

Partnership Self-Assessment Framework & Toolkit

March 2024

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Homeless Link

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Introduction

Homeless Link's vision is a country free from homelessness. We believe that everyone should have a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

Ending homelessness requires many people to work together across the voluntary sector, local government, health services and private sector. Homeless Link have pioneered and continue to support local partnerships across England.

On 3 September 2022, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government launched 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good.' It included the commitment that Homeless Link will develop and enable stronger local strategic partnerships using a partnership approach to address barriers in local systems. The development of this Partnership Self-Assessment Framework & Toolkit has been funded by MHCLG through the [Voluntary, Community & Frontline Sector Grant Programme 2022-25](#).

The self-assessment tool is an opportunity for strategic leaders to better understand local challenges and will form the basis of Local Partnership Plans to strengthen local collaborative working at a strategic and operational level. Self-assessment and subsequent action planning will require input from partners to ensure it is locally driven, locally owned, and has cross-sector buy-in to encourage participation.

This self-assessment tool aims to:

- Guide local areas in assessing the strength of local partnerships to combat homelessness and rough sleeping and help to identify a series of actions to take forward.
- Strengthen partnership working between people who are experiencing homelessness or facing the prospect of homelessness, local authorities, the voluntary, community and faith sectors, health and criminal justice partners, local citizens and businesses, and local political leaders.
- Aid continuous improvement through regular audits of the work completed (supported by suitable and relevant evidence).

The assumptions that underpin this toolkit are:

- Good partnership working involving lived experience will lead to better services.
- Stronger relationships and joint working improve service delivery and offers.
- Better frontline staff wellbeing will enhance service delivery and staff retention.
- Better services will positively impact on people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

- Improved intelligence will enable more targeted and effective support offered to the sector.

Ending homelessness requires coordination between many different agencies – including charities and housing associations, community and faith groups, local authorities, and other public services, as well as people with lived experience. Yet in many areas joint working remains under-developed, dysfunctional, or absent. Too often this results in inefficient ways of working as efforts are duplicated or confused, while the needs of people who are experiencing homelessness remain unmet.¹

The toolkit has been supported with a series of roundtables with Homeless Link Partnership Managers.

¹ Homeless Link (2022) Supporting Local Partnerships. Available [here](#).

Partnership Markers

Clarity of Purpose

1. The partnership knows how to feed in issues to relevant strategic groups and wider governance structures, normally setup within local authority catchment areas, e.g., Homelessness Reduction Board, Health & Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Board, or any other relevant boards or groups that can make decisions that influence the way systems work and improve outcomes for people.
2. A Homelessness Charter or clear vision for the local homelessness partnership is established and understood by all agencies involved. This Charter or vision is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and consistent with identifying and meeting the needs of local people.
3. Partners' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and each person involved in the local approaches, forums, or groups understands the purpose of their role and what they can bring to the table.
4. A Terms of Reference or equivalent document underpins the purpose of the local Homelessness Forum. This is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and up to date.
5. Homelessness Forum meetings are held regularly, and all the relevant agencies are involved across statutory, voluntary & community sector, faith-based, and other organisations or bodies.

Connectivity

1. The partnership has an established relationship with relevant funders and local authority officers and commissioners. This includes open communication and information sharing regarding commissioning or new funding opportunities across the partnership.
2. Working groups or action focused groups are in place which enable ongoing connections regarding opportunities for collaboration, funding, and solution focused discussions across relevant local agencies.
3. Accessible and clear referral pathways are in place and known to local agencies, which enable services to connect and work together to maximise positive outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping locally.
4. Seamless and consistent connection exists between operational and strategic groups and functions and there are clear lines of reporting and accountability between the two.
5. Silo working is minimised within agencies and all partners can demonstrate ways of effectively working in partnership with a positive external outlook.

Co-Production

1. Co-production is embedded at both strategic and operational levels. People with lived experience of homelessness or rough sleeping are effectively involved in forming approaches and making decisions that affect them.
2. People with lived experience are provided with training and are equipped with appropriate support to participate meaningfully in co-production activities.
3. Co-production is meaningfully embedded within the design, delivery, and oversight of the partnership, to ensure all elements of the partnership approach(es) incorporate the voices of people with lived experience.
4. Co-production principles are mutually agreed across the partnership and included in the Charter, Terms of Reference, or other agreed ways of working.
5. Established Peer Mentoring is in place and operating across the local system. People with lived experience are a member of and supported by the local partnership of agencies.

Collaboration

1. Training needs are identified across the partnership and opportunities are made available and shared with all members of the local partnership or agencies.
2. Operational forums are held with Multidisciplinary Teams and workable SMART actions are agreed. Partners are held to account and there are clearly identified links between operational and strategic groups or forums.
3. The partnership is holding reflective practice sessions to review the partnership's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as providing an opportunity for identifying any established and emerging good practice.
4. The partnership identifies gaps in local service provision and responds by jointly bidding for new services where appropriate, sharing resources, and together exploring other funding/commissioning opportunities. New services are built that are evidenced-based and filling gaps where needed.
5. Partnerships are acknowledging the strengths and skills of all the members and utilising each other's experience to form relationships with formal partnership agreements in place where necessary.

Communication

1. Arrangements for sharing information are in place and consistent across all members of the partnership and are regularly reviewed to ensure that relevant information is shared between agencies where appropriate and where this will have a benefit for people accessing services and receiving support.

2. Language is inclusive, clear, jargon free, and understood by all partners; an acronym reference or glossary are included in the Terms of Reference or other agreed ways of working.
3. Nuances across different IT systems are understood to ensure that information is shared smoothly and quickly between agencies, considering organisational requirements for safe and secure data sharing.
4. Communication is consistent and there is a regularly updated, online and accessible directory of local services to assist those who are homeless or vulnerably housed, with the purpose of identifying the relevant point of contact for a service.
5. Varied platforms for engagement are adopted by members of the partnership including those with lived experience of homelessness or rough sleeping. These platforms could include Microsoft SharePoint, Teams, or other application and web-based platforms that meet the needs of the users.

Partnership Markers: Good Practice

Marker 1: Clarity of Purpose

Clarity of purpose underpins strategy and change. Without this clarity, responses will be disorganised and chaotic and will lack 'buy-in' and partnership vision and may cause fractured relationships, lack of trust and unwillingness to work together. It may be reflected in unstructured meetings and duplication of work with limited expectations and consistency.

With clarity of purpose partners can more clearly consider their approach and how they can respond to homelessness. A nationally aligned local Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a requirement of all local authorities and Homelessness Charters are the gold standard for achieving inclusive clarity of purpose to end homelessness. Multi-agency meetings such as Homelessness Forums and working groups can clearly set out action needed and the roles of partners.

Manchester Homeless Partnership Toolkit

The Manchester Homelessness Partnership is a collaboration between people with experience of homelessness and the statutory, private, and third sectors – harnessing the resources of an entire community to respond to homelessness. This guidance will provide ideas and principles to help and inspire you.

Strategic Direction

Legislation and guidance require local authorities to have strategies in place to improve an area response to homelessness that are consistent with other local plans. The local Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy should set out how partners will be involved and what practical arrangements are needed to ensure the continued commitment to joint working to prevent homelessness and improve outcomes.²

There is considerable evidence of the health inequalities faced by people who sleep rough, and there is planned statutory guidance on the 'Duty to Cooperate' for the NHS and local authorities to be explicit in how partners should work together to address these inequalities.

Working Strategically with Local Authorities to End Homelessness

Working strategically with Local Authorities to end homelessness (July 2020) includes useful advice and good practice examples around joint working. It is intended mainly for smaller voluntary sector, community and faith groups but would also be useful for

² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018) Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. Available [here](#).

Local Authorities and anyone interested in developing more strategic relationships to end homelessness. It defines six key elements for effective joint working and was produced in partnership with the Local Government Association.

Homelessness Charters

A co-produced Homelessness Charter represents an area's mission to end homelessness by bringing together people, organisations, and businesses with one shared vision. A Charter can help to 'frame' Homelessness to replace old concepts of poor choices and inevitability³ and provide clarity of purpose where they set out how partners can work together and how people with experience of homelessness have a voice. Charters should include the rights of people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and an agreed common purpose with standard of service and regular reflection and revision in a changing environment. A good Charter will set out how people can access information and services and a safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support.

Multi-Agency Governance Arrangements

Partnerships should not be there for the sole purpose of information sharing and networking but should have some power to oversee and implement the strategic and operational direction. This may require building on or connecting into existing or new multi-agency governance arrangements, such as Health and Wellbeing Boards and Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs). Governance arrangements require clear Terms of Reference.

Multi-Agency Meetings

There will be many different types of strategic and operational meetings with partner agencies locally. Regular local Homelessness Forums can be used for information sharing and communication and usually focus on sharing news about local activities and developments and offers an opportunity to flag concerns and identify issues.

Effective Multi-Agency Meetings

This is intended to support organisations to understand and implement multi-agency meetings. The guidance gives advice about choosing the right type of meeting (strategic vs operational), the role of Homelessness Forums, issue-based meetings, and case management meetings; practical steps to setting up an effective multi-agency meeting; considers data sharing and overcoming barriers to effective working.

³ See also Crisis (2020) Talking About Homelessness: Introduction to Homelessness. Available [here](#).

Working Groups

Smaller working groups are often set up to explore issues further and report back to the main forum. This allows for a wider membership of the main forum. Working Groups or Action Groups can provide focussed activity on specific issues and feed into formal governance arrangements. They can be used to draw together people with specific expertise.

Joint Protocols and Procedures

Joint protocols or procedures set out clear and agreed working arrangements that provide clarity of purpose at an operational level. They can ensure that each partner plays a full role in preventing homelessness for people leaving institutions such as prison, providing corporate parenting support to young people leaving local authority care⁴ as well as housing and support for people leaving short and long stay hospitals, move on from short term housing and into safe, secure homes.

Job Roles

Partnership work should be embedded into job roles and those who are recruited see this as an integral part of the work they do.

2: Connectivity

Delivering solutions to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping requires strong connectivity at operational and strategic levels. Lack of connection can produce an underestimation and absence of trust in agencies, in poor knowledge and experience. It can result in silo working and resistance to change, poor commissioning practice, a lack of understanding of relationship-based approaches and lack of willingness to develop, adapt or learn new ways of doing things.

Excellent connectivity requires inclusive partnerships, partnership approaches to commissioning and allocation of resources as well as joined up working between commissioning and non-commissioned services. Mapping and the development of pathways support system change and bring about more connectivity across the service users experience. Good practice examples of service connectivity include co location and 'Trusted Assessors'.

The Homelessness Reduction Act introduced a duty on specified public authorities to refer⁵ service users who they think may be experiencing homelessness or threatened

⁴ Joint statutory guidance "Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year-old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation". Advises local authorities to establish joint working protocols to prevent and relieve youth homelessness.

⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018) A Guide to the Duty to Refer. Available [here](#).

with homelessness to local authority housing options teams. Housing Associations were not included, and the sector developed a Commitment to Refer⁶.

Inclusive Partnerships

To achieve a clarity of purpose partnerships, require an inclusive shared vision. The partners who can make difference to homelessness encompasses a wide range of stakeholders and agencies:

- Local authority partners including housing and homelessness, public health, safeguarding, community safety, domestic abuse, commissioning, adult social care, children, and young people's services.
- People with lived experience.
- Strategic NHS partners.⁷
- Commissioning bodies such as Integrated Commissioning Boards, and Police and Crime Commissioners.
- Landlords.
- Charitable and faith-based organisations.
- Grassroots organisations.
- Combatting Drugs Partnerships.⁸
- Primary Health service providers.
- National Probation Service.
- Police.
- Ambulance service.
- Local businesses and private sector service providers.
- Local communities and citizens.
- DWP and Jobcentre Plus.⁹
- Specialist women's sector.

Guidance on the Preparation of Integrated Care Strategies

The Health and Care Act 2022 focuses on integration and partnership and the Integrated Care Strategy Guidance recommends that homelessness services should be engaged by ICP's when developing the strategy that will inform Integrated Care Board commissioning decisions.

Commissioning and Resources

Commissioning is the process of specifying, securing, and monitoring services to meet people's needs at the strategic level and must include partnerships between local

⁶ National Housing Federation (2022) Commitment to Refer. Available [here](#).

⁷ Homeless Link (2022) Structure of the NHS in England. Available [here](#).

⁸ Home Office (2022) Drugs Strategy Guidance for Local Delivery Partners. Available [here](#).

⁹ Homeless Link (2018) Working Together Toolkit. Available [here](#).

authorities, service providers and people with lived experience. A lack of connectivity can cause tension between statutory/commissioned services and non-commissioned service providers. Co-ordinated commissioning plans and bids across statutory and voluntary sector partners can help to identify and address gaps and attract additional resources. Commissioning practice to encourage partnership may include:

- Services jointly commissioned, to share and maximise resources.
- Lead partner proposals: A group of organisations bid together to add capacity and share resources or lead provider procures services.¹⁰
- Coproduced commissioning plans and service specifications.
- Alliance Commissioning.¹¹
- Joint assessments of need.
- Closer working with women's sector organisations
- Planned referral routes, mapping, pathways, and a single point of access.

The Real Change Toolkit

The Real Change approach has been developed by The Riverside Group and Greater Manchester Combined Authority with support from Homeless Link. The Big Change MCR alternative giving programme raised nearly £200,000 from businesses and the public in its first two years and went on to test this approach through local Real Change partnerships in Wigan & Leigh, Oldham, Rochdale, and Guildford.

Non-Commissioned Resources

Many homelessness services are funded from non-commissioned sources including charitable funds, service charges and additional fundraising activity. Partnership working with the voluntary and community sector can bring in additional resources (including alternative giving) to localities. Good communication and partnership approaches between commissioners and non-commissioned services and commissioned service providers will create and support connections across the range of services in a locality.

Mapping Pathways

The customer journey map should set out the lived experience of homelessness in a locality and what it could be and coproduced in collaboration. Mapping services should include community groups and grassroots organisation services as well as commissioned and non-commissioned services and aligned with systems mapping. By assessing strategic need for services, mapping and setting out service specifications,

¹⁰ For example, Greater Manchester Combined Authority & Great Places 'A Bed Every Night' model of commissioning – lead provider procures services.

¹¹ National Development Team for Inclusion (2022) Alliance Commissioning. Available [here](#).

clear pathways can be developed that work within the locality and are understood across the partnerships. Pathways can help services feel seamless to those people who use them. including people moving on from 'public institutions' such as local authority care¹², prison, hospital; escape domestic abuse¹³; move out of rough sleeping and move on from short term accommodation-based services. Pathway meetings can discuss issues that arise from the pathways and quickly respond to risk and the individual needs.

Bristol Homelessness Prevention Pathways

In October 2017, Bristol City Council launched four distinct homelessness prevention accommodation pathways for people aged 22 and over, without dependent children. Each pathway is provided by a partnership of different organisations and co-ordinated by a lead agency. There are around 850 units of short-term accommodation across the four pathways. These pathways are:

- Pathway 1: Men only.
- Pathway 2: Mixed gender.
- Pathway 3: Women only.
- Pathway 4: Substance misuse.

System Change

Where there are blockages in the pathway - system change is required. Conflict may be inevitable when you aim for systemic change, but this can be healthy and generate change quicker and more effectively if approached constructively. Local systems activity can improve local responses to homelessness.

Influencing Change Locally

This shows what is possible when people work together to achieve systems change and what can be done in practice.

Connectivity Good Practice

Co-location is a method of working together in the same space to encourage joint solutions. Co-location can support complex individuals to receive a range of support services in one place. Many services adopt practices aimed to link with the people who need services in an agile way. This might include holding clinics at other organisations services or providing drop in for example. Many housing authorities have adopted partnership approaches to jointly develop individual Personal Housing Plans.

¹² [The Positive Pathway](#) is a framework created to help LA's and partners to work together to prevent youth homelessness.

¹³ For example, [Sheffield Domestic Abuse Co-Ordination Team](#).

CoLab Exeter

CoLab Exeter is home to over 30 organisations, from across sectors, all working together to enable people and communities to thrive and includes Exeter Homeless Partnership.

Trusted Assessors are originally an NHS initiative to support timely hospital discharge. The model has been adopted by some local authorities to improve connectivity across Homelessness Reduction Act assessments, referrals for housing related support or to identify social care needs.

St. Helens Council

St Helens Council are employing a Trusted Assessor, a qualified Senior Social Worker with an understanding of trauma and psychologically informed work within their Homelessness Pathway. The role is supporting people to move through the homeless pathway by assessing their social care needs, making referrals to adult social care and where they do not meet thresholds supporting practitioners to identify alternative pathways of support.

Marker 3: Co-Production

A vital part of homelessness partnership working is the central role played by people with experience of homelessness. Co-production is a theme running throughout effective partnerships and a central component of its values. Co-production is collaboration between people with lived experience and those involved in delivering and commissioning services. It requires culture change, new ways of doing things, and training of staff, volunteers, and people with lived experience. It requires buy-in from partners including senior leadership, organisation management and board members.

Creating a safe environment where co-production can happen is vital to ensure that a wide range of people are supported to take an active and meaningful role in the partnership and to actively work to support people to get involved. It is the responsibility of every service to be actively involving people and to create a culture where it is standard practice for all organisations to involve people in their services both internally and externally and with strategic work.

Co-production is an asset and a strengths-based approach where services “do with, not to” the people who use them. Co-production fundamentally requires a shift in power. It is a continuous process, starting with being well-informed about what the people using services want and need and moving towards full involvement of lived experience in decision-making, service delivery, training, recruitment, management, and governance as well as representing the service externally in meetings and events.

Co-Production Toolkit

For more information on what it is and how to co-produce effectively, please see Homeless Link's Co-production Toolkit.

Principles

Expert Link's¹⁴ Network Groups devised the following key principles for co-production:

1. Include everyone,
2. Trust and respect.
3. Listen.
4. Communicate clearly.
5. Open all doors.
6. Look at the big picture.
7. Be holistic.
8. Take action.
9. Encourage development.

Sharing information and raising awareness is the first stage of co-production. Information should be relevant, clear and jargon free. At this stage people should be able to feedback and influence some change. Engagement involves ongoing dialogue. The co-design of services involves the people using services together with commissioners, staff, and volunteers to design services based on their experiences. It is difficult to bring all the arms of partnership working together without sufficient centralised resource. To embed co-production into the fabric of working groups appoint co-chairs, one of which is someone with lived experience and provide training on co-production for all co-chairs.

Co-Production Toolkit

Fulfilling Lives in Islington and Camden have produced a practical guide for commissioners and services to develop and plan approaches to Co-Production.

Peer Support

Peer mentoring is a supportive connection between people who have a lived experience in common. Peer Workers may be volunteers or paid staff and have formal roles and work tasks. Peer Support can provide inspiration and based on shared experience.¹⁵

¹⁴ Expert Link (2022) Humanity, Honesty, Hope. Available [here](#).

¹⁵ FEANTSA (2015) Peer Support: A Tool for Recovery in Homelessness Services. Available [here](#).

Psychologically Informed Peer Mentoring: Basingstoke Outcome Home (OCH) is a social enterprise in Southampton providing psychological and peer services specifically for people experiencing homelessness and others who are multiply excluded.

Marker 4: Collaboration

Collaboration helps us to achieve the wider vision and purpose, brings people and organisations closer together to problem-solve, helps shared learning, opens new channels for communication and makes for more efficient use of resources.

Collaboration between statutory and voluntary partners can work to better understand what needs to happen to bring about system change.

Case Management

Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT's) can provide an effective case management mechanism for joint decision-making. They are often in place for safeguarding and meeting complex needs and usually take place weekly. Examples include Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Complex Needs MDT's. The teams bring together the expertise and skills of different professionals to assess, plan and manage housing, support, care, and health jointly. Safeguarding Adults Boards have a duty to conduct a review where an adult with care and support needs has died because of abuse and/or neglect, including self-neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the person.¹⁶

Adult Safeguarding and Homelessness: Learning from Safeguarding Adult

Reviews This briefing explores the evidence base related to cases of people who were homeless and shares the learning and key recommendations for practitioners and managers working in homelessness services.

¹⁶ For example, see Calderdale Safeguarding Adults Board (2020) Burnt Bridges? A Thematic Review of the Deaths of Five Men on the Streets of Halifax During Winter 2018/19. Available [here](#).

Relationship-Based Approaches

Relationship based approaches have partnerships at their core and are strength based. Psychologically Informed Environments, Trauma Informed Care, Housing First and strengths-based working are all different types of relationship-based approaches that transform partnership between staff and the people they work with.

Overview of Relationship-Based Approaches

In recent years the sector has seen an introduction of innovative approaches to supporting people who are experiencing homelessness. This overview explains the different positive approaches, what the differences are and why they are important.

Reflective Practices

Relationships and trust can be difficult to achieve and take time. Partnerships start and succeed on a personal level and with a need to trust the individuals perceived to be on the other side of the fence. Reflective practices are an opportunity to give and receive constructive feedback and allow partnerships to reflect on their experiences and actions and to participate in a process of continuous learning. Partnerships should adopt reflective practice to help recognise the assumptions, structures and relationships that shape thinking and action. Reflective practice avoids blame culture and celebrates the achievements of partnerships.

Conflict Management

Conflict is natural, unavoidable and a sign that change is needed so managing conflict is essential. Active listening and analysing the problem with partners may help to resolve the conflict. Avoid using emotionally laden language, work together and focus on the future. Mediation may help to build more positive relationships.

Formal Collaboration

Organisations may choose to collaborate through a formal contractual or sub contractual relationship to bid for funding or to tender for commissioned services. Joint working should be underpinned by written joint agreements or protocols which set out clear, practical arrangements for providing services to agree joint ways of working to deliver support and embed collaboration and partnership across services.

Pooling Resources

Pooled budgets combine funds from different organisations to enable them to fund integrated services. Pooling resources can increase organisational capacity. In the context of financial pressures, each participating organisation will need to consider costs and benefits, as well as risks and rewards. It is important to establish how risks

and benefits will be shared and develop a plan for how gains and potential losses will be distributed.

Marker 5: Communication

Excellent communication is more than just the exchange of information and requires a good understanding of emotions and reactions to the message. Poor communication may include unsatisfactory use of language, use of acronyms, no understanding of different organisational cultures, lack of feedback, and overly complex messages. Effective communication requires understanding of GDPR, shared IT systems and fully signed up information sharing agreements, access to and regular sharing of good quality local data to improve knowledge of trends, communication planning, efficient use of social media and websites, and skilled use of engagement tools.

Information Sharing Agreements

Government policy puts a strong emphasis on sharing information across organisations and professionals. At the same time the importance of confidentiality and security is reflected in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2 (DPA) 2018. Data sharing can take place while still respecting people's legitimate expectations about the privacy and confidentiality of their personal information. Information sharing agreements set out the basis for the use of personal data, to achieve better policies and deliver better services.

Data Sharing in Multi-Agency Meetings

This is intended to support organisations to understand and implement the different multi-agency meetings. The guidance gives advice about data sharing and overcoming barriers to effective working.

Shared IT Systems

Shared IT systems can help communication between commissioners and services. This means that everyone understands the person supported through the same casefile and the individual doesn't have to continually repeat information.

Local Intelligence and Data

Sharing information can improve the way we work both strategically through effective analysis and data management; at a planning level to trace pathways and map new and creative customer journeys; at an operational level at MDT meetings, achieving strength-based support and positive outcomes for individuals. Monitoring performance across the sector relies on good data about day-to-day delivery and analysis of outcomes and trends. 'Business intelligence' can support partnerships to develop strategic and operational direction, to target poor performance and focus on breaking down barriers to achieving positive outcomes.

Assessing the Health Needs of People Experiencing Homelessness

This can provide insight for local partnerships into health needs of their rough sleeping population.

Communication Planning

Sharing information with everyone clearly and consistently requires a plan about how communication will take place between partners and who will be communicating. The plan should consider the audience, the message and purpose of the message, the communication method, and timing. Briefings and newsletters can help to facilitate communication.

Social Media and Websites

Social media and websites can support good communication with the public, organisations, and people who are potentially experiencing homelessness so that they are aware of the help that is available and to communicate how important it is for people to act early if they are having difficulties that may lead to homelessness.¹⁷

Language

Clear, jargon free, respectful key messages can highlight the important work of the partners, raise awareness, and reduce misinformation. The language we use to communicate matters. Partners don't all use the same language and jargon can be a barrier to understanding.

Creative Engagement Tools

Good engagement with people with lived experience and partners may involve several methods to aid discussion and communication. This might include surveys and focus groups, conferences, and events as well as art, photography, writing, theatre, and more.

¹⁷ For example, see the [Manchester Homelessness Partnership](#).

Partnership Case Studies

Case Study: [Leicestershire Homelessness Charter](#)

Leicester's Homelessness Charter came about because several organisations recognised that they could achieve more together. They wanted to "join the dots", eliminate duplication, and address the gaps in support. Led by the Diocese of Leicester and following a series of well-attended workshops, the Charter was launched at Leicester Cathedral. Its first signatories were the City Mayor, the Bishop of Leicester, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Dean of Leicester. A committed oversight and management group and partner organisations actively work together. These include institutions, businesses, and statutory and voluntary sector bodies.

Change Needed: The Charter aims to provide multi-sector leadership and set out a shared vision to the wider public and help to harness partnership working. The Charter sought to provide a framework for learning, improvement, mutual support, develop trusted standards and enable and monitor change. It also aimed to raise awareness provide advice and signposting and a focus for co-ordination. The Charter established key objectives:

- Anyone with no recourse to public funds has access to safe accommodation.
- Increase availability of affordable accommodation for those in housing need.
- Tackle rough sleeping to ensure no-one is sleeping on the streets.
- Improve local systems through better partnerships and co-ordination.
- Ensure the voice of lived experience is at the heart of designing services.

Impact: The Charter has over 150 signatories and 36 organisations. There is greater understanding of who is doing what, and much better communication. Crucial partnership work has led to new initiatives and projects set up to find solutions for people facing homelessness within the City. Leicester's Homelessness Charter continues to bring a range of charities, statutory agencies, community groups, businesses, and individuals together. This collaborative approach has been particularly crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Charter has supported the development of a lived experience forum which sees people with direct and personal experience of homelessness in Leicester coming together on a regular basis to share their feedback, insight, and expertise. The Charter has a dedicated website including 'How you can help', a Directory of Services and emerging news, reviews, and impact.

Case Study: East Sussex Homelessness Forum

Introduction: It was identified that there was noticeable tension between statutory and commissioned services and non-commissioned Community and Faith groups. There was resistance from self-funded services to follow established RSI pathways; this was causing frustration and conflict between services and between the faith and community groups, and the local authority. This was having an impact on the work taking place locally; there were concerns about planned work as miscommunication and mistrust and silo working was causing confusion for those approaching services for support. Homeless Link chaired a Hastings Homelessness Forum where services could come together to exchange information and build relationships. The partnership was strengthened with neighbouring districts including Strategic Housing and Homelessness Leads from across East Sussex.

Change Needed: A county wide East Sussex Homelessness Forum was proposed to the East Sussex Strategic Housing Group to seek support and backing from all local authorities. The proposal suggestions were to hold a launch event to welcome everyone who is involved in supporting Rough sleepers across East Sussex to acknowledge the wealth of knowledge and expertise already present.

The main aims were to:

- Strengthen partnerships.
- Highlight challenges, experiences, and successes.
- Create space for positive communication.
- Strengths based approaches and understating of trauma and psychologically informed practice.
- Improve understanding of separate visions and develop a shared narrative.
- Respect and value different experiences within the sector.
- Create opportunities for the voice of Lived Experience to shape local dialogue.
- Collectively identify gaps in provision and look at innovations.
- Create opportunities for not hierarchical communication that fosters respect for each other's roles.

The event was held with Director of Public Health support and attended by over 50 people from all areas of the sector. As a result of the launch event a Core Member Group was established to enable communication between the forum and strategic leads from housing teams. Forum meetings are held bimonthly.

A Sub-Group was formed to develop the terms of reference and the group have now identified clear outcomes:

- A Charter including a pledge – how to refer, and what role partners play in the strategy.
- Independent website like ones in Oxford¹⁸ and Sheffield.
- An alternative giving scheme.
- The group to have strategic influence and input through the strategic forum.
- A specialised MDT Pathway event to welcome all partners who wish to find out more.

Impact: Many organisations are engaging well with the forum, and an independent chair works effectively in building good relationships. Opportunities for further connections and collaboration have been identified including recommendations to influence strategy as well as shaping future Lived Experience work. The Forum identified duplication and raised awareness of services through a series of presentations at Forum meetings. There has been greater clarity and understanding of pathways and clearer expectations regarding referrals and cross partnership working and increased communication across the sector. 89% of attendees said that they have connected with colleagues from across the sector, not connected with before; 84% said that the Forum has enhanced Partnership Work and 95% said that the Forum had raised awareness of their service.

The Forum has also been referenced in the House of Commons (September 21). Sally Ann Hart MP said, "Thanks to the fantastic work of Homeless Link, in East Sussex we now have more of a joined-up approach. Following a meeting last year, we have set up a forum aimed at preventing homelessness and mitigating the risk factors of rough sleeping. It includes local charities, churches, organisations, local authority officers and homelessness support representatives from all over, particularly those who are involved in housing and health support. The forum meets on a regular basis, which means that all those concerned with tackling the issue can meet to discuss progress and next steps. By working together, they are beginning to end the pandemic of rough sleeping in our area. The Government have played a crucial role, in providing funding and impetus to eradicate rough sleeping. Combined with the collaboration of those on the ground, that is now delivering results."

¹⁸ [Oxfordshire Homeless Movement](#)

Case Study: Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF), Oxfordshire

Change Needed: LEAF is funded thanks to donations from local businesses and the public. Previously, services have typically been designed with limited input from people who have experienced homelessness. Homelessness has remained a stubborn problem for many years, LEAF was asked to make sure that provision for those experiencing homelessness meets their needs.

Impact: LEAF members have been a key part of the implementation of a partnership between six local councils, who are adopting a system-wide approach to tackling homelessness. The LEAF group is working with local councils, Thames Valley Police and delivery charities to co-design outreach services that will be more effective and long-lasting.

As well as improving the support offered by homelessness organisations, LEAF has empowered its individual members, helping them see a future for themselves after the trauma of being homeless. LEAF member Tracy Joel comments: “LEAF has helped me to gain more confidence and not to be frightened to have an opinion, giving me new skills. It is good to know my contribution will hopefully mean that no-one else has to go through what I went through.”¹⁹ In November 2021, LEAF was recognised at Homeless Link’s annual Excellence Awards, winning the ‘Stronger Voice’ award.

Case Study: Mediation and Partnership Development (Northampton)

Homeless Link supported Northampton to mediate and build more positive relationships between the local authority, community groups, and faith groups. This was due to a breakdown in relationships regarding the increasing number of rough sleepers in the city. The issues that brought this call for assistance can be summarised as:

- Lack of communication and shared intelligence around the work to tackle homelessness.
- No current partnership working in place to keep ensure that everyone is informed and working towards the same objectives.
- A breakdown of trust between the local authority and voluntary sector which it is felt had led to a lack of respect for the work being done on both sides.

Change Needed: Three meetings took place within a month including a representative from the Local Authority, from church and community groups, a local charitable organisation and central government adviser. Meetings were chaired by Homeless Link to ensure impartiality and objectivity. Each meetings followed an agenda, and a

¹⁹ Oxfordshire Homeless Movement (2018) Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF). Available [here](#).

solution focused approach was adopted. Although, at times there was tension it became clear that all parties wanted to move forward to develop a partnership and the meetings resulted in the following actions:

- The development of a joint statement of a united approach to tackling high levels of people sleeping on the streets.
- Homelessness Strategy review to involve the community and people with lived experience.
- The creation of a 'Single Homeless Forum'. After a 5 year break it was agreed that this in part has influence on the breakdown of communications between groups.
- The creation of a partnership to include support service from the statutory, non-statutory and third sector groups, using examples of good practice, partnership agreements and terms of reference in their development.
- A workshop was attended by 50 individuals included lived experience.
- A report compiled by the Homeless Link Partnership Manager.

Impact: As a result of the mediation, the following has been achieved:

- Commitment to better communication through a 'Single Homelessness Forum'.
- Buy in from across the sector to develop a community-based approach.
- Strategy review to develop understanding of the range of support services.
- Wider services involved in the homelessness prevention and strategy review.
- A recognition that working in silo's has had serious negative impacts.
- Opportunity to consider trauma informed care and person-centred approaches.

Collaboration Case Study: Pan London Private Rented Sector (PRS) Forum

The London Supported Accommodation and Resettlement Workers CoP identified that many services are spending a lot of time in engaging with private landlords, to form partnerships and create routes into PRS accommodation. Organisations reported having added these tasks to staff duties resulting in stretched resources and additional workload for staff who may not have the necessary skills and experience.

Change Needed: A core group was put together whose aim is to direct the Forum, agree on themes, and bring forward ideas on what is needed to strengthen the sector. Collaboration and partnership work is a key focus. The Pan London PRS Steering group is made up of Homeless Link, Crisis, Hope World Wide, Fat Macys, Forward Trust Vision Housing, DWP, St. Mungos, and NewWay Project.

The group is currently seeking additional local authority membership and identified topics for future PRS meetings. These include cost of living, tenancy readiness and maintaining a tenancy, psychologically informed approaches to move on, maintaining

PRS Accommodation, finding landlords, relationship building with landlords, and working with under 35s.

Impact:

- Improved Information Sharing and Connectivity: DWP Homelessness advisors list was shared. As a result, members of the Forum contacted the appropriate DWP Advisor.
- Bridged the Gap Between DWP and Homelessness: There was a lot of negativity and hostility due to lack of clarity of the DWP role when a client moves into the PRS.
- Shared Policies and Procedures: Bigger providers have shared some of their forms to enable smaller providers not to re-invent the wheel.
- Local Influencing: Hope World Wide drafted an email and shared with the Forum members asking landlords for the rent to be reduced so tenants benefit from increase in UC to help with cost-of-living crisis. This was shared with list of landlords.

Increased Knowledge: Members reported difficulties with landlords not accepting under 35s. NewWay Project shared a template to be used with potential landlords informing them under 35s being exempt from the LHA cap, and who are entitled to the rent levels of properties with sole use of a bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom.

Case Study: Greater Manchester Combined Authority – A Bed Every Night (ABEN) Good Practice Event

ABEN highlighted the need to develop provision in the following areas:

- Consistency – minimum standards to overcome disparities in service provision.
- Sharing good practice and sharing information to prevent silo working.
- Workforce development.
- Lack of opportunities to connect and collaborate.
- An open space to address challenges and barriers facing frontline workers.
- Improvement in prevention, intervention, and recovery.

Regular good practice sharing events were needed to provide valuable learning, networking, and information sharing opportunities, as well as space to show case local services. A staff survey was used to gain the views and buy in of the event. The survey highlighted the change needed and what staff wanted support with. Homeless Links Partnership Manager acted as a critical friend to develop the agenda, delivery as well as hosting and chairing events. Partner providers and people with lived experience were supported to prepare for presentations. The session was attended by 60+ workers throughout the ABEN services across the 10 Greater Manchester districts. Not only did the event provide a space and opportunity for ABEN providers to hear the

Homeless Link

achievements of a specific provider, but attendees were also able to learn good practice around partnership working and collaborative approaches. The impact of the lived experience involvement allowed frontline workers to recognise the importance of the work being done across the 10 boroughs. Roundtable discussions enabled frontline workers from different districts to share knowledge and practice of areas such as:

- Homelessness health outreach
- Tenancy sustainment
- Outreach practice
- Partnership working
- The value of lived experience in developing services.

Staff considered aspects of workforce development and support for vicarious trauma and peer support to improve staff recruitment, retention, and professional development. Many exchanged contact details and arranged to shadow and engage in partnership working. "It is a tough job so having a space to be able to look around a room and realise there is a lot of hard work going on across Greater Manchester, and that together we are all in the mindset to try and make a difference is very motivating and comforting that we aren't alone!". ABEN good practice events will continue to be held.

Additional Case Studies

Worcestershire Community of Practice – County Wide Collaboration. Available [here](#).

Hull City Council explore opportunities for strengthening the relationship and understanding between non-commissioned organisations and Hull City Council. [Read the case study here](#).

Stoke on Trent & Liverpool City Councils stakeholder engagement in both these cities around bids to the [Rough Sleeping Initiative](#).

Reading Borough Council Homeless Link Partnership Managers lead the stakeholder engagement for Reading [to assess local provision of services](#).

Redditch and Bromsgrove establishment of high quality [Housing First programmes](#).

Partnership Self-Assessment Toolkit

The Partnership Framework provides a toolkit for measuring partnership working and adopts a rating system from outstanding to inadequate.

This Partnership Self-Assessment Tool is based on 5 Partnership Markers' that make for good partnership working. The 5 Cs are:

1. Clarity of Purpose
2. Connectivity
3. Coproduction
4. Collaboration
5. Communication

The tool provides an outstanding example under different standards for each marker, and you rate how close your partnership is to this example.

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool can be used to record evidence of good practice across the standards and to highlight areas where further improvement is required.

The Local Partnership Plan may be used as a template to set out agreed actions, identify who is responsible for them, and timetable for completion of actions.

How to Use the Partnership Self-Assessment Toolkit

Step 1: On the 'Markers' sheet, go through each marker rating yourself against the outstanding example offered. Your score for each marker and overall partnership score will be automatically calculated and displayed on the 'Overview' sheet.

Step 2: Note next to each marker examples of good practice and areas of concern.

Step 3: Record in the action plan activities to help improve or sustain partnerships. Actions that are overdue or due in the next 30 days will automatically appear on the overview page.

Partnership Self-Assessment Example

Self-Assessment Matrix

Marker		Score					Score	
		Outstanding	Good	Acceptable	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	76	
Clarity of Purpose		Total:					15	
Influence	The partnership knows how to feed in issues to relevant strategic groups and wider governance structures, normally setup within local authority catchment areas, e.g., Homelessness Reduction Board, Health & Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Board, or any other relevant boards or groups that can make decisions that influence the way systems work and improve outcomes for people.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
Shared Vision	A Homelessness Charter or clear vision for the local homelessness partnership is established and understood by all agencies involved. This Charter or vision is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and consistent with identifying and meeting the needs of local people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	
Roles and Responsibilities	Partners' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and each person involved in the local approaches, forums, or groups understands the purpose of their role and what they can bring to the table.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	
Terms of Reference	A Terms of Reference or equivalent document underpins the purpose of the local Homelessness Forum. This is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and up to date.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
Homelessness Forums	Homelessness Forum meetings are held regularly, and all the relevant agencies are involved across statutory, voluntary & community sector, faith-based, and other organisations or bodies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	
Connectivity		Total:					15	
Shared Opportunities	The partnership has an established relationship with relevant funders and local authority officers and commissioners. This includes open communication and information sharing regarding commissioning or new funding opportunities across the partnership.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
Working Groups	Working groups or action focused groups are in place which enable ongoing connections regarding opportunities for collaboration, funding, and solution focused discussions across relevant local agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	
Referral Pathways	Accessible and clear referral pathways are in place and known to local agencies, which enable services to connect and work together to maximise positive outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping locally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	
Operational and Strategic Groups	Seamless and consistent connection exists between operational and strategic groups and functions and there are clear lines of reporting and accountability between the two.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
Joined Up Working	Silo working is minimised within agencies and all partners can demonstrate ways of effectively working in partnership with a positive external outlook.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	
Co-Production		Total:					23	
Involvement	Co-production is embedded at both strategic and operational levels. People with lived experience of homelessness or rough sleeping are effectively involved in forming approaches and making decisions that affect them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	
Equipping	People with lived experience are provided with training and are equipped with appropriate support to participate meaningfully in co-production activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
Embedding	Co-production is meaningfully embedded within the design, delivery, and oversight of the partnership, to ensure all elements of the partnership approach(es) incorporate the voices of people with lived experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	
Mutual Agreement	Co-production principles are mutually agreed across the partnership and included in the Charter, Terms of Reference or other agreed ways of working.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
Peer Mentoring	Established Peer Mentoring is in place and operating across the local system. People with lived experience are a member of and supported by the local partnership of agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	
Collaboration		Total:					7	
Shared Learning	Learning needs are identified across the partnership and training, shadowing, and other learning opportunities are made available and shared with members and other agencies where appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
Joint Action Planning	Operational forums are held with Multidisciplinary Teams and workable SMART actions are agreed. Partners are held to account and there are clearly identified links between operational and strategic groups or forums.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
Reflective Practice	The partnership is holding reflective practice sessions to review the partnership's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as providing an opportunity for identifying any established and emerging good practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
Identifying & Filling Gaps	The partnership identifies gaps in local service provision and responds by jointly bidding for new services where appropriate, sharing resources, and together exploring other funding/commissioning opportunities. New services are built that are evidence-based and filling gaps where needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	
Strengths and Skills	Partnerships are acknowledging the strengths and skills of all the members and utilising each other's experience to form relationships with formal partnership agreements in place where necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	
Communication		Total:					16	
Information & Data Sharing Agreements	Arrangements for sharing information are in place and consistent across all members of the partnership and are regularly reviewed to ensure that relevant information is shared between agencies where appropriate and where this will have a benefit for people accessing services and receiving support.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
Accessible Language	Language is inclusive, clear, jargon free, and understood by all partners; an acronym reference or glossary are included in the Terms of Reference or other agreed ways of working.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	
IT Security	Nuances across different IT systems are understood to ensure that information is shared smoothly and quickly between agencies, considering organisational requirements for safe and secure data sharing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
Consistency	Communication is consistent and there is a regularly updated, online and accessible directory of local services to assist those who are homeless or vulnerably housed, with the purpose of identifying the relevant point of contact for a service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
Diverse Platforms	Varied platforms for engagement are adopted by members of the partnership including those with lived experience of homelessness or rough sleeping. These platforms could include Microsoft SharePoint, Teams or other application and web-based platforms that meet the needs of the users.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	

Appendix 1: Glossary

Alliance Commissioning

In an alliance contract model a set of providers enters a single arrangement with a commissioner to deliver services. Commissioners and providers are legally bound together to deliver the specific contracted service, and to share risk and responsibility for meeting the agreed outcomes. The alliance is reliant on high levels of trust across its relationships. Members collectively govern the alliance through a leadership board with an agreed term of reference.

Combatting Drugs Partnership

In June 2022, the Home Office published Guidance for local delivery partners 'From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives'. Available [here](#). Combating Drugs Partnerships are multi-agency forums accountable for delivering outcomes within local areas. They provide a single setting for understanding and addressing shared challenges related to drug-related harm, based on the local context and need. A dedicated Combating Drugs Partnership brings together action and oversight across the priorities of the 10-year drugs strategy with accountability for delivery against the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework.

Commitment to Refer and Duty to Refer

As part of the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), public bodies are bound by the 'Duty to Refer' where a person who has engaged with them might be experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Housing Associations were not included in the legislation as a public body. In response National Housing Federation, Housing Associations, and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) developed a housing association offer on the Duty to Refer know and Commitment to Refer. National Housing Federation - Commitment to Refer.

Corporate Parent

When a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority or is under 25 and was looked-after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent. Corporate Parenting is intended to support the role and tasks expected of a parent for care experienced children and young people. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 outlines corporate parenting principles, which comprise of seven needs that local authorities in England must have in regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to looked-after children or care leavers. See also Corporate parenting resource pack (local.gov.uk).

Health and Care Act 2022

The Health and Care Act 2022 is a major reform of the health and care system in England. It aims to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities by joining up NHS, social care, and public health services. See Health and Care Act 2022 (legislation.gov.uk).

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

It is a statutory requirement that every local authority has a strategy for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping. The Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Guidance provides guidance on housing authorities' duties to carry out a homelessness review and to formulate and publish a strategy based on the results of that review.

Homelessness Charter

A charter provides a vision, values, and principles that can be shared by all of those working to end homelessness, and to support those affected by it.

Homelessness Forums

A Homelessness Forum is usually organised and led by the local authority. There may also be voluntary sector led groups or partnerships which come together to tackle homelessness and might include individuals as well businesses and may involve people with lived experience of homelessness.

Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017

England's homelessness legislation places duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'. See also Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (legislation.gov.uk).

Integrated Care Strategy

The Health and Care Act 2022 amends the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and requires integrated care partnerships to write an integrated care strategy to set out how the assessed needs can be met through the exercise of the functions of the integrated care board, partner local authorities, or NHS England. See also Guidance on the preparation of integrated care strategies - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Integrated Care Partnerships

The Health and Care Act 2022 establishes integrated care boards and requires them, with partner local authorities, to form a joint committee – the Integrated Care Partnership.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 provides for the establishment of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (“MAPPA”) to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders. See Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA): Guidance.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

A multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) is a regular local meeting to discuss how to help victims at high risk of murder or serious harm. A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, probation, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Many areas have established Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs) to enable fast information sharing with the purpose of making an efficient and fast decision to safeguard vulnerable children and mitigate the risk of anyone slipping through the safeguarding net.

Police and Crime Commissioners

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are elected in England and Wales to make sure that local police meet the needs of the community. They are responsible for how an area is policed, the police budget, the Council Tax charge for police, the information about what the local police are doing, and appointing the chief constable. See also Role of the PCC (apccs.police.uk).

Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)

The Care Act 2014 states that local authorities must establish a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) to lead adult safeguarding arrangements across its locality and oversee and coordinate the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of its member and partner agencies. A SAB should develop and publish a strategic plan, publish an annual report and commission safeguarding adults’ reviews (SARs).

Terms of Reference

Terms of reference define the structure of a working group or committee. It sets out who the members or stakeholders are, defines the project aims, sets out risk factors and outlines governance arrangements.

Appendix 2: Partnership Matrix



Partnership Self-Assessment Tool

Please see our website to download a copy.

About Homeless Link

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for organisations working with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in England. We aim to develop, inspire, support, and sustain a movement of organisations working together to achieve positive futures for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

Representing over 900 organisations across England, we are in a unique position to see both the scale and nature of the tragedy of homelessness. We see the data gaps; the national policy barriers; the constraints of both funding and expertise; the system blocks and attitudinal obstacles. But crucially, we also see – and are instrumental in developing – the positive practice and ‘what works’ solutions.

As an organisation we believe that things can and should be better: not because we are naïve or cut off from reality, but because we have seen and experienced radical positive change in the way systems and services are delivered – and that gives us hope for a different future.

We support our members through research, guidance, and learning, and to promote policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

What We Do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

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Let's End Homelessness Together

