Partnership Self-Assessment Pilot Case Study

Case study provided by Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network

Why did you choose to undertake this process?
We chose to undertake this process to identify areas of improvement to the structure of the Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network. The GMHAN was established in 2017, but in 2022 the network structure was revised, and a full-time Network Manager was employed. The opportunity to take part in the self-assessment pilot came up a year after this change was implemented and so it gave us an opportunity to evaluate the changes that had been made and understand what more needed to be done. Also, we have done a lot of learning and development over the past 7 years, and we wanted the opportunity to help shape the toolkit based on what we had learnt. This seemed like a good opportunity to support and connect with other networks across the country too.

What were you hoping to achieve from this?
The main thing we were hoping to achieve, was an unbiased evaluation of new structure of the GMHAN, which identified the areas we needed to improve and where we were strongest. From this we also wanted to develop a tangible action plan,

which would focus on the areas of improvement and suggest clear actions that could be taken to strengthen these areas.

Who were the key people involved in the process?

For us it was key to have people involved who participated in the GMHAN at different levels. This included some members of our co-ordination group, co-chairs of our task groups and the Network Manager. This was so they could give feedback on the GMHAN based on how it operated in different spaces. It was also important that the working group reflected the wider network by involving partners from the combined authority, VCSE organisations, faith groups and people with lived experience of homelessness. Co-production is a key priority of the network and so we didn't feel this evaluation could be accurate without involving people with lived experience of homelessness.

What 3 key things did you learn from having undertaken the self-assessment?

1. We learnt that connectivity was the area that needed the most improvement, in particular because the link between strategic and operational groups is not entirely clear.
2. We were able to recognise and celebrate our ability to feed into strategic elements of work and how it has supported and resourced areas of work streams to support and build changes into services, both new and existing.
3. Through the self-assessment process, we have also learnt about other Homelessness networks & partnerships and have been put in touch with network coordinators in a couple of different locations.

Why would you encourage other local authorities, voluntary & community sector organisations, and other partners to undertake this process?

Homelessness partnerships are delivered collaboratively by lots of different organisations, which means no one individual or organisation has oversight or complete responsibility for the partnership. Therefore, carrying out an evaluation can often be forgotten, as it is unlikely that anyone has capacity to carry it out alongside coordinating the partnership itself. This self-assessment process was a straightforward way of completing an evaluation, which wasn't too time consuming. Therefore, it can more easily be completed by a partnership. However, this should be a jumping off point, for further evaluation which is more adapted to the specific partnership.