

National Advisory Council (NAC)

Terms of reference

Role of the National Advisory Council

The National Advisory Council (NAC) is the forum set up to enable senior individuals working for member agencies to have a role in informing the policy work of Homeless Link.

Aim of NAC

The aim of the NAC is to act as a strategic forum for Homeless Link focusing on national political and policy issues and seeking members input to more effectively enable Homeless Link to influence policy. It has a key role in ensuring that the policy and influencing work of Homeless Link is grounded in the experience of its members, including, identifying the impact of policies and ensuring the NAC members are kept informed of key policy and legislative developments

Objectives of NAC

The purpose of the NAC is to:

- Give strategic advice to Homeless Link primarily through the SMT and Head of Policy and Communications, on the development and impact of government policy on the ground
- Shape the national voice of Homeless Link's responses to policy issues including feeding in the impact on homelessness and supported housing services and on people who are homeless and/or vulnerably housed
- To comment on drafts of policy briefings consultation and responding to other requests from Homeless Link (should we specify the Policy & Communications Team) including, requested case studies/information

Composition of the NAC

The NAC shall consist of a maximum of twenty-five members and its membership should ensure geographical coverage with members from each of the English regions but also to replicate the wider membership composition of Homeless Link in terms of size and type of project. Further members can be co-opted should certain groups be under-represented, or should Homeless Link want to bring in the skills, experience or perspectives of non-homelessness supported housing members.

Membership

At present elected NAC members:

- Must be a senior employee or service user representative of an organisation that is a full or associate member of Homeless Link
- Can be an officer, trustee or director but should operate at a senior level
- Must commit to the objectives of the NAC and the expectations of NAC as outlined in the terms of reference.

Homeless Link

Nominations to replace vacancies to the NAC will be sought where possible through open advertisement in Homeless Link's membership mailings. Appointments will be made on an assessment of the skill/agency composition of the current members of the NAC to ensure that the NAC represents the full spectrum and diversity of Homeless Link membership including geographical coverage.

Candidates for membership submit the nomination form. If appropriate, candidates are invited to a meeting as a guest and meet with Chair prior to meeting start. Following the meeting the nominee may be invited back as a member if appointed.

Appointments will be made by Homeless Link in consultation with NAC members.

Members will remain part of the NAC for three years, with the option of remaining on the NAC for a further three years in agreement Homeless Link.

Chair of the NAC

The NAC meetings will currently be chaired by Homeless Link staff but following the recruitment for new members in 2018 this arrangement will be reviewed.

NAC meetings

Homeless Link will hold four NAC meetings per year.

The venue for the NAC is expected to be at Homeless Link, however, it may decide to hold up to two of its meetings per year outside London.

Homeless Link will collate and maintain a list of NAC members including contact details, information on roles, responsibilities and information on the organisation they work for and this will be regularly updated and circulated to NAC members

Expectations of NAC Members

NAC members will be expected to attend a minimum of two meetings per year. NAC members will be expected to stand down if they fail to attend three meetings in any rolling 12-month period, without substantial reason, such as, severe ill health. Dates for NAC meetings will be set at the earliest opportunity for the year ahead

At their first meeting, new NAC members will have a slot on the agenda to introduce themselves and their service.

NAC members are expected to:

- Contribute items to the agenda
- Read the papers and prepare for the meetings
- Fully participate in discussions at meetings
- Where relevant, to contribute to requests for information between meetings.

Expenses

NAC members will be paid reasonable travel and other expenses properly incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings in accordance with Homeless Link's general policy on expenses.

Homeless Link

Members are required to ensure expenses are kept to a minimum by purchasing advance and/or not open return tickets, travelling outside peak hours and using most economical form of transport where possible.

Relationship with the Board

The Board of Homeless Link want to have a close link with the NAC and, as such, the Board and NAC have agreed that:

- There should be a member of the Board invited to all NAC meetings and that person should act as a link between the NAC and Board
- That both Board and NAC meetings should have a standing agenda item for Board/NAC feedback.

Relationship with staff

The senior management team (SMT) will be represented at NAC meetings. The Head of Policy and Communications will be the primary point of contact for NAC members.

Secretariat

The Policy and Communications team will deal with the administration of meetings and will take minutes and circulate papers.

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years by the group.

For enquires about the NAC please contact jacqui.mccluskey@homelesslink.org.uk

TOR reviewed February 2018

Let's end homelessness together

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