

Homelessness Action Group
Wednesday 8 January 2020 10:00 – 13:00
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Executive Seminar Room, Ysbyty
Gwynedd, 2 Penrhos Road, Bangor, LL57 2NA

Minutes of Meeting

Attendees:

Jon Sparkes	Chief Executive, Crisis (Chair)
Katie Dalton	Director, Cymorth Cymru
Peter Mackie	Reader, Cardiff University
Naomi Alleyne	Director of Social Services & Housing, WLGA
Clare Budden	CEO, Clwyd Alyn Housing
Glynne Roberts	Programme Manager, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB
Gaynor Toft	Corporate Manager, Housing, Ceredigion Council
Lindsay Cordery-Bruce	Chief Executive, The Wallich
Clarissa Corbisiero	Director of Policy, Community Housing Cymru
Tamsin Stirling	Freelance Housing Expert
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

Apologies:

John Puzey	Chief Executive, Shelter Cymru
Bonnie Navarra	Lead Change Maker, Future Generations Office
Frances Beecher	Chief Executive, Llamau (joined part of the meeting by telephone)

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

EW began the meeting with an overview of actions being taken regarding rough sleeping this winter in the four key local authority areas. Nearly £1M additional funding has been agreed across all local authority areas. Overall a positive reception from local authorities and their partners. Consideration will need to be given by WG to ensure sustainability so that “emergency funding” is not needed to be pumped in next winter. EW also gave confirmation, following a meeting with the four police forces in Wales, that the powers of the Vagrancy Act will only be used as a last resort.

No further assertive outreach training sessions are planned at this time but an additional session can be scheduled if there is sufficient demand. In the medium to longer term consideration will be given to provision of further sessions linking in with Cymorth Cymru's work to start to form a joined up package of training. There will be a "review and reflect" exercise following the end of the winter funding programme. There will be a "review and reflect" exercise following the end of the winter funding programme to consider the impact of the short-term interventions, and the learning for the ongoing approach to tackling rough sleeping.

Consideration of Q1 draft recommendations paper

The first half of the meeting proper was concerned with a high level review of the draft second report's recommendations. The group identified areas requiring further development in the draft recommendations (e.g. substance misuse, mental health, role of Pupil Referral Units, youth homelessness, stronger emphasis on the role of the PRS, equality consideration on different communities, affordability (particularly with young people), consideration of the devolved/reserved powers in some areas (e.g. welfare, tax raising powers and the justice system in Wales) which will be considered and referenced. Also need to reflect and reference other important issues that are ongoing at this time, e.g. affordability re rent settlement for social housing, joint working between HAs and LAs, co-production and accountability.

Consideration will also need to be given to the "what" and "how" the recommendations should be implemented for system change from crisis to universal prevention and how that system change is managed and what it looks like. Clarity is also required on what data is currently captured and where this needs to change to enable preventative actions to be taken more effectively. Useful to also get a handle on whether there is joined up thinking with the 3 Regional Planning Boards plans going forward and whether homelessness is explicit in their plans.

Consideration was also given to the grid of specific target groups that are most at risk (see handout) that need to be cross referenced in the report as an annex to the report with a framework. KD & PM will work on this specifically.

There was also agreement within the Action Group that this question (1) also links to Q4 about how services are delivered and who does what role.

The recommendations will be converted into a full report which will be produced for consideration and sign off by the Action Group at the next meeting. This will then be finalised and submitted to WG. The object of this report is to ask "what is the overall framework" we need to end homelessness altogether.

Workforce and Culture

This section of the meeting considered the structures around workforce and culture (refer to handout from the meeting) considering what is happening already, what needs to happen and what are the underlying issues to affect that.

The Action Group split into two sub-groups to consider the principles and issues for the workforce and culture sections respectively. The considerations from the sub-groups will feed into the main report.

Mark Price
Housing Policy Division
Welsh Government