

# Influencing local authorities on accommodation



**The Greater Manchester  
Homelessness Prevention Strategy**

May 2023



Supporting the voluntary sector  
working in the criminal justice system

Published by Clinks © 2023

All rights reserved

Cover photo

© Jeff Hubbard / PA Wire, courtesy of  
Centre for Homelessness Impact

Funded by

**LLOYDS BANK  
FOUNDATION**

England & Wales



# Introduction

---

The voluntary sector working in criminal justice has extensive knowledge and experience in bringing about tangible changes in the criminal justice system.

Clinks has been funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales to deliver the Stronger Voice Project – a three-year project with the aim of strengthening the voice and influence of the voluntary sector working in criminal justice through a programme of information, collaboration, training, and capacity building.

As part of this project, we are running a series of expert seminars. The below case study seeks to highlight the different approaches and strategies voluntary organisations working with in the criminal justice system take in their advocacy work. We hope that through sharing these varied examples organisations can develop a greater understanding of policy influencing work and gain new knowledge about different approaches that can then inform their activity.

We would like to express our thanks to Sarah Paul and Joe Donohue for delivering an expert seminar on influencing policymakers to improve accommodation support for people leaving the criminal justice system. The following provides a written case study of work taking place in Greater Manchester to improve accommodation provision for people leaving prison. You can find an [online recording of this expert seminar on YouTube](#).

# Working together to prevent emergency homelessness from custody

---

## About the speakers

Sarah Paul is the Homelessness Prevention Lead for Greater Manchester Probation. Sarah played an instrumental role in the emergency Covid-19 Trailblazer for safe accommodation of people leaving prison in a public health crisis. This formed the foundations of the regional whole systems approach to the Community Accommodation Service for people leaving prison who are experiencing homelessness. Previously Sarah has implemented the Offender Personality Disorder Strategy alongside health colleagues within local custodial and community settings. She has also co-ordinated regional multi-agency public protection arrangements whilst co-located with Greater Manchester Police Sex Offender Management Unit.

Sarah was joined by Joe Donohue, Homelessness Strategy Principal, Public Service Reform for Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

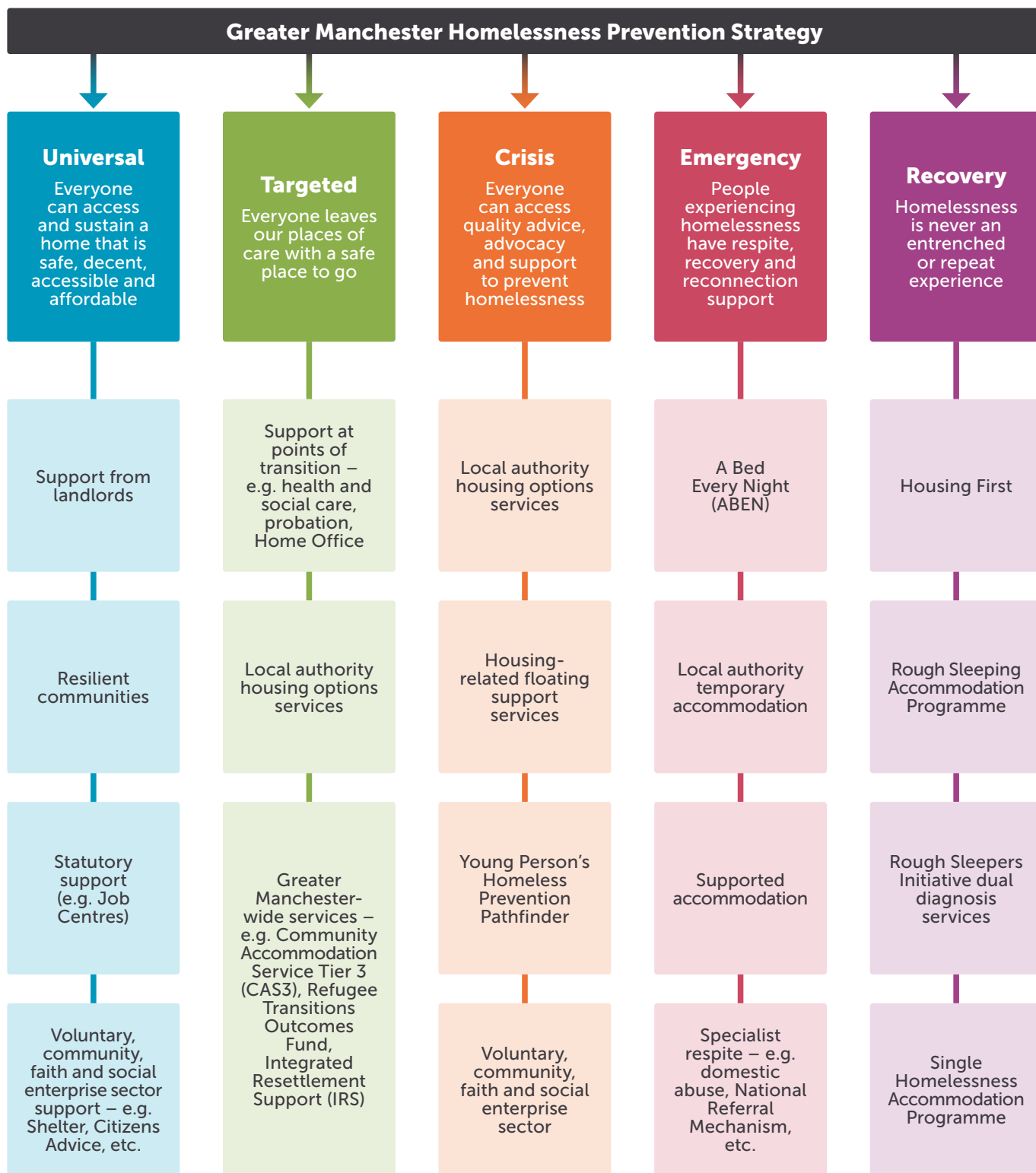
## Background

The presentation focused on the implementation of the Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS3) in Greater Manchester. CAS3 provides temporary accommodation for up to 84 nights for homeless prison leavers and those moving on from Approved Premises (CAS1) or the Bail Accommodation and Support Service (CAS2), and assistance to help them move into settled accommodation. From July 2021, CAS3 was piloted in five 'vanguard' regions providing temporary accommodation for approximately 3,000 people released from prison subject to probation supervision and at risk of homelessness on release. From December 2022, CAS3 was rolled out across England and Wales, available in 12 regions, providing temporary accommodation for approximately 12,000 people leaving prison per year.

## The Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy

The speakers explained that in Greater Manchester CAS3 doesn't stand in isolation, and they would be looking at it in the context of the Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

This diagram illustrates the various missions of the Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy:



Seeing prevention across the five missions – universal, targeted, crisis, emergency, and recovery – gives a view across the different lanes created by commissioning and allows them to see the whole system rather than a discrete service.

This is an approach that is based on commissioning to learn, rather than commissioning for outcomes. In Greater Manchester, they are taking risks and trying to do things differently, which they say is as much about learning what works as about achieving outcomes. It is about looking beyond single data points and understanding the bigger picture.

They want to create a culture of inquiry and get to the root of the issues causing homelessness. They try to use the best data available, listen to the voices of lived experience, and take appropriate action.

## **CAS3 in Greater Manchester**

Greater Manchester was an early adopter or 'vanguard' area for CAS3. Early on, they realised that bringing in private providers to deliver the service would not work, so they described the context of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy to the Ministry of Justice and made a proposal for a different structure. They were granted funding from the Ministry of Justice.

The service has the following characteristics:

- Temporary accommodation for people leaving prison or Approved Premises
- A 'single system' of resettlement and homelessness prevention; an integrated public service offer
- Collaboration to strengthen relationships and improve outcomes
- Justice devolution to reinforce shared public service responsibility and accountability
- Opportunity for system-wide improvements, better understanding unmet need and acting on shared insights
- An opportunity to highlight what works, identify barriers (evidenced by data) and address those barriers through resettlement policy at a regional and national level.

In Greater Manchester, they didn't want to develop a separate pathway for people leaving prison, rather they wanted an integrated public service offer. They recognised that they couldn't do this alone. They sought to strengthen relationships and focus on opportunities for improvement, better understanding of unmet need, and sharing information and insight.

One of the structures they use in their approach is the model of healthy and unhealthy organisations from Philip Stokoe (2011). This is set out in the diagram below.

### How do we collaborate effectively?

#### Clarity about primary task

The CAS3 pilot in Wigan has delivered a genuine approach to inclusive partnership working and has achieved a strong balance of effective commissioner/provider relationship, without losing touch with operational delivery.

#### Clarity of shared principles

We pride ourselves on taking a flexible, person centred approach to how we deliver services, ensuring the needs of our residents are the focus of our work.

#### Decision making delegation and authority

The relationships we have developed on the CAS3 scheme are genuine and effective, the impact of which can be seen on the willingness of staff to go above and beyond, and the feedback from those working on this scheme.

#### Management and good practice

Considering this pilot is across 10 local authorities, it is outstanding that the central team have such a detailed overview of placements, risk, support needs, and have managed to build great relationships across a range of partnerships involved.

P. Stokoe (2011). *The Healthy and Unhealthy Organisation: how can we help teams to remain effective.*

The speakers noted that in this model, everyone has shared aims and leans on each other's expertise. It needs to be constantly revisited as the service develops. They noted that it is important to come together collectively, share best practice and collaborate.

There is a commissioning partnership between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Probation Service. Then there is a delivery partnership that sits underneath that, including prisons, the Strategic Housing Specialists based in prisons, local housing authorities, accommodation providers, and support providers.

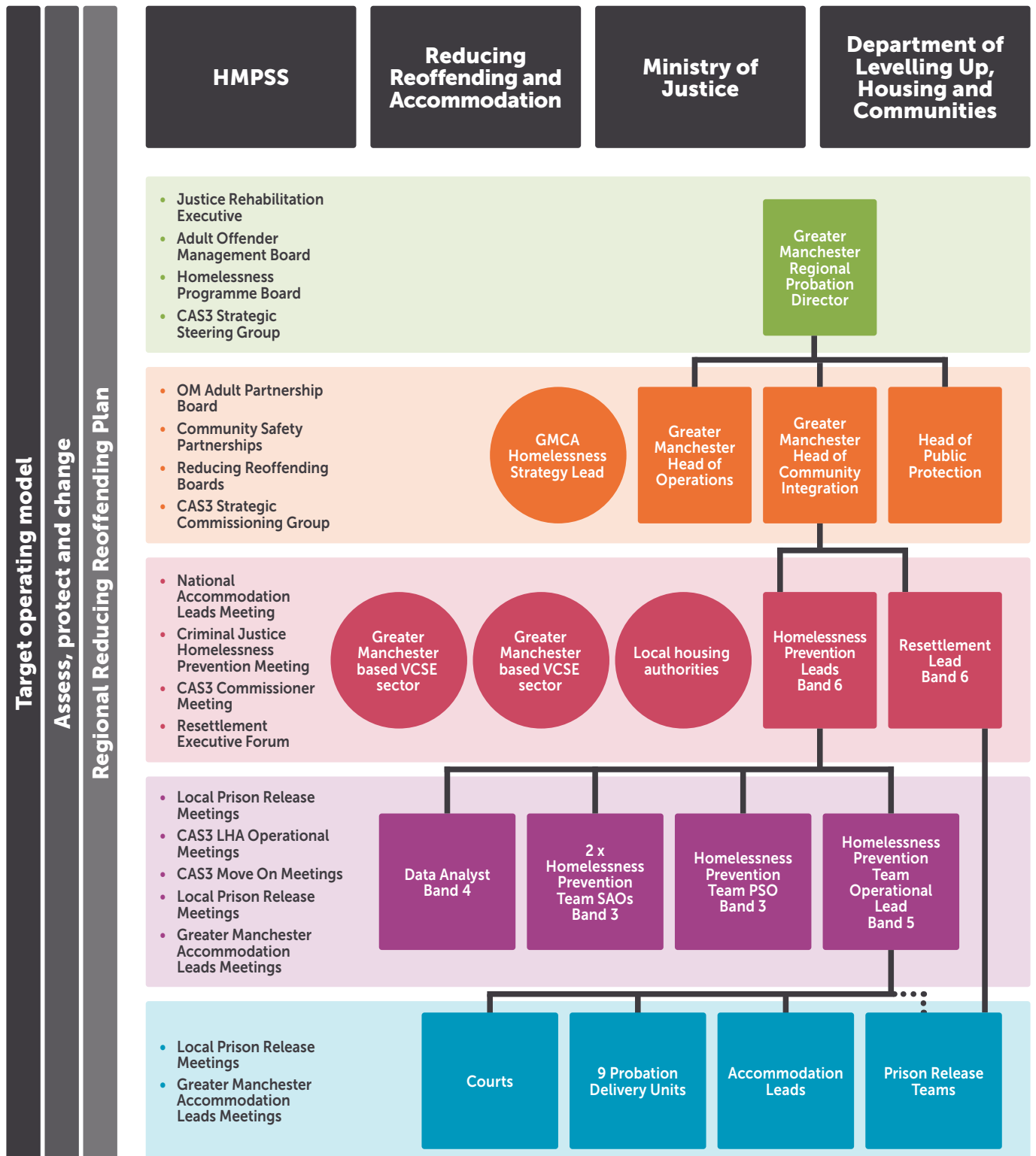
There are 10 local housing authorities in Greater Manchester, which is a challenge with a small regional probation team. They have developed a specification, but they approach it with an element of flexibility to fit with the different ways of working and capacity of each local authority. This means that the structures behind the service are variable.

CAS3 in Greater Manchester has a support provision from local housing authorities, voluntary sector organisations or lived experience organisations. This gives the service a greater range of difference perspectives that come together in regional commissioning meetings and support provider meetings. The service has commissioned oversight of the service from a voluntary organisation called Justlife with experience in temporary accommodation. This invites an honest acknowledgement of any problems and better information sharing.

# Leadership and governance

This diagram shows the structure of the Greater Manchester criminal justice homelessness prevention leadership and governance framework:

## Greater Manchester Criminal Justice Homelessness Prevention Leadership & Governance Framework





A level of justice devolution has provided good spaces to collaborate, and internal structures have developed to support the service. They have developed a structure that encourages being curious, having conversations, and questioning in a non-combative way.

## Deeper partnership working

The aim is to have deep partnership relationships across HM Prisons and Probation Service and local authorities. Part of that aim is achieved through the Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network. This has been a key catalyst to end homelessness and rough sleeping in the region.

The next stage is to position CAS3 and projects like it within this space, create a powerful coalition of people with lived experience and professionals across the sector, and harness the expertise of voluntary sector partners. Greater Manchester Combined Authority want to interrogate what is happening in the system, learn from it, and shift policy priorities accordingly.

They list the challenging missions which will transform their approach to homelessness prevention across the region:

- 1 Changing or creating specific projects and programmes
- 2 Changes in how they commission and resource their services
- 3 Campaigning and influencing
- 4 Building a new understanding of how they work together
- 5 New or emerging technology
- 6 Changes in governance arrangements, and much more.

## Shared principles

The service takes a one workforce approach. The shared principles of the service are illustrated in this diagram:



## Analysis and insight

On their journey of learning, they have developed processes that feed that learning back to the organisations they work with:

- Improving communication and developing an understanding of roles and responsibilities in order to avoid duplication.
- Developing a shared training schedule so that teams can share their knowledge with each other.
- Prioritising prevention.
- Working towards strengths-based practice using the knowledge of Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Feeding back information about recall decision-making.
- Improving information-sharing.
- Prioritising planning for release.
- Working closely with local authorities on their 'Accommodation for ex-offenders' funding.
- Peer support from the gate, providing lived experience support to those leaving prison.
- Commissioning a service to have an overview of the broad changes in the accommodation pathway from prison. Justlife are bringing different stakeholders, including those with lived experience of CAS3, to the table in a one team approach to understand the experience of CAS3.

Key themes here are collaboration and professional curiosity. A service should always strive to be person-centred, participatory and create meaningful opportunities for people to get involved in the design and delivery of services.

## What can voluntary sector organisations do to advocate for this innovative approach in their own areas?

- Talk to Reducing Reoffending Boards, where commissioners are brought together.
- Look for opportunities in the probation Regional Outcomes and Innovations Fund (ROIF).
- Learn from lived experience and embed lived experience in service design. Ensure people are paid for their time and valued for their contributions.

## Our vision

Our vision is of a vibrant, independent and resilient voluntary sector that enables people to transform their lives.

## Our mission

To support, represent and advocate for the voluntary sector in criminal justice, enabling it to provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families.

## Join Clinks

### Are you a voluntary organisation supporting people in the criminal justice system?

Join our network of over 600 members.

Clinks membership offers you:

- A voice to influence change
- Practical assistance to be effective and resilient
- Support from a community of like-minded professionals.

[www.clinks.org/membership](http://www.clinks.org/membership)

### Clinks

82A James Carter Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 7DE

☎ 020 4502 6774 ✉ info@clinks.org 🐦 @Clinks\_Tweets 🌐 www.clinks.org