

Etrop Grange Community Involvement Statement – Manchester City Council Homelessness Service In-House Temporary Accommodation Service

Community involvement – a key priority for the service and residents.

The Homelessness Services team and residents at Etrop Grange temporary accommodation site are taking demonstrable steps to make a positive contribution and be good neighbours within the local community in Woodhouse Park. Epitomising the ‘Our Manchester behaviours’ the service is proud and passionate about Manchester and endeavour to reflect this to the wider community through the activities and engagement both our staff and clients participate in locally.

Keeping our own site tidy and presentable is a key priority. We conduct daily spot checks for litter on the grounds and complete litter picks of the full site every Wednesday and Saturday. Staff and accommodation clients will undertake these together. This activity affords clients the opportunity to take pride in their temporary home.

The service has brokered a partnership initiative with the Manchester City Council Parks Team at Painswick Park. Etrop Grange residents will undertake an organised litter pick within the park grounds every second weekend of each month. This again enables a sense of pride and ability to give back to the local community in a neighbourhood setting.

The park’s team are considering other community projects, maintenance, volunteering and planting activities that Etrop Grange residents can help with for mutual benefit of the infrastructure of the park and all in the community. This engagement aims to demonstrate that together we value our differences and treat people fairly, regardless of the circumstances people may find themselves in.

Community engagement we are involved in demonstrates our commitment to work together and improve the quality of the area for all our neighbours. We find that many of our clients have not managed their own space before, and so previously may not have really considered the implications of littering or not caring for a space to a good standard. However, giving people ownership of such tasks enables them to develop consideration of others, to care, to foster life skills and gain confidence in making a positive difference. This all contributes to the necessary skill set needed to manage life, manage a tenancy. For instance, if we inform a resident that a litter pick is required twice a week of the grounds, it can encourage them to start a routine and practice positive skills; when they see the impact of such work, it can result in them feeling motivated to continue and progress. This then can continue into their own behaviour. It is also positive for residents to be able to give back after being supported by a project.

We have made changes to the site entrances since taking over the management of the site. It was apparent that motorists were taking dangerous short cuts in and out of the driveway at the site to avoid the traffic lights on Thorley Lane. Our actions have prevented this practice. In addition, we have become aware of private hire taxi’s idling outside of the site awaiting pick-ups at Manchester Airport. We have addressed littering from vehicles and continue to closely monitor and challenge this. We have also recently advised local residents on where to escalate taxi idling concerns outside private properties.

Onsite Activities

At Etrop Grange various targeted activities for residents take place onsite, covering a range of support needs.

Every other Monday a health care mobile unit visits from the Urban Village Medical Practice delivering essential primary care medical check ups to the residents. UVMP are a general practice known to many of our clients as they provide a specialist health support to homeless clients. The mobile unit offers check ups, advice services, vaccinations and sexual health screenings. This has proved very popular and has made healthcare accessible for some of the most vulnerable homeless people in Manchester. This also avoids any additional pressure being placed on local GP services in the area whilst people are resident at Etrop Grange.

Each week we have drop-in sessions from Centrepoin, Change Grow Live (CGL) and Greater Manchester Mental Health Homeless Team. Centrepoin provide support and advocacy for our youngest residents between the ages of 18 and 26 years. They offer support and signposting to other agencies to our most vulnerable young people. CGL are a drug and alcohol recovery service who promote harm reduction programmes. Providing a drop-in session on site makes it easier for the service to engage with the hardest to reach clients, and often those in most need of this specialist support. For many of our clients once accommodated it can become much easier to enable and support them into managing their drug or alcohol addictions in a safe manner. The Mental Health Homeless Team work closely with our service at Etrop Grange. We relay any client safeguarding concerns to their staff, who then arrange to speak to the individual and see what measures can be put in place before a crisis point is reached.

We also have a monthly drop in from charity group, Barnabus. They come onsite to carry out a regular 'Prayer and Meditation' Session. A member of the organisation brings a guitar and leads singing and reflection sessions for residents. These are really well attended with many finding this therapeutic, enriching and enjoyable.

We are actively working to bring in further additional activities to encourage positive dwell time in the building. We are keen to forge new relationships and work with other agencies and community groups to enhance this offer for our clients.

Examples of community participation

Residents at Etrop Grange do take part in activities offsite that have the aim of improving their wellbeing and many welcome this. For instance, some residents will access the local community centre, The Dandelion Centre, which operates as a foodbank and provides clothes and hot meals to people in the community in need. Some of the Etrop Grange residents have taken it upon themselves to volunteer at this project and take part in the Sunday Lunch Service. We have received positive reports from full-time volunteers at this project telling us how well this has gone and how much they appreciated our residents taking part.

In addition to this, many residents attend community groups at the Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre. Residents have attended computer classes there to gain IT confidence and skills. There is also a men's help group called 'Directions For Men' that some of our male clients attend. This service provides support for males and can signpost them to other agencies if needed. One client used this service and when moving elsewhere told his former support

network that he was struggling in his new location. The group researched and found a similar organisation in his new area. He has since made positive progress and has settled into his tenancy. This example demonstrates the power of sharing experiences and empowered understanding within a community setting.

We are very keen to develop further volunteering opportunities for clients of Etrop Grange as we know our clients value the experience and want to give back to the community.

Partnership Working and Tackling ASB

As a responsible neighbour we work collaboratively with partner agencies to address anti-social behaviour in the local area. These include but are not limited to: Greater Manchester Police (GMP); the Anti-Social Behaviour Team; Manchester City Council Neighbourhood Officers and Park Officers; The Rough Sleeper's Support Service; Reach Out in the Community and Wythenshawe Community Housing Group. We are in regular contact with our partners and aim to work collaboratively to ensure that Etrop Grange is a safe environment for all and our role in the community remains positive. We meet often and discuss any issues raised and come up with a solution that all stakeholders have a say in.

Before any issues manifest into problems, we put provisions in place to deter residents from engaging in Anti-Social Behaviour. For instance, all residents must sign and adhere to a 'non-secure licence agreement' for the duration of their tenancy at Etrop Grange. This contains behaviour expectations that must be adhered to. If clients breach the agreement, they are aware this will place their accommodation at risk of being terminated. In addition, we have a warnings system in place whereby if someone breaches their agreement either within the accommodation or off the premises, they will receive written acknowledgement of this. The aim is to deter future incidents occurring. We find this a very effective system.

Etrop Grange has on site security staff 24/7 who support our operations. They work in tandem with our service to safeguard residents, monitor security and support the maintenance of a safe site in the community.

We recently held a community engagement event at Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre. We spoke to local people about the service we deliver at Etrop Grange, and answered questions that local residents had about our service. Contact details of managers and the site were also provided so that any queries local residents may have that they believe relate to Etrop Grange can be raised directly with the service. The service will always investigate an issue raised and we will take appropriate actions and feedback on actions taken.

We share out contact details, because we value communication. We pride ourselves on listening to our neighbours. If anyone wants to raise with us a question or have a concern about something in the community that they believe may relate to any of our clients we welcome this and we will always respond.

The service has recently been invited to attend the regular Ward Meetings held at the Lifestyle Centre. We welcome this participation and responsive opportunity to share the works we are undertaking at the site.