



SHAPING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

Homeless Link's strategy
to end homelessness

April 2021 - April 2024

As the membership body for the homelessness sector in England, with over 800 members, Homeless Link is 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.

Key to those solutions is the tireless work our growing body of members do across the country to support, enable and empower people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. More and more we have seen the positive impact of cross-sector collaborative approaches to tackling homelessness and multiple disadvantage, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have witnessed first-hand the growing power of digital and data-driven approaches that complement traditional face-to-face work. And the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness – the real experts – are growing stronger.

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.

This new Strategic Plan presents a roadmap for achieving that change. We want our members – the beating heart of all we do – to come on this journey with us. To end homelessness for good by ensuring everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it. And moreover, to help create positive futures for all individuals experiencing homelessness or living in vulnerable housing situations.

Here is our journey. Come with us.

Our Vision

Our 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.



Our Mission

To develop, inspire, support and sustain a movement of organisations working together to achieve positive futures for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed.





Our Values

At Homeless Link we are:

Committed

We work tirelessly to drive social change to end homelessness for good

Compassionate

We believe in the value and potential of people. We champion justice, humanity and compassion for all

Credible

We speak the truth based on evidence. We listen and learn, ask questions and respond with honesty and integrity

Collaborative

We believe in the power of partnership, working together for better results - with our members, our partners and people experiencing homelessness



Our Approach

As an independent charitable organisation we work tirelessly to support and represent our members and their beneficiaries. In order to do this we take an enterprising approach to our activities and finances. We actively avoid being dependent on any one source of funding and try wherever possible to self-generate resources. This can be via fundraising and corporate sponsorship, bidding for contracts that further our Vision and Mission, and by making a surplus on our trading activities. We aim for 100% transparency in everything we do.

We adopt a ‘partnerships by default’ approach to our work, meaning that we actively seek out partners and work collaboratively wherever possible including with people with lived experience.

We are fully committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and stand against all forms of discrimination. We aim to embed EDI across all areas of our structure and work and have produced an allied EDI Strategy to sit alongside this plan (available from June 2021).



Our New Strategic Priorities 2021-24

Following extensive consultation, we have established our key strategic priorities for the coming three years. These are heavily influenced by our members' experiences as well as the current Covid-19 pandemic. They are aspirational in that they require change both in our own work and that of our members. They will also require us to identify new resources and partners.

1. Home Safe

We believe everyone should have the right to open and close their own front door and feel safe and secure in their own accommodation. Sadly for many people this isn't the case. To help achieve this we will:

- Undertake a comprehensive review of the full range of accommodation options that are available to individuals and couples experiencing homelessness, to include the scale, scope and quality of services across the country. Use the findings of this review to make recommendations for the future development of accommodation services
- Drive the scaling up of high fidelity Housing First as a solution for people facing multiple disadvantage for whom traditional models don't work
- Working with partners, support the development of data-informed housing and homelessness strategies at both a local and national level, which tackle rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness, including hidden homelessness
- Strengthen links and explore partnerships with relevant housing and funding/investment organisations in order to increase the availability of high quality, affordable accommodation for people experiencing homelessness
- Campaign to secure positive progress on the need for adequate and long term secure funding for supported housing in all its forms, as part of a comprehensive welfare safety net



2. People First

We believe that homelessness is a temporary state rather than a permanent condition. It is vital that individuals experiencing homelessness are given the right support to meet their needs and aspirations and improve wellbeing. To help achieve this we will:

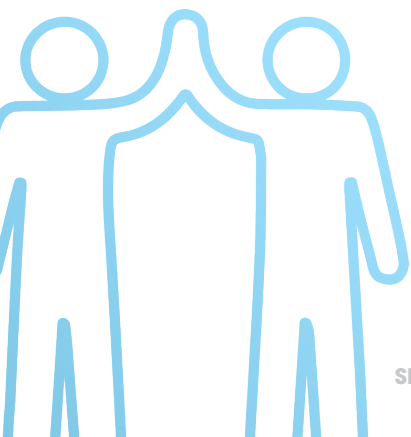
- Develop tools and resources to support people experiencing homelessness into a wide range of employment, volunteering and life skills training opportunities
- Increase our support for activities that encourage wellbeing, self-expression and empowerment, in particular by promoting community-based solutions based on individual needs and wants
- Ensure that the key role faith-based and non-commissioned community organisations can play in supporting people out of homelessness is fully recognised and acknowledged, both locally and nationally
- Champion Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion both in our own work and across the sector, ensuring that the diverse needs of people experiencing homelessness are identified and met in the most appropriate ways
- Ensure the specific needs of women and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness are recognised in both policy and practice, including in local commissioning arrangements and national strategies
- Continue our work as part of the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coalition to improve the way that services across different sectors support people facing multiple disadvantage and create long-term changes to local and national systems
- Identify and promote policy and practice approaches that effectively meet the housing, support and advice needs of non-UK citizens who are homeless and those with no recourse to public funds



3. Prevention Into Action

If we are to truly end homelessness, we must find ways of targeting our efforts and resources further upstream to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place. But it is important to focus on what is actually within our gift to change, both as an organisation and a sector, alongside our campaigning efforts in this space. Hence we pledge to:

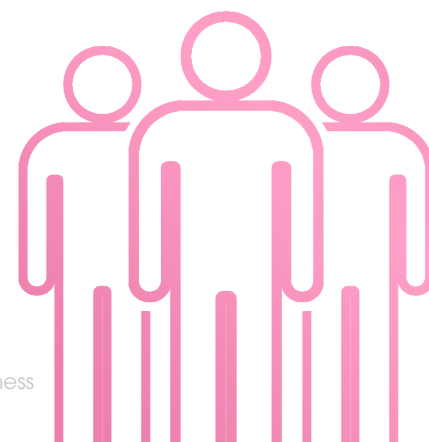
- Campaign for an enhanced advice/advocacy offer for people experiencing or at risk of all forms of homelessness. Strengthen relationships between homelessness and advice/advocacy organisations and ensure our members understand the legal frameworks and how to effectively advocate for peoples' rights
- Play a leading role in the emerging collaboration between health bodies, local authorities and the homelessness sector in order to improve health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness (especially people sleeping rough and those being discharged from hospital or other institutional services e.g. prisons, care, armed forces)
- In partnership with members, conduct research into the drivers and potential preventative strategies that may reduce evictions and tenancy breakdowns that can exacerbate and prolong peoples' homelessness

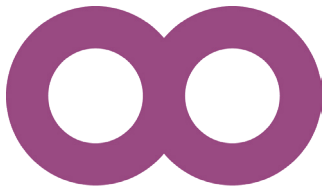


4. A Stronger Voice

Our strength lies in our members: their skills, experience, resources and passion. They know better than anyone the true nature and scale of the challenge to end homelessness. We want to give voice to their experience and, in so doing, create opportunities for shared learning and celebration and give challenge to systems that are not working for people. To achieve this we will:

- Take a bolder campaigning approach, which enables members to play an active role and lend the weight of their experience and knowledge to changes at a systems level, both locally and nationally
- Make it easier for organisations to identify themselves as members of Homeless Link and engage at all levels within the organisation in ways that suit their circumstances
- Support our members to improve their practice via information resources, training and events, networking and grant making, and make our In-Form client relationship and service management system an essential tool for managing data about our members' work
- Secure independent funding for our campaigning work that enables us to have a strong voice and legitimate opinion on behalf of our members, in pursuit of an end to homelessness
- Grow our membership base to over 1000 by the end of this strategy period to ensure we represent the widest possible range of homelessness organisations in this country





homeless link

About Us

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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