



World Homeless Day 10th October 2020

The Plymouth Alliance - Housing The Homeless During The Coronavirus Crisis

During the Covid19 national lockdown, the Alliance worked hard to accommodate people who were homeless in Plymouth. This work takes place all year round, but during lockdown it was more important than ever that people were housed, had their own rooms and were safe as part of the government's '[Everyone In](#)' initiative. This meant responding differently as services were not able to move people out of temporary accommodation in the way they usually would. Therefore we were not freeing up those temporary spaces for 'new' people.

We needed to ensure we

- Moved people who were in communal spaces / dorm style places into their own rooms
- Moved people off the street
- Moved people out of B&B
- Had options for people newly presenting, often to the Council
- Provided family homes

Alliance partners rose to the challenge of meeting these needs by:

BCHA provided 26 rooms that took 19 people from night shelters straight away (moving people from communal space to individual rooms), as well as people directly from the street.

PATH leased shared houses to provide more temporary accommodation for 44 additional people. These people came from other temporary services (freeing up spaces for others), from B&B and people presenting directly to PCC and other services, giving people somewhere appropriate to stay in the short term.

Young people's services set up a house, too, to add to options for young people presenting as homeless during this period.

Plymouth City Council's Community Connections service and partners worked with 2 letting agents, in particular, to enable homeless families to move into empty properties on a temporary basis; and then worked in a couple of cases to convert those to tenancies.

Harbour, Hamoaze and Shekinah freed up staff from services closed or reduced during lockdown to provide day time support and meals, creating a significant additional service in the community. More recently they cooked additional meals to provide hot food for the Rough Sleeper Team, who in turn distributed these for those people who continue to, or find themselves in the position of rough sleeping.

The Livewell Complex Needs team have continued to offer a mental health offer and assessment for existing services and for the H4H houses that came on line to support the 'Everyone in' agenda.



The Plymouth Alliance

Covid has given them the opportunity to offer assessment and interventions to people that sat previously outside of services. Detox nursing staff have recovered some opiate/ alcohol detox assessments and interventions and are assessing people where it is appropriate to do so.

At the same time Alliance partners continued to provide existing housing and homeless services, including:

- Rough sleeper outreach
- hostels
- other temporary accommodation
- housing advice and support
- access to private rented housing

All this meant that there were decent offers for many people in a time of crisis, with numbers in B&B being higher but being managed all the time. The response to Covid meant the Alliance quickly did many things we had planned in our accommodation strategy and this part of our work has moved forward. The challenge and priority now is to maintain and develop that.