

COVID-19 and Homelessness

International learning

About

This briefing provides links to information about Covid-19 infection rates among people experiencing homelessness in other countries, and the responses that have been adopted.

The governments of England, Scotland and Wales acted swiftly and robustly to reduce the risk of Covid-19 among people experiencing homelessness and rates of infection and death remain low. While there is little published data from elsewhere, there are interesting and useful resources which will help us as we reflect on our initial and ongoing response.

US and Canada

The impact of Covid-19 on people sleeping rough or using shelters was widely reported in the US and appears to have been significant. In many cities, large communal shelters remained open and greater numbers of people were forced to use them due streets being cleared and subways closing.

Resources & websites

- National Alliance to End Homelessness (US) advice and practical guidance: <https://endhomelessness.org/coronavirus-and-homelessness/>
- Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness statement 20 March 2020: <https://caeh.ca/covid-19-homeless-sector/>
- Canadian Network for the Health and Housing of People Experiencing Homelessness advice and resources: <http://cnh3.ca/resources/>
- Health Canada advice for homeless service providers: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/homelessness.html

Published Papers

A number of more in-depth papers, articles and studies have been published in the US about the risks, prevalence and testing of Covid-19 within shelters.

- Paper looking at three shelters in Seattle, USA: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6917e2.htm
- Article about Shelters in New York, USA: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/socialpolicy/2020/06/01/new-yorks-homeless-population-should-not-be-pushed-into-the-shadows-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- Research Paper of a Shelter in Boston, USA: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.6887>
- Five State night shelter study, USA: <https://jamanetwork.com/channels/health-forum/fullarticle/2765745>

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News articles (North America)

The following is a selection of news reports from the US, and one from Canada:

- Chicago: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/columnists/2020/5/21/21266311/covid-19-outbreak-homelessshelter-raises-concerns-some-staying-there>
- Philadelphia: www.inquirer.com/news/covid-outbreak-death-philadelphia-homeless-shelter-after-city-broke-up-encampment-convention-center-20200501.html
- San Francisco: <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/04/19/coronavirus-update-san-francisco-homeless-shelter-outbreak-grows-to-over-100-confirmed-cases/>
- Los Angeles: <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/investigations/coronavirus-spreads-to-most-skid-row-homeless-shelters-despite-efforts-to-stop-it/2360838/>
- Toronto: www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZ-HjC_aHyQ

Europe

Published papers

- Dublin's response to Covid-19 and homelessness:
www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2020/g-July-20/Ireland's-innovative-approach-to-supporting-homeless-and-drug-using-populations-during-COVID-19-saved-lives

Resources & websites

- World Habitat's report and case studies from the European End Street Homelessness Campaign cities:
<https://world-habitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/EESHHC-Responding-to-Covid19-case-studies-FINAL-1.pdf>
- FEANTSA (European federation) statement on 18 March 2020:
www.feantsa.org/en/news/2020/03/18/covid19-staying-home-not-an-option-for-people-experiencing-homelessness?bcParent=26
- FEANTSA (European federation) statement 31 March 2020 '7 steps for authorities to take':
www.feantsa.org/en/news/2020/03/31/seven-measures-authorities-must-take-to-protect-homeless-people-from-covid?bcParent=26
- Housing First Europe Hub's advice for Housing First services:
<https://housingfirsteurope.eu/research/covid-19-resources-homelessness-housing-first/>

International

Resources & websites

The Institute of Global Homelessness's collection of Covid-19 & Homelessness Guidance resources form around the world:

<https://ighomelessness.org/covid-19-homelessness-resources/>



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.

Let's end homelessness together

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