, led by IPPR North and Justlife, we present good practice examples of how to improve UTA locally and suggest ways in which our recommendations might be tailored to local circumstances.

The five steps, detailed in the next section, are as follows.
1. Understanding the context
2. Choosing the board membership
3. Meeting regularly and identifying a 'driver'
4. Producing an agenda
5. Deciding the lifespan

FIVE STEPS TO SETTING UP A TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION BOARD

STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Unsupported temporary accommodation largely houses single homeless households who are deemed non- or low-priority by the local authority. It is, in theory at least, short-stay accommodation. It is, in theory at least, short-stay accommodation in which residents have limited rights or security of tenure. UTA is commonly host to substandard social and physical conditions. Homeless households living in UTA generally lack formal structures to support them to find permanent accommodation.

These factors are common to UTA across England, and yet throughout this project it has been clear that the context of single homelessness and temporary accommodation differs from place to place and that organisations and local authorities refer to similar issues in different ways. For instance, unsupported temporary accommodation may cover the following bedspaces in England: B&Bs, guesthouses, homeless hostels, private hostels, private hotels, emergency accommodation and short-stay HMOs (houses in multiple occupation).

The context of UTA differs not only by type of bedspace, but also by local policy frameworks and local housing markets: for instance, through differences in approach to council gatekeeping, signposting and referral-making for single homeless households. Variables also include availability of bedspaces, tenant support services, and levels and methods of enforcement and regulation. Each of these factors needs to be accounted for in establishing a TAB (as discussed below).

STEP 2: CHOOSING THE BOARD MEMBERSHIP

A temporary accommodation board is a place-based collaboration between local partners designed to create understanding of the situation of UTA within their own geographical area, and to enable those partners to address the issues facing those living in UTA, by harnessing the local will and resources of individuals and organisations that are involved in providing for single homeless households.

The headline objective for any TAB should be simple: **to keep tenants' stay as short, safe and healthy as possible**.

The membership of the TAB should be as open as possible but should include key stakeholders who have the power and resources to make changes. These include the following:

- local authority housing and homelessness officers (across a combined authority where appropriate)
- current tenants of UTA

- health services
- mental health services
- substance misuse teams
- fire services
- police
- environmental health teams
- local housing providers, such as housing associations and ALMOs (Arm's-Length Management Organisations)
- third sector organisations involved in referrals, placement and support.

It is vital that members of the board always include current or former tenants of UTA. Their lived experience provides crucial insight into current accommodation-related issues as well as the potential for real-time feedback on changes implemented by the TAB.

Each local TAB collaboration may find the need to widen its membership on a rolling basis to include other stakeholders who could unlock change for single homeless households. These could include: officers and public services from other neighbouring local authority areas, probation and prison housing services, other local homeless charities, registered social landlords and localised health services such as GPs. Practicable, political involvement would also be useful, and therefore where appropriate we recommend the occasional input of councillors and/or MPs, as these elected members represent the communities in which UTA is located. These stakeholders can also prove persuasive in advocating for change.[1]

When considering membership to the board, the following key questions should be asked:

1. Which particular local UTA challenges need to be addressed?
2. With the above in mind, which relevant organisations/people/voices should be represented on a local board in order to address these challenges effectively?
3. Does the group combine a good level of understanding of what's happening on the ground with strategic decision-making power?
4. Are there current UTA tenants on the TAB? If not, how can they be involved?

The importance of tenant involvement
Tenant involvement is critical to the success of a TAB. Tenants have the most current insight into issues within unsupported temporary accommodation and how these affect their health and wellbeing. They also often want to speak about the barriers UTA presents to them while

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1   It should be noted that we have not mentioned inviting landlords or managers of UTA to sit on temporary accommodation boards. Tenants, services and local authorities frequently have fragile relationships with landlords, and while we recognise that there are landlords and managers doing a satisfactory job, our research found that many of the inadequate social and environmental issues in UTA are caused or exacerbated by unscrupulous landlord or management practices. Therefore, their involvement in TABs may not always be appropriate. The complexities of dealing with unscrupulous landlords of UTA are exacerbated by the fact that local authorities do not want to lose the bedspaces this accommodation offers to some of the most hard-to-house people; UTA tenants do not want to lose their accommodation either as it is frequently their only option; and services do not want to jeopardise their clients' accommodation. Therefore, they are careful not to antagonise landlords. However, it is crucial that a TAB seeks to build relationships with landlords and managers of UTA and invites them to join the TAB if this is deemed appropriate.

trying to move into stable accommodation. The communication of their firsthand experiences is vital because without it, the extent of the problems that exist within the accommodation would remain largely unknown, even to the relevant enforcement organisations.

One tenant involved in the current TAB pilot in Manchester said:

> 'You have to experience it to know what it's like… I've seen it from both sides: I was a caretaker so have seen it from the owner side and from living there, so it helps to make sure that both sides are there… Hopefully [the TAB] will bring in a lot of change and safety [for people in UTA].'

Tenant-members also provide a grounded approach to change because they understand that the actions of the TAB will affect their daily lives. Therefore, they will not tolerate talk of change that is not followed up with action. Their involvement will also provide regular assessment of the effectiveness of initiatives for change, given the fact that they are living in the accommodation in question. The opportunity to contribute to the board is also empowering and makes change feel tangible for both tenants and the other members of the TAB.

Another tenant involved in the Manchester pilot told us:

> 'Makes me feel on top of the world knowing I'm contributing and helping out the best I can, and that it's not just me but others [are contributing] too… When I speak to the general public now, they don't know what's going on but I can get the word out.'

The success of tenant involvement is reliant on the addressing of power imbalances that may exist on this type of board. Most individuals living in UTA may not have attended meetings of this nature before and, understandably, may feel nervous and uncomfortable in taking part. Relationships between tenants and other board members must be built prior to the first TAB meeting, which should support tenants to feel empowered by reassuring them that their voice is valued in a situation that could otherwise be intimidating; this can partly be achieved by providing them with information beforehand on what to expect.

Case study: Establishing the Manchester temporary accommodation board

The Manchester TAB was established in 2016 as part of Manchester's homelessness charter[2] – a vision to end homelessness in the city, created through collaboration between individuals experiencing homelessness in Manchester and the voluntary, private and public sectors, following a significant rise in homelessness. Homeless households in Manchester identified B&Bs (a form of unsupported temporary accommodation) to be a significant issue, citing a lack of safety as well as criminal and health issues within these premises. These concerns were echoed by frontline workers from both the homelessness and the housing sectors.

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2   More information on the Manchester homelessness charter can be found at the Street Support website: https://streetsupport.net/

In May 2016 Justlife formed a temporary accommodation board as part of the homeless charter's initiative to address B&Bs and substandard accommodation in the city. Within the charter, this group is called the B&B Action Group. Current membership includes: representatives from Manchester city council departments including homelessness and temporary accommodation, environmental health and revenues and benefits; the NHS homeless mental health team; four voluntary sector organisations that provide support and signpost people into UTA; six individuals who are currently living in UTA or have done in the past; and the fire service. Justlife is aware of the need to broaden the reach of the board's membership and is working to include substance misuse services, the police and social housing representatives in order to bolster expertise and decision-making power.

The Manchester TAB has so far achieved the following:

- Identified all properties and bedspaces used as UTA across the city, which highlighted further gaps in knowledge of current conditions and costs. TAB members have now committed to compiling that information.

- Developed an informal greenlist of acceptable UTA, through conversation about the quality of UTA currently known and used by members of the TAB.

- Developed a prototype of an online rating system for UTA, assessing its effectiveness for giving control back to those living in UTA.

- Set up working groups to positively engage landlords of UTA across Manchester.

- Improved communication and collaboration between services. For example, mental health teams have been asked to stop placing their clients in some of the worst UTA in the city, but instead to go through the local authority's brokerage team to find acceptable bedspaces.

- Empowered tenants to feel their voice is valued equally to that of other board members. At meetings, tenants' share of spoken involvement and inclusion has equalled that of non-tenant members.

Suggested action
- *Map key stakeholders of unsupported temporary accommodation in the local area to identify who should be involved in the TAB. This could be done by first identifying the local challenges within UTA that need addressing and then determining who has influence to make specific changes concerning those issues.*

STEP 3: MEETING REGULARLY AND IDENTIFYING A 'DRIVER'
TABs should meet regularly to collectively agree a programme of ongoing actions for improving the lives of single homeless households living in unsupported temporary accommodation. Initial meetings should be held as frequently as necessary but the frequency should take into account the additional pressures each member will have from their

existing roles. We recommend meetings are held quarterly once the TAB has gained momentum.

At the outset, it is important to appoint a chair person/organisation for the group who is able to drive the agenda and actions, and organise meetings and administration. The role of this 'driver' is vital for the success of the TAB. The driver will ensure meetings are convened, that the TAB has a common understanding of the issues and a common agenda, that actions are clearly identified and assigned, and that tenants of UTA are included in the process on an equal footing with other board members. Without a chair driving these core practicalities of the TAB, it is likely the group will not be effective in making change.

We recognise that to achieve the above activities and functions, an investment of time is needed, especially by the driving organisation or individual. We recommend exploring funding options to contribute to this role, in situations where that is an option and would ensure the smooth running of the TAB. However, while the driver is necessary for pushing forward agendas and keeping the group focused, the success of the TAB is reliant on the strength of equal collaboration between members, which will be developed by meeting regularly.

Suggested actions
- *Establish a driving organisation/member to chair TAB meetings.*
- *Identify whether or not funding is necessary for the success of the TAB by assessing the input needed to drive actions through to outcomes.*

STEP 4: PRODUCING AN AGENDA
We recommend that a TAB sets out a simple three-part agenda of objectives as a starting point. These agenda points reflect all the issues raised by UTA tenants during the course of IPPR North and Justlife's three-year research study (2013–16). They could be expanded to reflect specific local circumstances.

The overarching objectives are:
1. Identifying bedspaces
2. Addressing the standard of accommodation
3. Supporting tenants

These are detailed further below.

Objective 1: Identifying bedspaces

Key questions
- Who is living in the UTA?
- Where is the UTA?
- How are people travelling there?
- How long are they staying?
- What are these places like?

There is no systematic recording of accommodation used by both priority and non-priority single homeless households, nor of the physical or social conditions of bedspaces.

A key role of the TAB should be the systematic recording of bedspace data. This should include location of bedspaces and, at a minimum, the name of the landlord and managing agent, their contact details, the type of accommodation, the type of licence agreement used, and the number of individuals living in the property.

An array of evidence shows that accommodation used for and by single homeless households tends to be of low quality. IPPR North and Justlife's research with UTA tenants echoes this. In addition to monitoring the number of local bedspaces, having information on the physical and social conditions within properties is critical for ensuring that living conditions are tolerable. This should be informed by tenants and existing local data drawn from any Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) monitoring via environmental health and fire inspections carried out in UTA.

Further questions and points to consider
- Who has existing data[3] (even if partial) on local bedspaces? Where and what are the clear omissions from current recording procedures?
- How can recording systems be updated regularly?
- Local authorities have lists of licensed HMOs in their area, and may also have lists of non-licensed HMOs.
- Local revenue and benefits teams will also have housing benefit data, including individuals living in hostels and B&Bs, and individuals on licence agreement.
- Fire services are responsible for inspecting HMOs, and their data and knowledge can be used to contribute to local databases.
- Although public services will hold some official data, many issues go unreported. Therefore, tenants and frontline workers are most likely to have a good knowledge of the locations of short-stay bedspaces in the area, and of the environmental and social conditions within dwellings.

Objective 2: Addressing the standard of accommodation

Key questions
- To what extent are current UTA dwellings in the area covered by housing regulations?
- What would a minimum set of standards for all local UTA dwellings consist of?
- How should these be implemented and by whom?

Basic property standards exist in all accommodation across the housing market, governed by the poorly enforced HHSRS (Battersby 2012; Davies and Turley 2014).

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3   Environmental health teams will hold data on known problem dwellings in an area but the extent of this data will be dictated by the extent to which tenants have come forward with complaints.

The policy framework for managing housing conditions locally is patchy at best, and the dwellings used for UTA often fall through the cracks, in part because of the reluctance of tenants with little security of tenure to report problems, but also because local authorities with few environmental health resources are ill-equipped to deal with the scale of housing problems in their areas.

Nevertheless, housing standards can be promoted by driving tenants towards good properties in the first place, limiting signposting and referrals to substandard accommodation. This action should be underpinned by a minimum set of acceptable standards for UTA, developed into a simple and concise standards document, which should be agreed by the local authority, landlords and TAB. These standards should be informally monitored when someone is placed, by the placing agency visually taking note of the state of the property in reference to the minimum standards agreed and set by the TAB. They could be based on the exemplar standards documents contained in the online toolkit; these have been developed by IPPR North and Justlife out of our work with UTA tenants in the North West and South East of England and from consulting with frontline workers and local authorities.[4] Both are written in Microsoft Word and are editable. The two documents consist of the following.

- **Set of minimum standards**, to be agreed on by the TAB. We recommend that TABs develop relationships with landlords to secure voluntary sign-up to these minimum standards. Standards documents should be available to all tenants at all times and should clearly state how to report an issue and to whom. The ability to report anonymously is crucial.
- **Tenant checklist**, to support the recording of property conditions during the first visit, with a follow-up set of questions available for prolonged stays. We suggest that either a tenant or placing organisation completes the checklist during a 'warm handover' when the tenant arrives at the UTA, and then the placing organisation inputs the information into a database held centrally by the TAB.

It is proposed that the feedback from the existing local data (already collected by environmental health teams or revenues and benefits offices) and tenant checklist responses is used to inform greenlists (of acceptable UTA) and exclusion lists (of unacceptable UTA), and therefore future signposting/referral decisions, as well as enforcement activities. It is hoped also that it will encourage landlords to ensure that the essential conditions and items listed on the checklist are provided before the tenant arrives, and maintained where possible throughout their stay.

Case study: Getting landlords to sign up to minimum standards in Blackburn

Blackburn with Darwen has around 550 bedspaces of UTA located in privately-run houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) of five bedspaces or more. For some time, the properties had a patchy reputation in

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4   The 'Journey home' full toolkit can be found on Justlife's website: https://www.justlife.org.uk/research/the-journey-home-full-toolkit/

terms of the poor physical and social environment. Members of the council's housing service decided something needed to be done to improve the quality of the accommodation and the experience of its tenants. They determined to do this, working alongside public health, health outreach, safeguarding, community safety, drugs and alcohol services, housing benefit services, the voluntary sector and user groups.

This multi-agency team visits the properties regularly in order to build relationships with each of the landlords and see the condition of the properties firsthand. As a result of this engagement, some of the properties began to improve. The relationships developed with landlords also ensured that when the local authority wrote its own standards, building on existing HHSRS minimum standards, all the landlords of UTA willingly signed up. These standards ensure continued improvement in service quality as well as guaranteeing access to the properties by floating support workers.

Further questions to consider
- What recording of quality, if any, happens at the local level?
- Can any environmental health and fire data be fed into a TAB database?
- Are official HHSRS metrics needed to drive enforcement activity?
- What metrics can be used to monitor social conditions?
- What criteria would warrant inclusion on a local greenlist of approved UTA?
- How can local landlords be incentivised to sign up to providing minimum standards?

Suggested actions
- *Utilise the editable minimum standards and checklist documents in the resource pack.*
- *Refer to the existing legal standards, the HHSRS system and HMO standards, links to which are provided in the resource pack.*
- *Hold greenlist and exclusion list information within the TAB and use it to improve the life chances and living situation of UTA tenants, even if local authorities may be reluctant to do so for legal reasons.*
- *Look for innovative ways to implement the minimum standards. (See case study below from Sunderland.)*

Case study: Creative enforcement and use of licensing in Sunderland
Sunderland city council had five properties used as unsupported temporary accommodation and licensed as houses in multiple occupation. These properties housed both individuals placed by the local authority and individuals who found their own way into the accommodation. The properties were widely known to be problematic for the area due to their poor social environment and the vulnerable adults living within them.

In an innovative effort to address these issues, funding was received for an environmental health officer to focus on these five properties. The officer would work creatively, following a partnership approach with landlords of UTA, using enforcement regulation only where required. This partnership approach consisted of regular, monthly contact with the landlords of UTA at their properties to monitor and drive up housing standards through the use of HMO licensing and/or Housing Act powers, including management regulations. It also would assist hostel owners in supporting vulnerable tenants by developing formal links between departments – for example, revenues and benefits and 'Access to Housing' – while also liaising and coordinating the work of external support agencies.

Sunderland city council also changed its licensing for these properties to include safeguarding as one of its conditions, requiring the landlord to receive training from the local authority in the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

These innovative approaches have ensured better support both for vulnerable adults living in this accommodation and for the landlords.

Our research found that tenants were often rushed into signing very basic documents that primarily secure housing benefit against the rent. These agreements do not equate to a licence agreement and contain little useful information in terms of the rights or responsibilities either party might have, or any clear statement of where additional service fees are being charged, and what the fees were for. A standardised agreement developed with landlords would help to clarify tenants' rights and responsibilities, even if they are staying under the limited protection of a licence agreement. At a minimum, a standardised agreement should include contact details for landlord or manager, local authority housing teams, and a clear statement detailing the rent, the service charge and services this pays for, and the responsibilities of the tenant towards the property and to other tenants.

Further questions to consider
- How can tenants be involved in writing the area-wide standard licence agreement?
- Why might landlords object to a standard licence agreement and what can be done about this?
- How can landlords be supported to provide accommodation for vulnerable tenants?

Suggested actions
- *Use the editable standard agreement in the resource pack, adapting it as necessary.*
- *Get input from tenants about the rights and responsibilities they think they have or would like to have.*

Objective 3: Supporting tenants: Recording individual journeys and flagging risk

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Key questions
- What support (if any) is already in place?
- What support is needed?
- Who is best placed to provide support?
- How are tenants being helped to move on from UTA?
- What can different housing option providers do?

The most complex part of the TAB's work will be monitoring individuals moving in and out of unsupported temporary accommodation. This is critical for the identification of individuals at risk of repeat cycling in and out of UTA, but also for enabling the flagging of at-risk individuals who arrive at properties not suitable for their needs.

Some data on individual journeys exists, including benefit data, local authority data (on individuals who have been accepted as homeless) and data recorded by numerous voluntary sector organisations. With the cooperation of the Department for Work and Pensions and local revenues and benefits teams, there is significant potential for capturing data on the journey of individuals through UTA. For example, once an exclusion list of dwellings has been created by a local TAB, local revenues and benefits officers could flag to the TAB when an individual has claimed for housing benefit against that dwelling, and act accordingly if they think the individual is likely to be at risk while living there.

Further questions to consider
- What data is accessible? What is missing? (For example, voluntary sector databases may not record self-referrals.)
- Does the TAB need to create its own, new data collection system?
- How can the TAB be sure any database is kept up to date?
- Will the data flag when an individual moves into a risky property?
- What are the data protection obstacles to making this work?

A critical problem with parts of this sector is the 'parking' of individuals in UTA. In IPPR North and Justlife's research, people who identified that they had been placed by an organisation – charities, hospital, prison, probation, mental health services, local authority or police – also reported being given no onward support or referral to such support from the placing agency. Organisations frequently utilise UTA for hard-to-house people, without any plan to provide in-tenancy support or eventually to move them out of UTA and into stable, permanent accommodation.

Not all tenants want or need support with their health, employment status or housing situation. But many do. We therefore recommend that, at a minimum, 'warm handovers' for the tenant take place to ensure that the property is in an acceptable condition and, ideally, that each tenant has a

designated point of contact or support worker, according to their needs (see boxed text below).

Warm handovers

UTA tenants participating in the IPPR North and Justlife research regularly reported feeling unsupported, lost in the system and unaware of where to access support. Many spent years in this situation, with deteriorating mental and physical health, before accessing a support service.

Warm handovers could go some way to avoiding this situation. They involve the placing agency/organisation taking the tenant to the property, whereupon organisation will check the accommodation with the tenant using the checklist (detailed above) and assisting the tenant to report any issues. If either party plans to terminate support, the placing organisation will also introduce or refer the tenant to onward support by physically accompanying them to an initial meeting, formal or informal. This onward support option could be structured support or an open-access day centre, depending on the tenant's needs and service availability. Where possible, a rehousing plan should be drawn up, at the earliest opportunity.

Further questions to consider

- How prevalent are warm handovers?
- What resourcing would be required for more warm handovers to take place?
- What support services are already in place and working?
- How should the need for ongoing support be determined and who would do this?

There are excellent examples of good practice from around England in providing support to UTA tenants. Three examples are presented in the following boxes. Updated good practice examples will be stored in the online toolkit at Justlife's website.

Case study: Good practice in supporting tenants – Justlife

Justlife provides support to individuals living in unsupported temporary accommodation in Manchester and Brighton, who otherwise would be left to navigate complex systems on their own. Justlife workers offer help in making housing referrals, dealing with benefits issues as well as supporting individuals with other general health and wellbeing needs. For tenants, often the simple knowledge that they have a safe place where they can go and be heard makes a difference. The support is very person-centred, recognising that each individual is more than just the sum of their 'needs' and that they need to be treated as such. Justlife also provides creative engagement services including political

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engagement, art projects and exercise sessions – all of which contribute to the holistic person-centred support.

One Justlife service user reported the following:

> '*It gives me a reason to come out.... It gives me something to focus on, you know. Like I don't have to think, Oh, what's the point in carrying on because I'm just going to be depressed tomorrow and the next day and the next day. But then I think, well Justlife is over there, I can just go to Justlife, you know, and a better atmosphere. Better people than where I am, you know. Because if I didn't come to Justlife, I would just be stuck in that room.*'

Case study: Good practice in supporting tenants – Changing Lives Sunderland

Sunderland's private hostels were notorious for providing poor-quality housing, with no support, poor social environments, financial and physical exploitation of tenants; modern slavery was alleged to take place in some. Ultimately, the state of this accommodation was causing people to die.

The charity Changing Lives was commissioned to work with individuals living in UTA in Sunderland. The work it does is holistic, acknowledging individuals' needs taking into account each person's health and wellbeing. The support it gives includes providing in-reach work (to tenants within their UTA accommodation) and welfare support, identifying unmet health needs, and providing trauma-informed care[5] and social engagement activities. The project has had a positive impact on the private hostel tenants. Fewer people are dying and the tenants are recounting fewer stories of exploitation. The concern is now that Changing Lives is the only organisation working within this environment in the North East, and withdrawing support after a certain amount of time could disrupt any progress made. The charity believes that support is key for individuals stuck in UTA who are entrenched within the homelessness system, otherwise they will be forgotten and forced to continue living in a situation that could end up killing them.

Case study: Good practice in supporting tenants – Blackburn MEAM

The public health team at Blackburn with Darwen council identified that a number of the 50 most frequent A&E attendees in the area lived in unsupported temporary accommodation. The same individuals were also recognised as having poor mental and physical health,

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5   Hopper et al (2010: 81) define trauma-informed care within homelessness services as being: '… grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, [and emphasizing] physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, [creating] opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.' (https://www.healthcare.uiowa.edu/icmh/documents/ShelterfromtheStormTrauma-InformedCareinHomelessnessServicesSettings.pdf)

for getting involved in a range of chaotic behaviours and acquisitive crime, and for causing a range of concerns to the community, the local authority and partner agencies. This prompted public health to look at ways of providing enhanced case management involving in-tenancy support to individuals living in UTA.

The approach taken in Blackburn with Darwen was developed with support from the MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) national coalition. The initial project focused on vulnerable individuals with multiple and complex needs who were either living in unsupported temporary accommodation in the form of HMOs, or were at risk of homelessness or of rough sleeping. Three MEAM workers were hired via a commission involving the local Families, Health and Wellbeing Consortium, which brings together a number of local voluntary, community and faith sector organisations. The workers had a range of complementary vocational experience (including gender-specific for females with complex needs) to enhance the person-centred support and advocacy created for individuals living in this type of accommodation. The approach was found to be useful for individual clients rather than providing higher impact short-term outcomes overall, helping those individuals to navigate the complex and diverse system of various agencies with greater confidence while also taking back some control and responsibility for building their own improved outcomes. In addition to the paid staff, the provision also included the use of volunteers with lived experience. The intention is to use more volunteers as the project progresses, including some of the people who have received support from MEAM, who represent a crucial asset for helping others turn their lives around.

This project has been largely successful in its aims: building trust and relationships between the project workers and individuals in UTA; providing an opportunity to improve relationships and the responsibility of private the landlords involved using the Care Act 2014 as a lever; supporting individuals through regular engagement with relevant services and wider community networks; learning from the experiences disclosed; and reducing cost pressures on public services.

STEP 5: DECIDING THE LIFESPAN

Ideally the need for a TAB will diminish as the social and physical environments within unsupported temporary accommodation improve, following the board's input, positive engagement with landlords, and the development of viable alternatives to UTA. Or in some cases the methods of collaboration presented in TABs will become so embedded in the system that they will be natural practice. The reality will look different for each local area, thus each TAB will need to decide on its own lifespan, once it has seen noticeable improvements. We therefore recommend that this decision is guided by unfolding events rather than an imposed arbitrary time frame, as this will encourage the continuation of collaboration to address issues if and when they arise in the future.