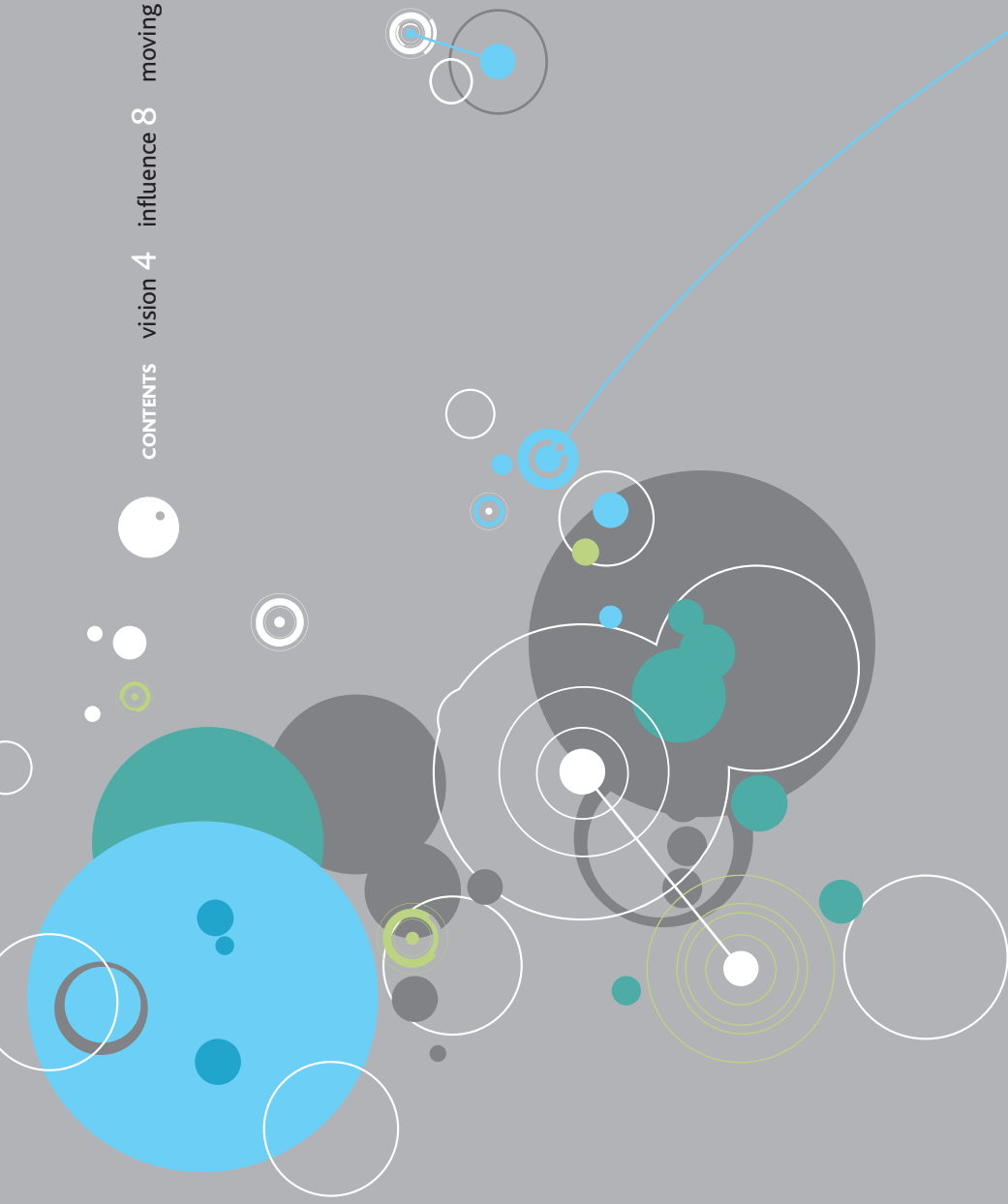




ending
homelessness
together...

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ending homelessness forever...

Homeless Link is six years old. This report is a celebration of our achievements so far and also an opportunity to look forward to what we hope to achieve in the future. We intend to build on our successes, to aim higher. All that we have learnt in our first six years needs to be applied to the challenges that will face us in the future.

First and foremost, we are a national umbrella body with a growing membership. Our member organisations support thousands of people whose lives have been marked by homelessness. Every day they help people make the journey away from homelessness.

We have learnt to speak out with confidence as we have grown into our leadership role as the independent voice of the sector. With our members, we have developed a clear and tangible **vision** of how we can end homelessness in England forever.

Secondly, Homeless Link is an organisation of growing **influence**. We influence and inform national policy drawing on the direct experiences of our members. We also influence our members and other frontline agencies to develop and improve their services. This is a time of opportunity, when many policy makers and services are open to ideas that can have a strong positive impact on the lives of some of the most excluded people in our country.

Thirdly, we are an organisation that takes **action** on a daily basis towards ending homelessness. Our teams in London and around the English regions help frontline agencies put national strategies into practice, to make a real difference to lives. We celebrate every local and individual success that takes us one step closer towards ending homelessness.

Finally, we are an organisation that wants and gets **results**. The ultimate result we want is to see an end to homelessness in England by 2022.

We know that we cannot achieve this visionary goal on our own. But Homeless Link, with all its members, can be a catalyst that will inspire many others to take on the challenge of ending homelessness in our country – whether they are in front line services, politics, policy areas, the media, communities or people whose lives have been touched by homelessness.

This scale of ambition is challenging. It will need determination, intelligence and resources. This is not about sentiment, it is about serious commitment. It is about taking on this most challenging area of social change with clear strategies and determination to succeed.

This report outlines the steps we are making on the journey towards the vision of our country free from homelessness. We hope you will join us on that journey.



Jenny Edwards
Chief Executive, Homeless Link





vision

Homeless Link is the national umbrella organisation for frontline homelessness agencies working to end homelessness together.

We have around 450 members providing a range of services including hostels, advice centres, health projects and outreach work.

We were formed in 2001, taking over the work of the Homeless Network and the National Homeless Alliance.

Our first six years have seen a period of intense change, both internally and externally.

Our formation coincided with the Government achieving its ambitious target to reduce rough sleeping in the UK by two thirds.

Since then, we have witnessed the introduction of a new Homelessness Act, a new national homelessness strategy and a successful campaign to end the long-term use of B&Bs for homeless families with children.

Meanwhile the leadership of each of the three main parties has changed and a decade has passed since the Labour government set its ambition of bringing rough sleeping to as close to zero as possible.

In this time, Homeless Link has emerged as the independent voice of the homelessness sector.

Since 2005 we have been promoting a vision, shared across our membership, of England as a country where we can end rough sleeping and homelessness forever.

The progress we have seen in recent years gives us confidence to believe that we can achieve our ambition.

We are the connecting force between the Government, frontline agencies and other organisations. We can be the catalyst that will transform this vision into practical action and end homelessness forever.





○ ○ connect

● change

● end

our goal is to end
homelessness by

2022



'Homelessness has no place in a sustainable community. Like poverty and disadvantage, our aim should be to eradicate it.'

Lord Rooker, Minister of State for Regeneration & Regional Development
(*Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives*
March 2005)

leading the way...

WHAT WE SAW

In 2004 the Government achieved its target of ending the long-term use of B&Bs for homeless families with children. It had already achieved and sustained its goal of reducing rough sleeping by two-thirds.

The next target was ambitious, namely to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010.

As a general election approached, we wanted to ensure that the needs of single homeless people, former rough sleepers and others who fall outside the 'statutory homeless' group were kept in the spotlight.

WHAT WE DID

We wanted to encourage the Government to be even more ambitious in tackling rough sleeping and homelessness. The progress that had been made since the nineties showed that where there is the political will, a real difference can be made.

We felt the time had come to develop a new vision for tackling homelessness together.

HOW WE DID IT

Homeless Link has around 450 member organisations that provide services to tens of thousands of homeless people every day.

We asked them about their experience – and the experience of their service users – to find out what they thought the Government should be doing next to end homelessness in England.

What emerged was not just an overwhelming desire to keep improving things, but a belief that, with the right leadership and political support, we could end homelessness forever.

This vision inspired us to produce a manifesto and an action plan for ending homelessness.



WHAT WE ACHIEVED

Our ten-point manifesto was launched in the Houses of Parliament ahead of the 2005 general election. Since then, the challenging concept of ending homelessness has become a mainstream political idea and our action plan for ending homelessness in England by 2022 (Ending Homelessness: From Vision to Action) won broad support from representatives of all parties.

As a national organisation representing around 450 frontline agencies we act as the independent voice of the sector on influential bodies such as:

- the Communities & Local Government (CLG)'s Homelessness Strategy Delivery Group
- the Housing Reform Advisory Panel following the Hills Review
- the Mayor's London Housing Forum
- the Housing Corporation's Advisory Panel on Vulnerable People
- the Cabinet Office Reference Group on Adults facing Chronic Exclusion
- SCIE (Social Care Institute for Excellence) Partners Council.

Our influence has grown in the past six years, as we have drawn on the experience of our members to produce evidence-based models of intervention that have been proven and tested.

The Move On Plans Protocol (MOPP) that we piloted across England, with the backing of the CLG, is just one example of how Homeless Link not only provides policy makers with the analysis, but also helps the sector put theory into practice.

It is this pivotal role as the connecting force between government, frontline agencies and other organisations that work to end homelessness, which makes Homeless Link unique.



influence

Homeless Link is a powerful force for change. Our influence reaches from the daily experiences of people touched by homelessness to the development of national strategy.



Our frontline connections enable us to identify emerging challenges, evidence and substantiate the nature of the issue and follow up with practical and strategic recommendations. This approach has worked on a wide variety of issues including:

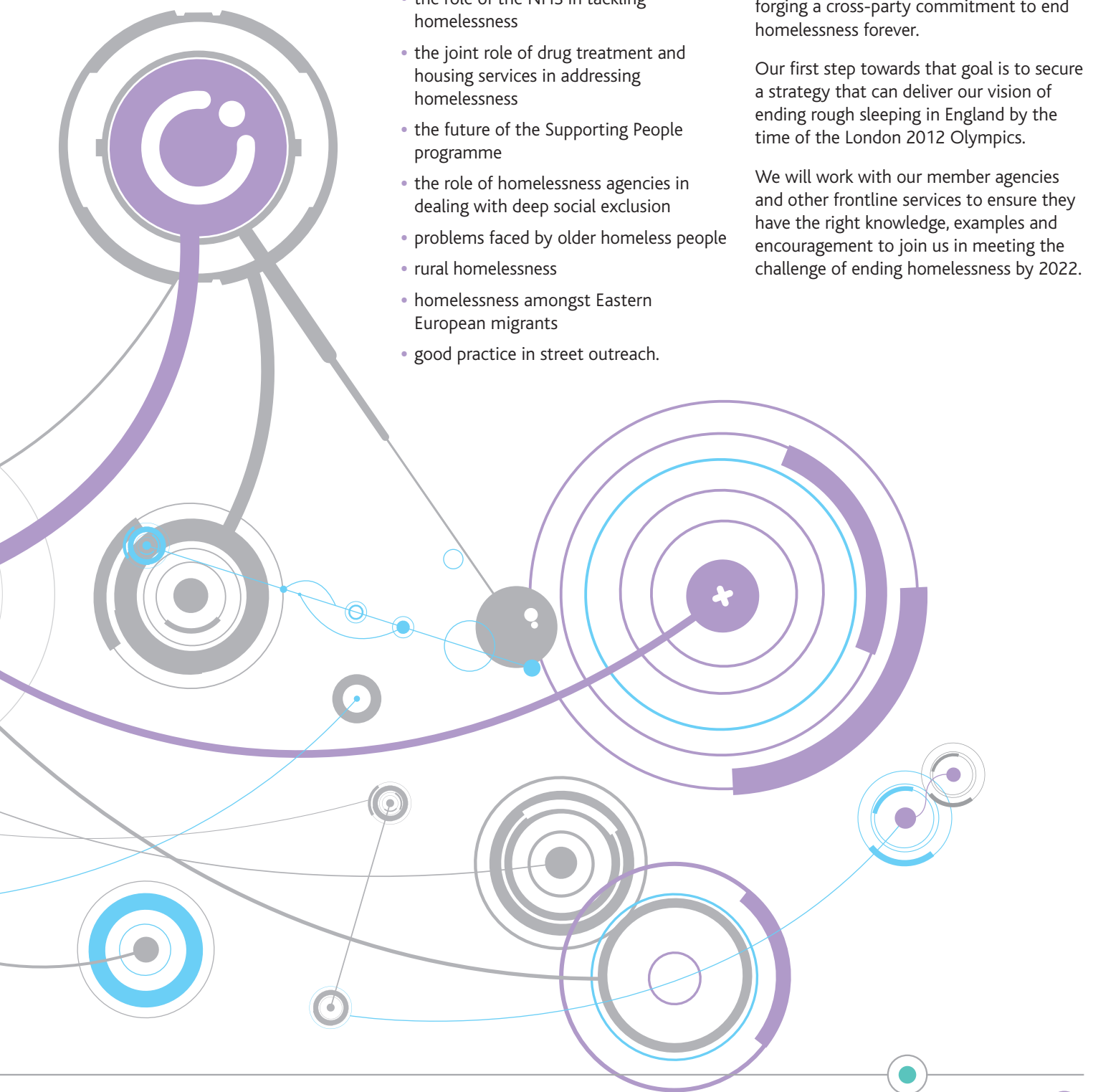
- the role of the NHS in tackling homelessness
- the joint role of drug treatment and housing services in addressing homelessness
- the future of the Supporting People programme
- the role of homelessness agencies in dealing with deep social exclusion
- problems faced by older homeless people
- rural homelessness
- homelessness amongst Eastern European migrants
- good practice in street outreach.

We also use our influence to highlight the role of the arts, sports and cultural activities in ending homelessness and promote the use of ICT to support these strategies.

Looking forward, it is our ambition to continue influencing policy and practice by forging a cross-party commitment to end homelessness forever.

Our first step towards that goal is to secure a strategy that can deliver our vision of ending rough sleeping in England by the time of the London 2012 Olympics.

We will work with our member agencies and other frontline services to ensure they have the right knowledge, examples and encouragement to join us in meeting the challenge of ending homelessness by 2022.





sharing the solutions...

WHAT WE SAW

Homeless Link's broad membership often acts as an early warning system highlighting emerging issues that sometimes slip under the radar of policy makers.

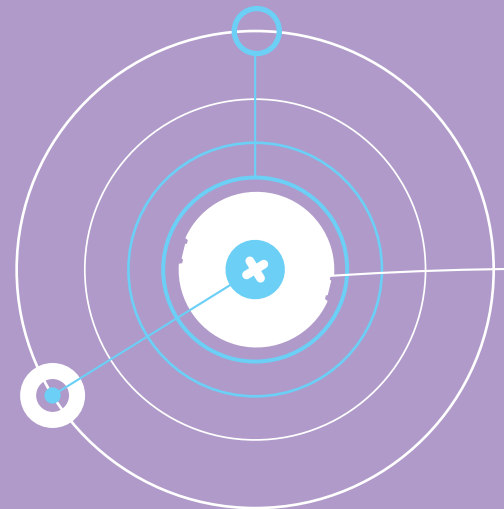
For example, a major migration from the 10 countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 has been an economic success story in many ways. However, the restrictions on benefits for some Eastern Europeans mean that a significant minority end up homeless and destitute.

WHAT WE DID

In 2006, we became aware that a number of our members, particularly in London, were reporting an increase in the number of clients from new EU member states, then known as A8 countries.

London day centres in particular were reporting great pressure on resources as a result. A significant number were struggling to support people because of language barriers and restrictions on recourse to public funds. This meant the normal routes off the street were closed.

We responded to our members' concerns by seeking to uncover the scale of the issue, look at the problems involved and find out what solutions could be applied.



HOW WE DID IT

We undertook research designed to give us a clear picture of the issues faced by homeless A8 nationals and the agencies responding to their needs.

This included a snapshot survey of London day centres, outreach teams and night shelters and follow-on interviews with providers who have developed specialised services. The results of this research demonstrated to national and local Government that there was a problem that was threatening to undermine the progress made on tackling rough sleeping.

Finally, we produced a guide to good practice called 'Sharing solutions: working with A8 nationals.' This was designed to provide frontline agencies with clear information and examples of successful projects in order that they could deal with the issue more effectively.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED

Since the publication of our research the following developments have taken place:

- the CLG has provided additional funding to local authorities to tackle the problem
- the issue has been raised in the national media
- the issue has been the subject of an adjournment debate in the House of Commons
- Housing Minister, Yvette Cooper, highlighted the importance of our research
- Homeless Link's best practice guide has been used by over 100 service providers across London
- the CLG and the Home Office asked us to work on co-ordinating a solution.

'As a day centre accessed by a large number of A8 nationals, we really appreciated the way Homeless Link engaged service providers. We are looking forward to developing new services for this client group as a result.'

Janie Kidston, Project Manager,
ur4Jobs at The Upper Room

VISION

In 2004, research by Homeless Link revealed that large numbers of homeless people were finding themselves 'trapped' in hostels. Our Move-On campaign highlighted three major problems:

- hundreds of people were needlessly being prevented from moving on with their lives because there was a lack of accommodation
- the progress made in reducing rough sleeping was being put at risk because of a lack of available bed spaces
- millions of pounds of public money could be better used if a solution was found.

INFLUENCE

We used our unique role as the connecting force between government and frontline agencies to:

- provide hard evidence of the scale of the problem
- explore ways that councils and service providers could work together more effectively on the issue
- find examples of successful solutions and share them with the sector, local and national government.



moving

'I am impressed by their ability to network, mediate and share good practice while working positively across the traditional boundaries between local authorities, the voluntary sector and others'.

Terrie Alafat, Director, Housing, Homelessness and Support, Communities and Local Government

forward

ACTION

Our starting point was a national survey which revealed that nearly half (45%) of the people living in hostels were ready to move on, but had nowhere suitable to go. In London alone the extra cost of people being unable to move on was an estimated £8 million.

Having uncovered the scale of the problem we used our connections to find an effective way of addressing the problem. By presenting the evidence and some potential approaches to solving the problem, we won the backing of CLG to develop the Move On Plans Protocol (MOPP).

Our Policy team successfully piloted the approach in nine local authority areas and now local authorities across the country are adopting MOPP.

RESULTS

The MOPP demonstrates how Homeless Link can:

- act to draw on the vast experience and knowledge of its members
- use that experience to influence national policy and debate
- provide evidence of homelessness issues
- identify problems that need to be addressed
- provide practical solutions that can be supported nationally and applied locally
- build relationships between statutory and voluntary partners in local areas
- help find ways to spend public money more effectively
- identify and share examples of best practice.



action

Homeless Link has developed a strong reputation for looking at problems and providing policy makers and practitioners with evidence-based solutions.

In short, we put theory into practice. We do this by:

- identifying and sharing best practice
- turning hard research into workable recommendations
- supporting the delivery of national policy at a local level.

With the help of funding from the CLG, we established a team of Regional managers.

Their role is to be a connecting force between government, service commissioners, funders, frontline agencies and other organisations that work to end homelessness.

Their aim is to find ways to help agencies improve or change their services and speed up the delivery of national policy.

In addition to our Regional team, we have also established an Innovation and Good Practice team (IGP) that plays a vital role in sharing solutions across the sector and creating a shared vision of excellent practice in services.

The team produces a comprehensive range of online best practice guides. These provide everything from advice on funding to guidance on the use of therapeutic interventions. They are accessed by hundreds of frontline staff every day.

IGP also delivers a range of training programmes that are constantly being developed to meet the changing needs of the sector. Since its inception in 2005, we have trained more than 1,000 frontline staff and provided bespoke in house training to more than 150 agencies on topics as diverse as supporting clients at risk of self harm and working with clients from the new EU states.

Our in-house Policy team is also influencing action on the ground on a daily basis. Our research and recommendations don't just help to inform and shape national policy; they also have a direct impact on frontline services.

For example, we produced the Clean break toolkit to help local commissioners integrate housing support into their services for drug users. Clean break is now promoted by the Government's National Treatment Agency and is being adopted by frontline staff around the country.

These are just some of the many ways that Homeless Link not only influences and inspires others, but also takes action to help end homelessness.



making policy work...

WHAT WE SAW

There are many different ways that we can work together to help end homelessness in England. The Government's £90m Hostels Capital Improvement Programme (HCIP) - and the 'Places of Change' agenda that complements it - is a notable example.

From its inception, we saw that HCIP provides a unique opportunity to develop a new generation of services that play a vital role in ending homelessness. As with any national initiative, we realised it could only be successful if it was embraced and delivered at a local level.

WHAT WE DID

Our team of regional managers was created in 2005 with the help of CLG. These individuals turn national policy and strategy into local action and help HCIP to reach its full potential. Our regional managers also make a difference every day by:

- finding ways to help frontline agencies to improve their services
- sharing good practice and organising stakeholder visits
- putting commissioners in touch with service providers
- helping local government devise and deliver effective strategies
- helping service providers find funding and other resources.

HOW WE DID IT

Our regional managers operate in many different ways, but one of the common themes of their work is that they help create new approaches, connections and partnerships.

For example, our North West regional manager organised a 'Places of Change' event at an excellent YMCA facility in Crewe. Following the event, we surveyed the service providers who attended:

- more than 80% said they would 'buy-in' to the 'Places of Change' agenda as a result of the event
- 91% said they had changed their expectations about the role of hostels and the opportunities that should be available within them
- 82% said they would change their working practices to reflect elements of the 'Places of Change' programme.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED

To take just one example, our regional manager for the South West used her connections to bring occupational therapy (OT) into homelessness projects in Exeter. To date the specialist volunteers have:

- introduced healthy living and eating programmes within services
- supported former service users who have moved into employment to stay in work
- developed methods for assessing the OT needs of individual service users
- established a service user football team
- helped one client to reduce his drinking and become a project volunteer.

'This has been the most inspiring day I have had since working in homelessness and it has rekindled my desire to help people.'

Participant in Homeless Link 'Places of Change' event

London Mayor
Ken Livingstone has
backed Homeless
Link's campaign to
end rough sleeping in
the capital by the
2012 Olympics

75,000
frontline staff use
Homeless Link's
growing library of
online guides
every year

VISION

results

The homelessness sector has achieved many notable successes since the formation of Homeless Link in 2001. The political will to make a significant difference is being translated into new strategies and reflects a genuine desire to improve services on the ground.

In our unique role as the connecting force between government, frontline agencies and other organisations working to end homelessness, Homeless Link is a catalyst that shapes these strategies and helps frontline services to deliver national policy at a local level.

As the independent voice of the sector we celebrate and welcome every success that takes us a step closer to ending homelessness. We also believe it is important to recognise and acknowledge some of our own successes on the way.

Homeless Link's campaign to end homelessness together by 2022 has been broadly supported by representatives from all political parties

Frontline agencies across England now use our 'invest to save' methodology to demonstrate the value of their work to commissioners and funders

INFLUENCE

CLG increased funding to address homelessness amongst the new wave of EU migrants after Homeless Link highlighted the issue and published a best practice guide

Homeless Link has championed and supported the Government's 'Places of Change' agenda. After one event more than 80% of participants said they would now 'buy-in' to 'Places of Change'

Homeless Link's work with London Nurses has led to the Department of Health guide to hospitals on discharging homeless people

Homeless Link's championing of the issue of multiple needs is now informing the Government's pilot programme to support Adults facing Chronic Exclusion

Homeless Link's Clean Break toolkit is now recommended by the Government's National Treatment Agency and has been put into practice by frontline staff working with drug users

ACTION



'Since using the Homeless Link handbook our day care centre has changed radically and the impact on service users has been phenomenal.'

Stephen Bell, Chief Executive, Tyneside Cyrenians

putting people at the centre...

WHAT WE SAW

Day centres have long been regarded as the Cinderella service of the homelessness sector.

Viewed by some as supporting and maintaining a culture of street life and rough sleeping, we see things differently.

In our experience, day centres can be one of the key elements in helping to end homelessness.

At their best, they can be places that transform lives, but sometimes lack of funding, knowledge and support can result in their falling short of achieving this potential.

WHAT WE DID

Homeless Link is committed to helping day centres play a fuller role in ending homelessness. So far, we have done this by:

- drawing on the vast experience of our membership to identify and share best practice across the sector
- hosting the 2006 national day centres conference
- creating "the invest to save" methodology that frontline agencies now use to demonstrate the value of their work to commissioners and funders
- producing the Day Centres handbook and other online resources
- using quality tools to help day centres assess their priorities

- initiating the Award for best day centre
- providing one-to-one support to help small day centres achieve their full potential.

HOW WE DID IT

The Day Centres handbook is one of a series of good practice guides that are freely available online.

This is an invaluable resource that is now used by day centre providers across the UK.

It combines vital information on national policies and strategies, with practical advice on everything from fundraising to key working on health and safety.

This is presented alongside transferable examples of best practice based on the experience of our members.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED

The experience of the Tyneside Cyrenians in Newcastle-upon-Tyne is just one example of how the theory in our Day Centres handbook has been put into practice.

The Cyrenians have adopted a whole new approach to the way they run one of their night shelters and day centres.

Using the Homeless Link handbook as their guide, they have taken on nine former service users and employed them to run their centre.

The excellent work of the Cyrenians supports our view that shifting the way we think about homeless people can help us find new ways to end homelessness forever.

Homelessness has many causes and affects people from all backgrounds. The truth is, it could happen to any one of us. It is a problem that should concern everyone. However, we know it is the most vulnerable people that are at the greatest risk.

In order to achieve the ambitious aim of ending homelessness in our country, we need to focus on three key areas and to deepen our understanding of them:

Prevention – to tackle the root causes of homelessness

Support – to empower people to avoid or escape homelessness

Accommodation – to provide an affordable, accessible and decent home for everyone.

We will continue to investigate the causes and routes into homelessness and the different reasons that people find themselves trapped within it. We will search out the evidence for the answers, what works best and for whom, drawing on the real life experience of people who have left homelessness behind them.

We will also draw lessons from the experience of frontline agencies. There is deep knowledge and experience in the specialist organisations focused on homelessness. We learn from this every day. But we will also seek out knowledge, experience, and working models from organisations helping people to deal with multiple and complex needs. We will look for answers and inspiring examples to share more widely.

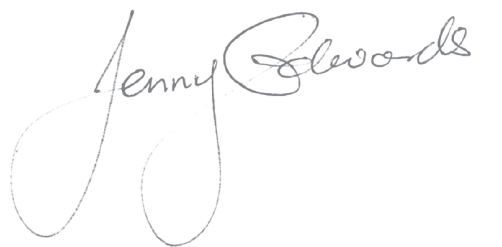
We will continue to influence national policy wherever national policy touches the issue of homelessness, the lives of people who experience it, their needs for a home and their wider needs.

We are delighted that the Government is continuing its commitment to making services for homeless people 'Places of Change'. The decision to invest an additional £70 million will enable many more hostels and day centres to transform the work they do.

We know that we have to close the door to homelessness and provide the support that opens the door to independence and a positive future for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

We look ahead to a time when this country is free from homelessness. We believe this is possible by 2022. We believe every person has the right to a settled home and, if they need it, the support to keep it. We know that others across the world are starting to share this belief and are working to see it become a reality.

We invite everyone who shares this belief and this vision to join with us. Together we can end homelessness forever.



Jenny Edwards
Chief Executive, Homeless Link

ending
homelessness
forever...



We would like to thank all our funders for their support and commitment to our work.

STATUTORY (2001 – 2007)

- Capacitybuilders
- City of Westminster
- Communities and Local Government
(formerly Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and incorporating the former DTLR)
- Department of Health
- Greater London Authority
- Housing Corporation
- Learning & Skills Council – London East
- London Councils *(formerly Association of London Government and London Boroughs Grants)*
- Newham Substance Misuse Partnership
- Safer Islington Partnership
- Welsh Assembly Government

NON-STATUTORY (2001 – 2007)

- The Baring Foundation
- The Beatrice Laing Trust
- The City Bridge Trust
(formerly Bridge House Trust)
- City Parochial Foundation
- Community Fund
- CRASH
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Haberdashers' Charitable Foundations
- Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (HACT)
- Help the Aged
- The John Laing Charitable Trust
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- King's Fund
- Lloyds TSB Foundation for England & Wales
- London Housing Foundation
- Royal Bank of Scotland
- Sanctuary Housing Association
- The Tudor Trust
- The Vodafone UK Foundation

OTHER SUPPORT / DONATIONS

SPONSORSHIP (2001 – 2007)

- Barclays Bank plc
- BBC Radio 4 Appeal
- Genesis Housing Group
- Marks & Spencer
- Sadler Legacy
- Unity Trust Bank
- Virgin Unite

We are very grateful for the support and donations we have received from members of the public during this time. We would also like to extend our thanks to our member agencies and other partners for their commitment to our vision of ending homelessness in the UK forever.



Frontline agencies in partnership

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