

CHAIN update November 09



The new CHAIN system - update & survey feedback

As you all know CHAIN is being redeveloped and we want to keep you the users up to-date with the progress so far.

- We have commissioned developers at Astadia to redevelop CHAIN. Managers from the CHAIN team and an outreach worker spent two days in October talking through every aspect of the system with the team who are now building the database.
- The project is due to go-live in April 2010.
- A small steering group consisting of representatives from CLG, St Mungos and City of Westminster are overseeing the project.
- The CHAIN development manager (Ian Shenstone) and the project manager for the LINK redevelopment at Homeless Link (Val Cohen) are working on a mechanism to ensure data can continue to be shared between CHAIN and LINK.
- The CHAIN team have developed a communication plan to ensure that CHAIN stakeholders are consulted, informed and trained at the right times. Recent activities have included attending the Homeless Link Practitioners Group, undertaking a survey of users and getting feedback from teams about support needs information on CHAIN. Future plans include recruiting a Super User Group of people who use CHAIN regularly to help us bed the new system in and plan for the future of CHAIN.
- Thank you to all those who responded to the online survey about the new system. Your feedback has been reported to the steering group and is helping us in our development plans.
- Overall you told us that you want an easy to use and fast system which gives managers the flexibility to run the reports they need to report to funders and manage teams work. Most of those who responded find that the current CHAIN is pretty fast and user-friendly but there is room for improvement. Some examples:
 - Changing the way the system returns you to the top of a list of clients when you have gone into a particular record to have a look at a case in more detail
 - Making space for people to add a message to a record e.g. contact Joe Bloggs if you come across this client
 - 'Flagging' more - for example showing at a glance when someone was first and last seen rough sleeping and whether they are in accommodation or not
 - Making the fields and response options clearer in places so people record the same information in the same way
 - Ensuring that changes to CHAIN do not adversely affect LINK users.
- Bobby, Thecla and Ian will be running CHAIN re-training during March 2010 for all inputting users. This is likely to take the form of seminars for accommodation projects and more hands-on training for outreach teams.



RS205 Case study

The RS205 project (which highlighted people who have been sleeping rough for a long period of time and/or very frequently) has had some great successes. Clients have been provided with enhanced options for long-term move-on, including the private-rented sector (PRS).

Terry is a man in his 50s who moved into a PRS property in outer London this autumn. Terry became homeless after a family breakdown more than five years ago and has since been sleeping rough on the streets of City of London.

Throughout the time on the streets Terry has been known by City Outreach team however has not wanted to move on into a hostel. During the summer of 2009 he was approached by the Personalised Budget Coordinator for City Outreach and started working towards finding a PRS flat in his former home area. Terry was referred onto a PRS scheme and with no drug or alcohol issues and with a previous good history of maintaining tenancies, he was accepted onto the scheme.

A property was procured in the area he wanted to move to. The landlord was open towards the idea of working with people on housing benefits initially and once the new scheme was introduced to him with the view of helping a single person off the streets into PRS, the landlord was interested in getting involved.

The main concerns were rental payments and support, but in this case the TST specialist worker would arrange for direct payments and provide the support throughout the tenancy. In this instance it was a safer prospect for the landlord to have a one point of contact with a worker as well as the security of rental payments directly into his bank account.

There were challenges along the way - Terry's lead worker says the outlook of getting into a self contained flat after having slept on the streets for years was overwhelming at times and it was touch and go getting the tenancy signed until the last moment. However, Terry made the decision to move into the flat and an Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement was signed.

Terry is now getting used to his new life and looking forward to start looking for work within his local area. Over the last few weeks he has been busy buying furniture to his new home.

Quarterly reports for July - September 09

You should have received your borough reports which were emailed out in October.

- There has been an overall increase of 13% in the number of people in all London boroughs seen rough sleeping in the quarter (1441) in comparison to the April to June 2009 period. The number of people seen is similar however to the same period last year (July to September 2008 - 1420).
- Although there has been an increase in rough sleeping this quarter overall, some boroughs have seen a drop - Brent, Heathrow and Hounslow. In addition, outreach and building-based service teams succeeded in either booking into accommodation or reconnecting 528 people, which compares to 458 people in the same quarter last year.
- There were 657 new people sleeping rough this quarter. 411 were only seen bedded down once in the quarter. Just under 1 in 2 new people were British, and just over 1 in 5 from A8 or A2 countries.

If you have any queries or suggestions for the CHAIN team, please email us on CHAIN@broadwaylondon.org or call 020 77100562