



Minutes of the 462nd Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council
held in The Braid, Ballymena
Thursday, 8th August 2019 at 10.30 am

The Officers joined the Meeting at 10.45 am

Present:

Ald Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough (Chair)
Cllr Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Vice Chair)
Ald Phillip Brett	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough
Cllr Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Ald Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Cllr Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Ald Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Ald Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Cllr Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

In Attendance:

Clark Bailie	Chief Executive (Housing Executive)
Paul Price	(Department for Communities)
David Polley	(Department for Communities)
Caroline Connor	Assistant Director (Housing Executive)
Justin Cartwright	(Chartered Institute of Housing)
Eileen Patterson	(Chartered Institute of Housing)
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat)

Apologies:

Ald John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Cllr Michael Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

2.0	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chair extended a welcome to Members and Officials from the Housing Executive, Department for Communities and the Chartered Institute of Housing.</p> <p>Clark Bailie, Chief Executive of the Housing Executive introduced himself to Members. Mr Bailie highlighted the importance of the role of the Housing Council and their contribution to help the Board of the Housing Executive shape its policies and he added that there is a standing item on the Board agenda for the four Housing Council Members to advise of your meetings deliberations and to open the two way channel working both ways.</p>	
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3.0	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None.</p>	
4.0	<p>To adopt the Minutes of the 461st Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday 13th June 2019</p> <p>It was proposed by A Fitzgerald, seconded by N Mathison and resolved, that the Minutes of the 461st Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 13th June 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
5.0	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p><u>Page 2 Item 2 - Appointments to the Board of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive</u></p> <p>It was noted that the ‘conversation with a purpose’ interviews have been set up to take place during the month of July and August, for the nominated Members whose names have been put forward for the Board of the Housing Executive.</p> <p><u>Page 3 Item 3.2 – Review of Standing Orders</u></p> <p>It was reported that the Secretary will be in touch with the Members of the Standing Orders Committee to arrange a suitable date to review the Housing Council Standing Orders, probably a date in September 2019.</p> <p><u>Page 5 Item 8.1 – Review of Attendance Allowance</u></p> <p>It was noted that the Department of Finance had approved the Attendance Allowance of £60 per meeting as from the 13 June 2019.</p>	Secretary
6.0	<p>The Housing Executive’s Board Bulletin</p>	
6.1	<p><u>Draft Annual Report and Accounts for Year Ending 31 March 2019</u></p> <p>It was noted that the Board had approved the Draft Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019. The draft had also been considered by the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) at their meeting on 24 June 2019.</p>	

<p>6.2</p>	<p><u>Finance Report as at 31st May 2019</u></p> <p>The Board had noted the current financial position as at 31st May 2019.</p>	
<p>6.3</p>	<p><u>Final Draft 2019 – 2020 One Year Corporate Business Plan</u></p> <p>The Board had approved the 2019/20 final draft one year Business Plan, which includes for Programme for Government targets, Departmental Priorities and corporate KPI's. Subject to Departmental approval the document will then be published on the Housing Executive's website.</p>	
<p>6.4</p>	<p><u>Monkscoole House Rathcoole</u></p> <p>The Board approved the acquisition of the four leasehold flats in Monkscoole House; the award of Management Transfer status to the remaining Housing Executive tenant in Monkscoole House; and the closure of Monkscoole House.</p> <p>It was reported that a future business case would be submitted seeking Departmental approval for demolition and re-provision for Monkscoole House, a health and safety assessment of conditions in the block indicates that it should be cleared as soon as possible.</p> <p>Mr Brett welcomed the decision to demolish Monkscoole House and the possibilities of regenerating the area.</p> <p>Several Members are supportive of the Tower Blocks Strategy.</p> <p>In response to Mr Speers reference to the commercial properties in Magowan Portadown, Mr Bailie confirmed that consultations are usually with the tenants of the tower blocks but he undertook to check what provisions are being made in the case of commercial units underneath the blocks.</p>	<p>C Bailie</p>
<p>6.5</p>	<p><u>Approval to remedy Contracts awarded to Company in Administration</u></p> <p>The Board had approved the recommendation to novate all existing Contracts awarded to Dixons Contractors Ltd (who had entered into administration).</p>	
<p>6.6</p>	<p><u>Relets and Actionable Voids Analysis and Voids Action Plan 2019-2022</u></p> <p>The Board had noted the voids and relets performance from the previous three years and approved for an updated Voids Action Plan in relation to actionable voids.</p>	

	<p>This aim is to build upon the improvements of recent years and ensure that the Housing Executive is ready to meet the future challenges of a changing social housing environment.</p> <p>The Housing Executive has continued to perform strongly in its void management functions, showing improvement across all key performance metrics in the period covered by the previous void strategy. During 2018/19, the Housing Executive lost approximately £3.38 million in potential rental income owing to void dwellings, which equates to 1.01% of total rent chargeable across its entire property portfolio. This compares favourably with the equivalent figures from 2015/16 which were £3.98 million and 1.03% respectively. At the end of March 2019, a total of 740 properties were vacant, comprising 0.87% of the total Housing Executive stock.</p> <p>This is a significant decrease on the 1.21% figure reported in March 2016. Similarly the percentage of these voids classed as actionable at the end of the financial year was 0.29% compared to 0.55% in 2016. The average number of days taken to re-let our properties has fallen from 36 days to 30, with a decrease in standard lettable properties from 23 to 18 days and those deemed 'difficult to let' from 55 to 49 days.</p>	
6.6	<p><u>Homelessness Strategy Year 2 Annual Report and Strategy Update</u></p>	
	<p>The Board noted the publication of the Annual Progress Report 2018/19 which will be launched in September 2019.</p>	
6.7	<p><u>Supporting People (SP) Provider Investment Fund</u></p>	
	<p>It was reported that the Board had approved the arrangements for the new Supporting People Provider Investment Fund (PIF) and the draft Supporting People Annual Report and noted the arrangements for the public consultation on the Standardised Regional Payment Rates (SRPR) and the progress relating to the development of Strategic Needs Analysis.</p>	
	<p>The Supporting People budget of £72.8 m was noted and the Department for Communities had been able to secure £0.5m to be used for greater innovation amongst SP providers to help them make changes to improve the services that they provide to their customers.</p>	

<p>6.8</p> <p>6.9</p> <p>6.10</p> <p>6.11</p>	<p><u>Health & Safety proceedings and works at 58 Downpatrick St, Rathfriland</u></p> <p>It was noted that the Board had been given an update on the criminal charges brought against the Housing Executive relating to external work at the rear of a Housing Executive property in Rathfriland and the circumstances of a fatality.</p> <p>The Board noted the abandonment of the criminal charges against the Housing Executive on 5 June 2019 and its acceptance of a HSENI administered simple caution on 17 June 2019 for breach of Article 5 of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978; that AES Ltd on pleading guilty to the same charge received a fine of £15,000.</p> <p><u>Supporting People Programme – Progress Status Update</u></p> <p>The Board was updated on the progress relating to the Supporting People Programme. The Board noted the completion of 7 Supporting People Review recommendations, wholly or partially, from the possible 9.</p> <p>The two remaining recommendations were noted by the Board, identifying if they were deliverable, and outlined their significant risks to delivery. Key Supporting People Programme operational priorities for 2019/20, as per the current draft corporate KPIs were also noted by the Board.</p> <p><u>Community Safety Strategy Action Plan Update</u></p> <p>The Board had noted the contents of the paper which outlines how the Housing Executive continues to implement its Community Safety Strategy “Safer Together” and Action Plan 2018/19. The aim of this strategy is to ensure that we continue the work the Housing Executive has done in recent years to promote and further the community safety agenda even as new structures and processes emerge.</p> <p><u>Others Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Ms Kelly expressed concern at the statistics released in the recent report published on Cavity Wall Insulation. Mr Bailie explained that to date the concentration has been on the insulation fill, which the industry would promote the fill to be removed and replaced. The Commission Research looked at fabric of the property as well as what went into the cavity wall, the actual percentage that requires immediate attention is 1%, and the main reason is the outer fabric has failed and he assured Members work is underway.</p>	
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	<p>It was noted that the Housing Executive will be compiling a response to the British Board Agreement (BBA) report which looked beyond the issues of cavity walls.</p> <p>It was noted that a presentation on Cavity Walls has been arranged for the September Meeting.</p>	Secretary
10.0	<p>Housing Issues, Department for Communities</p> <p>Mr Price and Mr Polley gave Members an update on the Department for Communities Housing Issues, under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Newbuild starts <p>Ms Elattar referred to the 1850 social homes started by March 2020, she asked how many actual homes would be required to meet housing need and housing stress. In response Mr Bailie explained that at least 2,000 social homes per year, to keep pace of the growing lists and the other option is rental within the private sector.</p> <p>Ms Elattar felt that the private rented sector was not an option for the majority of people on the social housing waiting list.</p> <p>Mr Price stated that unfortunately, the lack of resources to fund social houses is the main issue, but other models are currently being examined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ownership <p>Members noted that lower targets were set for this year due to limited available funding. On 31 July, the Department secured additional funding for Co-Ownership and the annual commitment will now be increased.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Shared Neighbourhoods (TBUC) <p>Ms Kelly referred to the shared neighbourhood scheme, Cantrell Close and the recent disturbance caused and asked what is being done to prevent this happening in the future.</p> <p>In response Mr Polley explained that the Housing Executive is responsible for community relations within the estates, but it also requires other agencies ie. Police, Department for Communities, Department of Infrastructure, he added that there is a wide range of work ongoing with the communities.</p>	

	<p>Ms Patterson in her capacity as the Director of Community in Radius Housing, who own and manage the shared housing scheme in Cantrell Close, reiterated the immense work being carried out and she referred to a cultural festival within that area in the forthcoming week with 14 different cultures. Ms Patterson added that the additional funding for shared housing enables housing associations to develop communities.</p> <p>It was noted that Members were very supportive of the shared housing schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme for Social Reform <p>Members noted the draft implementation plan and budget is awaiting the return of the Northern Ireland Assembly, it was agreed that arrangements would be made for the Department to give an update on the Social Housing Reform Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy <p>Mr Mathison asked for more details on the proposals of the Review, Mr Price explained at this stage it would premature to share those proposals, and he undertook to give a presentation on the Review in the Autumn 2019.</p> <p>Mr Mathison reiterated his concern at the potential of the Housing Executive to discharge its homeless duty into private sector and he felt it would be a proposal that would be contentious and would welcome the consultation when available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reclassification of Northern Irelands Social Housing Providers <p>The Department undertook to give a presentation on the draft Bill at a future Meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People Delivery Strategy • Homelessness Strategy • St Patrick’s Barracks, Ballymena • Regulation of the Private Rented Sector • Increasing Housing Supply • Affordable Warmth Scheme • NIHE Rent Scheme <p>In response to Ms Elattar’s questions in relation to the last three years of the rent freeze and the detrimental effect it has on the Housing Executive, Mr Price explained that the rent freeze is expected to expire in 2020, but unfortunately this matter awaits the return of Ministers.</p>	<p>DfC</p> <p>DfC</p> <p>DfC</p>
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<p>10.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Welfare Reform Mitigation payments <p>In response to Ms Grehan's question, Mr Polley explained that the DfC cannot extend the mitigation period which is set out in legislation to end March 2020. Also, there would be an additional £25m required to cover the shortfall which is not available.</p> <p>He added that there may be another mitigation available 'discretionary housing payment' which is available in the private rented sector and in the UK was extended in the social sector but would also be additional funding which would need to be made available.</p> <p>Mr Bailie highlighted that there is a low level of awareness and preparation of tenants that this mitigation will be ceasing in March 2020. Some tenants could be losing up to £25 -£30 from their housing benefit payments. The Housing Executive is very concerned about the potential rent arrears when the mitigation payments end.</p> <p>Ms Grehan feels that tenants urgently need to be made of aware of these changes.</p> <p>Mr Clark agreed that tenants need to be advised but highlighted that there are sensitivities around this and with the mitigation ending in March 2020, this will pose huge problems within the social housing sector.</p> <p>Mr Price stated that political intervention is required to amend the date, but then additional funding would be required to meet the shortfall and the implementation of IT systems etc.</p> <p>The Chair asked that the Officers from the Department and the Housing Executive to keep the Housing Council informed of the developments.</p> <p><u>Other Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Mr Brett requested an update on the current position on new housing schemes at Rathcoole and Sandown Road.</p>	<p>DfC C Bailie</p> <p>DfC</p>
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PRESENTATIONS

11.0	<p>Presentation by Caroline Connor, Assistant Director on Chronic Homelessness Action Plan May 2019</p> <p>Ms Connor explained that the Housing Executive has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Homeless legislation in Northern Ireland and has statutory duties to assess homeless and respond to Homelessness.</p> <p>The Housing Executive delivers homeless duties through our Housing Solutions and Support teams across Northern Ireland and also have an integrated policy and strategy unit in the Housing Services division of the Housing Executive.</p> <p>Members learned that the Chronic Homeless Action Plan evolved as a response to our commitment to produce Rough Sleeping Strategies for Belfast and Derry. The Housing Executive, and partner organisations, carried out rough sleeper street counts in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Newry during November 2018 where 38 individuals were recorded as rough sleeping across Northern Ireland. Consistently through our engagement with the sector the Housing Executive identified a need to broaden the focus from only those who are sleeping rough to identifying actions which will help address issues facing households who are experiencing chronic homelessness, who are those individuals defined as having ‘very pronounced and complex support needs who found it difficult to exit from homelessness’.</p> <p>Key in the development of the Chronic Homeless Action plan was recognising that it is not just a housing issue and the sector has identified a number of both housing and broader issues facing those affected by chronic homelessness, this includes issues related to Health, Education and the Justice system.</p> <p>To address chronic homelessness, the Housing Executive will need to continue to work collaboratively with its stakeholders across the statutory, voluntary and community sector. The plan contains objectives and actions which will improve our understanding of chronic homelessness across Northern Ireland, take action to prevent it and, where this is not possible, provide appropriate support to minimise the impacts of chronic homelessness and find sustainable solutions as soon as possible. The aims of the draft Action Plan, are as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve the measurement and understanding of the scale of the problem of chronic homelessness and establish a baseline.• Promote early intervention and prevention of chronic homelessness.• Provide a rapid response to chronic homelessness to ensure	
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interventions are effective and well targeted.

- Promote a cross departmental and inter-agency approach to addressing the problem of chronic homelessness

Members support the interagency approach but feel that they should have to contribute financially towards homelessness.

Mrs Elattar referred to one of the criteria under the category of chronic homeless which states '*an individual prone to violence – risk to self, to others or from others*' she asked does this include domestic violence.

Ms Connor said that issue is part of the discussions, the criteria has had the most debate as a result of the consultation. The Housing Executive feels that it should include those who are subjected to domestic violence, following the feedback from the consultation the criteria will be tailored accordingly.

Mrs Elattar referred to the Research Projects and the two key actions listed and asked if other disadvantaged groups effected by homelessness ie: young people; foreign nationalist are they been addressed.

There needs be more engagement with several agencies to tackle certain groupings, but it is an area that the Housing Executive will be addressing.

Mr Mathison asked for the average length of time spent in 'temporary' accommodation, in particular, he referred to 'single men' who have few waiting list points and face living in temporary accommodation for a long period of time. Also, the lack of 'temporary accommodation' how is it being addressed.

In response, Ms Connor explained that there is a strategic review of temporary accommodation and the Housing Executive are looking at more flexible models, particularly in areas outside Belfast and added that the Housing Executive's aim is to make the 'temporary accommodation' arrangement, as short as possible.

Members commended the Housing Executive for their sterling work in addressing and tackling homelessness in Northern Ireland. It was acknowledged the challenges faced by the Housing Executive in addressing the needs of those who are homeless or faced with homelessness and the associated complexities.

Members' supports the responsibility for the assessment of homelessness and the delivery of homelessness services should remain with the Housing Executive.

<p>12.0</p>	<p>Presentation by Eileen Patterson and Justin Cartwright on the Work of the Chartered Institute of Housing</p> <p>Members learned that the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is an independent voice for housing and the home of professional standards. Their goal is to provide housing professionals and their organisations with the advice, support and knowledge. The Membership is a diverse membership of people who work in both the public and private sectors, in 20 countries on five continents across the world.</p> <p>Ms Patterson then referred to a recently published report ‘Rethinking social housing Northern Ireland’ was launched with an aim of helping to shape the future of social housing. The report offers an ambitious series of recommendations to help ensure that social housing is fit for the future, taking account of what we heard from our research participants. The recommendations include roles not just for central and local government, but also for the housing sector, including the Chartered Institute of Housing.</p> <p>Ms Patterson explained that it is hoped that this report will continue to facilitate dialogue going forward, where areas of agreement are found and plans for change are developed.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Secretary would circulate the Report to Members, for their information.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p>13.0</p>	<p>Social Housing Development Programme - Progress Report July 2019</p> <p>Members noted the report.</p>	
<p>14.0</p>	<p>The Housing Executive’s Scheme Starts June and July 2019</p> <p>Members noted the reports.</p>	
<p>15.0</p>	<p>Public Consultation – Standardised Regional Payment Rates for Supporting People Services</p> <p>Members noted the report.</p>	

16.0	Northern Ireland Housing Market Research (3 Reports) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Northern Ireland Quarterly House Price Index• Performance of the Private Rental Market in Northern Ireland• Northern Ireland Rental Index H2 2018 The 3 Reports were noted.	
17.0	Any Other Business There was no other business.	
18.0	Date and Venue of Next Meeting – 12th September 2019 in the Antrim Civic Centre	

The Meeting concluded at 1.00 pm

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN

Caroline Connor
Assistant Director, Policy & Business Excellence

*ending homelessness **TOGETHER/***

Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 - Objectives



ending homelessness **TOGETHER/**

Statutorily Homeless - Definition

In order to be “accepted” as statutorily homeless, a household must meet the four tests of:

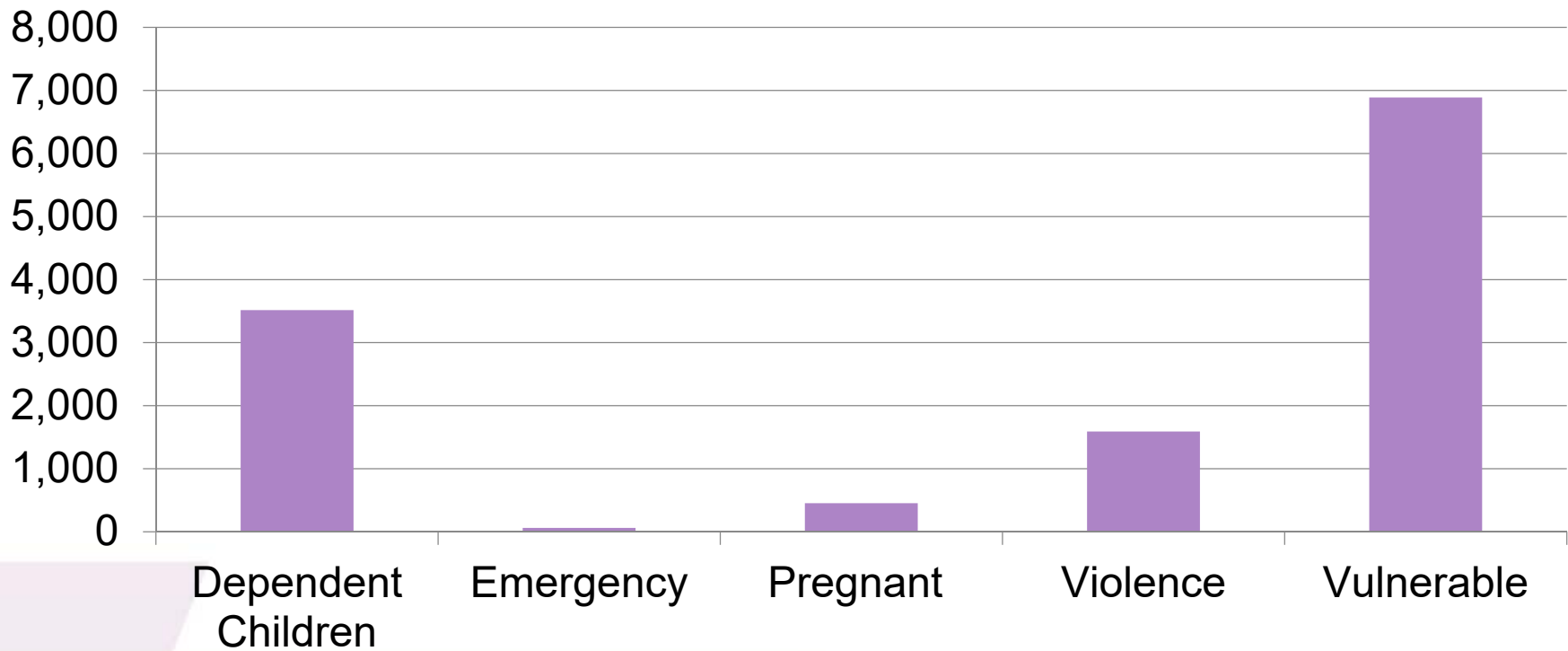
- Eligibility;
- Homelessness;
- Priority Need;
- Intentionality

Homelessness in Northern Ireland 2018/19

- 18,202 presentations, 12,512 acceptances – 68.7% of presentations accepted
- 1,088 repeat presentations
- Ave length of stay (temporary accommodation) – 40.1 weeks
- Total funding of £36.2m
 - SP - £26m
 - Temp accommodation - £5.8m
 - Furniture Storage £1.8m
 - Voluntary sector - £2.3m
 - PRSAS – £0.3m

Homelessness Acceptances – Increasing Complexity

Priority Need Reason



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Definition of Chronic Homelessness

- 'A group of individuals with very pronounced and complex support needs who found it difficult to exit from homelessness' – Crisis, 2010 and incorporated in to Homelessness Strategy 2017-22
- Chronic Homelessness can often manifest itself as rough sleeping or other street activity
- Most severe and visible form of homelessness
- 38 individuals recorded as rough sleeping across Northern Ireland in November 2018

Development of criteria for Chronic Homelessness

An individual can be said to be experiencing chronic homelessness if they meet three or more of the criteria listed:

- A individual with more than one episode of homelessness in the last 12 months (constant breakdown of tenancies)
- An individual with multiple placements/exclusions from temporary accommodation
- An individual with mental health problems
- An individual with addictions e.g. drug or alcohol addictions
- An individual that has engaged in street activity, including rough sleeping, street drinking, begging
- An individual prone to violence - risk to self, to others or from others
- An individual who has encountered the criminal justice system

Aims

- Improve the **measurement** and **understanding** of the scale of the problem of chronic homelessness and establish a baseline
- Promote **early intervention** and **prevention** of chronic homelessness
- Provide a **rapid response** to chronic homelessness to ensure interventions are **effective** and **well targeted**
- Promote a **cross departmental** and **interagency** approach to addressing the problem of chronic homelessness

Action Plan

- The 4 aims of the Action Plan are supported by 10 objectives:
 - Aim 1 – Objectives 1 to 3 (Pages 29 to 32)
 - Aim 2 – Objectives 4 to 5 (Pages 33 to 37)
 - Aim 3 – Objectives 6 to 8 (Pages 38 to 42)
 - Aim 4 – Objectives 9 to 10 (Pages 43 to 44)

- Action Plan categorises actions within each objective:
 - Actions which can be completed now
 - Actions which will be completed with additional resources

Key Actions

Aim 1

- Monitor & report on chronic homelessness
- NI wide street counts/estimates for rough sleepers
- Street Needs Audit in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry & Newry
- Better understand the service user experience
- Research projects
 - Specific impacts of chronic homelessness on women
 - Poly-drug and IV drug addiction in single chronic homeless accommodation

Key Actions

Aim 2

- Interpretation of data and trends to inform review of existing service services and new service requirements
- Adopt innovative approaches to preventing homelessness e.g. prevention funding

Aim 3

- Consider role of day centres to support chronic homeless
- Development of peer support to help chronic homeless
- Adoption of a Housing First approach

Aim 4

- Link in to existing structures including Inter-departmental Homelessness Action Plan for non-accommodation based issues

What next?

- Consultation closes at 5pm on Friday 9th August
 - Consultation events attended by over 120 representatives from the homelessness sector
 - Detailed consultation responses received to date reflect the importance of this Action Plan to the sector
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of consultation responses to inform an update Chronic Homelessness Action Plan
- Submission of final version to October Board
- Full implementation will commence immediately upon Board approval – work on a number of actions has already commenced
- As chronic homelessness is an issue that goes beyond housing linking in to the Inter-departmental Homelessness Action Plan is a key priority

Questions/Comments



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