

Homelessness Action Group
Wednesday 18 September 2019 10:30 – 13:30
Shelter Cymru, Swansea

Minutes of Meeting

Attendees:

Jon Sparkes	Chief Executive, Crisis (Chair)
Katie Dalton	Director, Cymorth Cymru
Peter Mackie	Senior Lecturer, Cardiff University
Naomi Alleyne	Director of Social Services & Housing, WLGA
Clare Budden	CEO, Clwyd Alyn Housing
Tamsin Stirling	Freelance Housing Expert
Frances Beecher	Chief Executive, Llamau
John Puzey	Chief Executive, Shelter Cymru
Bonnie Navarra	Lead Change Maker, Future Generations Office
Glynne Roberts	Programme Manager, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB
Gaynor Toft	Corporate Manager, Housing, Ceredigion Council
Sian Aldridge	The Wallich (representing Lindsay Cordery-Bruce)
Nick Morris	Policy & Communications Manager, Crisis
Emma Williams	Deputy Director, Housing Policy Division, Welsh Government
Sarah Rhodes	Head of Homelessness, Welsh Government
Mark Price	Project Lead & Group Secretariat, Welsh Government
Sara Faye	Special Adviser to the Minister for Housing & Local Government

Apologies:

Lindsay Cordery-Bruce	Chief Executive, The Wallich
Clarissa Corbisiero	Director of Policy, Community Housing Cymru

JS welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting of the Homelessness Action Group and apologies were noted.

The meeting commenced with an update from Rebecca Jackson, Shelter who attended the first part of the meeting (only) to provide an update about the lived experience on-line survey. She stated:

- The on-line survey has already launched and the targeted field work has commenced (in Cardiff) with more to follow throughout Wales.
- There have been 131 responses to date, 63% of which have experience of homelessness and 36% of these were within the last five years.

- Only 13% of respondents state that they never worry about their own housing situation (ie potential for homelessness).
- The survey contains a list of ways to address homelessness and asks people to rank these in priority order. The majority of people so far have selected “provide accommodation that can be accessed by anyone in an emergency situation without any barriers” as their first ranked priority. The second choice selection has mainly been “personal connections” with the last/least ranked option being “personal budgets”.
- The remaining two sections of the survey have elicited comments including: the need to expand Rapid Rehousing options; improve/ provide additional training; comments about the quality of the temporary accommodation and the amount of time spent in it; and improving the quality and supply of housing throughout, including the PRS, to help end homelessness.
- The next stage of this work will be use homelessness stats to provide a representative framework and develop a list of existing planned events concerning lived experience that can be used to hold workshops and also hold one-to-one interviews with those attendees that are content to be interviewed.
- The resultant data gathered from this workstream will be brought together with all other evidence from work being done in Wales and will identify any gaps in understanding.
- There will be a weekly snapshot of what the data is telling us, providing the opportunity to then sit down with specific people to understand their needs more.

Group members offered to provide Rebecca with support to enable the lived experience work activity to have more of a reach, particularly in North Wales. Members will contact Rebecca directly to arrange. Rebecca also agreed to circulate the latest weekly snapshot to the Group.

NM then updated the Group about a separate survey aimed at capturing the feedback from professionals working within the housing and homelessness sectors, and will send a link of the survey to the Group. He stated that the aim of this survey is to capture concerns regarding day to day issues, ie training, and the survey will run until October. Key themes will be picked out of the survey results and can be used to run workshops at existing events in order to get further feedback. A calendar of events and meetings will be drawn up for this purpose.

The Group was then split into three sub-groups and asked to review the first draft of the report “Reducing Rough Sleeping in the Very Short Term” and consider two specific questions. Firstly, what do we want to keep/add/lose/edit for each recommendation. And secondly, consideration of “how” and “what” we need to do to make the recommendations happen, who needs to do what, what are the specifics and what the issues may be.

The Group reconvened for the last part of the meeting where JS thanked everyone for their contribution and comments and stated that these will be used to update the report.

The report will then be circulated to Group Members in advance of the next meeting (9 October) to agree and sign-off virtually, the intention being to present the report to the Minister on 8 October. A decision will then be made about when to publish the report.

JS reminded the Group that this is one of four reports that will be produced between now and the Group's final meeting (next March).

Mark Price
Housing policy Division
Welsh Government