

**Housing  
Rights**

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**Consultation Response**

**Draft Homelessness Strategy**

**2022-2027**

**January 2022**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Housing Rights is Northern Ireland's leading independent provider of specialist housing advice. For over 50 years we have been helping people to find and keep a home. We believe that prevention is better than the cure, and work to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

Housing Rights' policy work is informed by the views and experience of the people who contact us for advice and aims to support the identification of evidence based, user informed solutions.

Our work in preventing homelessness across all our services and more specifically with people experiencing homelessness, for example through our Beyond the Gate project,<sup>1</sup> ensures that our contributions to this consultation are evidence based. Housing Rights welcome this opportunity to contribute a number of overarching comments and specific suggestions which the NIHE may wish to consider when amending and refining the existing strategy.

## 2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The strategy's commitment to **collaboration**, which has been carried through from the last strategy, is welcome. However, in Housing Rights view this section needs significant strengthening to make it both more robust and meaningful. This response proposes that an outcome and associated indicators are added with respect to this and proposed wording for same are included for consideration.
- To strengthen the collaborative approach proposed in this strategy, Housing Rights would support legislative change to strengthen collaboration between statutory bodies and has therefore recommended to the Department for Communities that it should bring forward legislative reform to place a statutory duty to cooperate in the prevention and alleviation of homelessness on each of the statutory bodies named in s6A (5) of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988.
- Housing Rights strongly welcomes the NIHE's commitment throughout the strategy to listen and respond to people who have **lived experiences** of homelessness.
- In recognition of the intensive investment of time and resources to facilitate this new process, Housing Rights would suggest that it should be named as

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<sup>1</sup> Beyond the Gate works with repeat offenders across Northern Ireland. By co-ordinating wrap-around support for prisoners upon release, Beyond the Gate advisers work to reduce homelessness on leaving custody, and associated re-offending, by ensuring that their clients are supported with the initial transition back into independent living.

a fourth objective of the strategy. Housing Rights has also recommended proposed wording for both an outcome and associated indicators which would reflect the importance of this objective and allow its achievement to be measured from an Outcomes Based Approach perspective.

- Housing Rights is acutely aware of the difficulties in the **private rented sector** which significantly contribute to homelessness. Our assessment of the current draft strategy however is that references to the private rented sector are muted. Housing Rights views it as appropriate for the flagship strategy to prevent homelessness to more overtly address the issue of the private rented sector. The challenges associated with the sector in terms of affordability, fitness, security etc. should more comprehensively be noted to reflect the private tenancies' unsuitability for people/ families who are homeless or people/ families whose housing circumstances make them vulnerable to homelessness.
- Housing Rights welcomes the NIHE's independent research project which evaluates the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022. However, Housing Rights believe the timing of the **evaluation** may present challenges to incorporating all learning into this current strategy.
- Housing Rights' welcome the inclusion in the evaluation Terms of Reference of the requirement to explore the effectiveness of inter-agency working in the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy 2017 – 2022 and any aspects of this which could be improved in the development and delivery of the Homelessness Strategy 2022 – 2027.

### **3.0 OVERARCHING AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Housing Rights would like to suggest the following overarching areas for consideration which may be of use to the NIHE in maximising the effectiveness of their planned interventions:

#### **3.1 Collaboration**

**3.1.1** Housing Rights acknowledges the importance of collaboration in ending homelessness; the strategy's commitment to collaboration, which has been carried through from the last strategy, is therefore welcome. **In our view this section of the strategy (primarily under Objective 1) needs significant strengthening to make it both more robust and meaningful.**

**3.1.2** To ensure the contributions of all stakeholders are recognised, Housing Rights recommends that the distinct roles played by statutory and community and voluntary organisations are clearly defined, particularly with respect to the achievement of key objectives. This will ensure the role played by all stakeholders is appropriately maximised and avoid a scenario in which no-one feels responsible for certain objectives which leads to their not being progressed.

**3.1.3** The NIHE may further wish to review what collaborative working looks like in practice, where resource, management and funding issues are all relevant.

**3.1.4** If the strategy is to better promote collaborative working these issues should be addressed in the strategy. Not only will better awareness of and connections between services make better use of finite resources, it would also improve the experience of the people who use the services, as their needs could be met through a more straightforward process. **To this end, Housing Rights would suggest creating a directory of services** so that everyone can be clear of what services already exist, as a practical illustration of this collaboration and to assist in ensuring that people in need of support receive the most appropriate service as quickly as possible. **Housing Rights also suggests a review of the ongoing model of short term or year-to-year funding to support collaboration.** This model of funding undermines the effectiveness of contributions which can be made through collaborative working.

**3.1.5** Housing Rights commends the NIHE on its collaborative working throughout the pandemic, especially with the Department of Health and frontline voluntary bodies. This is evidence that collaborative working can deliver. However, Housing Rights is concerned that the relationships and cooperation that the pandemic inspired, may be lost in a post-pandemic setting. To support, facilitate and copper fasten the purpose of such collaboration, Housing Rights would suggest that an explicit duty is placed on stakeholders to cooperate. This would not only bring Northern Ireland into line with legislative developments elsewhere, it would ensure that the prevention and alleviation of homelessness remain a key priority for all relevant public bodies. **Housing Rights would support legislative change and has therefore recommended to the Department for Communities that it should bring forward legislative reform to place a statutory duty to cooperate in the prevention and alleviation of homelessness on each of the statutory bodies named in s6A (5) of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988.**

**3.1.6** Housing Rights welcomes the proposal on pg. 8 for the development of protocols for partner public services and would suggest that the Homeless Strategy is an appropriate place to provide further detail on such protocols for clarity.

**3.1.7** Finally, Housing Rights has recommended that given the vision of the strategy to end homelessness together and to assess progress in this regard, the outcomes and indicators of the strategy reflect work in this area. To that

end, Housing Rights has suggested an appropriate outcome and several indicators which may usefully be adopted to do so. Please see section 5.0.

## **3.2 Lived experience**

**3.2.1 Housing Rights welcomes the NIHE's commitment throughout the strategy to listen and respond to people who have lived experiences of homelessness.** Indeed, it is clear that the NIHE value the contributions of those with lived experiences, and Housing Rights supports the commitment to have those with lived experience involved in the co-production and co-design of strategy actions. Housing Rights' experience in supporting participation of people affected by issues in the private rented sector specifically and beyond, in our own work, show us that this shift in approach will require appropriate resources to achieve meaningfully.

**3.2.2 Housing Rights would therefore suggest, that whilst lived experience is at the core of the strategy, in order to ensure appropriate focus and resources are directed towards it, it should be a key objective of the strategy. Indeed, it is our view that supporting people with lived experience of homelessness in the design and delivery of homelessness policy and services, should be added as the fourth objective of the strategy.** Housing Rights believes this approach to making it an objective, would also ensure that as the strategy progresses the NIHE can evaluate progress against this objective with a view to improving the approach to involving people with lived experience so that homelessness policy and services move towards being co-produced with people who have lived experience of the relevant issues.

**3.2.3** Furthermore, in recognition of the intensive investment of time and resources to facilitate this new process, **Housing Rights recommends the adoption of a specific outcome and indicators through which the success of this objective would be measured.** Proposed wording for the outcome and indicator is included in Section 5.0. of this response.

**3.2.4** To enhance stakeholders understanding of the approach to be taken by the NIHE in this work, Housing Rights **suggests the strategy detail how the NIHE plans to engage with and work alongside those with lived experiences.** Usefully, the strategy could consider *who* exactly are the people they want to engage with. It would be appropriate in the first instance to consider those groups who are experiencing inequality in relation to housing and homelessness. Housing Rights recognises recent research which identified the particular experiences of women who are chronically homeless for example. The approach adopted for this group may be different from the approach taken with e.g. young people. In other words, those with lived experiences of homelessness are not a homogenous group, therefore, specific barriers will

have to be addressed, and specific approaches employed, to engage with specific groups of people. Engaging with those with lived experience of chronic homelessness for example, may require a trauma informed approach, whereas language and cultural sensitivities may inform the approach for engagement with some people from ethnic minority communities.

Furthermore, the NIHE will be aware that Homeless Network Scotland are currently leading work with their Change Team and 'All in for Change' programme. The team is made up of individuals already working in the sector and individuals who have their own lived experience of being homeless. This combination of policy and practice allows for big issues to be viewed from multiple perspectives and it allows solutions to come from those with lived experience. Housing Rights commends the Change Team for their valuable work and believes this kind of model could be considered in this strategy. **(See Appendix 1)**

**3.2.5** Housing Rights note the commitment on pg. 12 to develop a Homelessness Lived Experience programme aligned to the strategy. It may be of use to the NIHE to know that **Housing Rights is preparing to commission research to better understand groups who are experiencing poor housing and homelessness in Northern Ireland and potential models of participation which may assist their involvement in decisions made about policy and services.** The research is the first step in a programme of work which aims to test the application of such models and consider their applicability to improve housing and homelessness policy and services in Northern Ireland.

**Housing Rights would be pleased to work with the NIHE in the development of the Homelessness Lived Experience programme.**

### **3.3 Private Rented Sector**

**3.3.1** Housing Rights is acutely aware of the difficulties in the private rented sector which significantly contribute to homelessness. Indeed, it is our view that prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment cannot be fully achieved, without proper consideration being given to addressing the many issues faced by some people living in the private rented sector.

**Therefore, Housing Rights views it as appropriate for the flagship strategy to prevent homelessness to more overtly address the issue of the private rented sector and more definitively identify the problems associated with the sector in this strategy.** This point is considered more specifically under Objective 3 below.

### 3.4 Evaluation

**3.4.1** Housing Rights supports learning by reflection, and welcomes the NIHE's independent research project which evaluates the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022. **However, Housing Rights believe the timing of the evaluation may present challenges to incorporating all learning into this current strategy.** One area of concern is that responses to the draft strategy will not be informed by the valuable insights which the evaluation will produce. In practice, timing may also present a challenge for the NIHE to shape this strategy based on the insights offered in the evaluation of the previous strategy. It would be useful therefore, for consideration to be given to how the findings of the evaluation will be shared with those involved in the delivery of the strategy via the various groups (LAG, CHF, HSSG etc.) so that the learning of the evaluation can influence the approach to implementing the draft strategy. Additionally, **Housing Rights would suggest that the timing of future evaluations is given adequate advance consideration, to avoid this situation arising again.**

**3.4.2** Housing Rights views the evaluation of interagency working as particularly important for the development of this current strategy, especially since the structures created to facilitate this (Local Area Groups, Central Homeless Forum and HSSG) were adopted under the 2017-22 strategy. **We therefore welcome the inclusion in the evaluation Terms of Reference to explore the effectiveness of inter-agency working in the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy 2017 – 2022 and any aspects of this which could be improved in the development and delivery of the Homelessness Strategy 2022 – 2027.** Housing Rights believes this evaluation is an opportunity to access what has worked well and to improve the work going forward. Housing Rights is aware for example of specific Local Area Groups which work exceptionally well, and believe that there is learning to be taken from these groups.

**Additionally, Housing Rights recognises the challenges associated with interagency working at a HSSG level when the work is not underwritten by a legislative framework which prescribes and facilitates effective collaboration (Please see comments at 3.1. regarding the need for a statutory duty to cooperate).**

## 4.0 KEY OBJECTIVES

Housing Rights wish to contribute some further comments in relation to each of the key objectives developed in the strategy:

### 4.1 Objective 1 - Prioritise homelessness prevention

**4.1.1** As outlined on pg.26 homelessness prevention was recognised as a key objective in the Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022. In delivering this objective the NIHE introduced the Housing Solutions team. The provision of housing advice is at the heart of Housing Solutions, and ensuring that such advice is of good quality, is therefore critical to the success of this approach.

A Generalist Advice Quality Standard has been developed for Northern Ireland. In recognition of the complexities of other areas of specialist advice however, a separate advice quality standard has been developed in relation to debt advice by Money Advice Service and there is support for the adoption of one in relation to housing.

It is Housing Rights view, therefore, that the development and adoption of a Housing Advice Quality Standard is imperative to quality assuring the Housing Solutions approach. That such a standard would also contribute to improving standards of housing advice provision delivered by all agencies involved in homelessness prevention work, adds further weight to the need for such a standard. Housing Rights recommends that the NIHE include a specific action in relation to this under Objective 1. *“Housing Advice Quality Standard agreed and implemented for all relevant agencies across Northern Ireland.”*

**4.1.2** Housing Rights supports the goal of partner agencies working together to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies. This goal however requires proper planning, as without it, there is a risk of duplicating services. As noted in **3.1.4** Housing Rights would support the creation of a directory of services to help minimise this risk.

**4.1.3** Housing Rights agrees with the legislative reform mentioned on pg. 31 as an important element for consideration, and welcomes the NIHE’s approach of drawing inspiration from other jurisdictions to place statutory focus on preventing homelessness.

## **4.2 Objective 2 – Address homelessness by providing secure, appropriate accommodation and support**

**4.2.1** Housing Rights commends the on-going preventative work the Housing Solutions team carries out, however notes that no official evaluation or review has taken place and been published since this approach was adopted in 2018. In keeping with the evaluation of the previous strategy, Housing Rights would suggest the NIHE evaluate the delivery of the Housing Solutions team as this would ensure further learning is embedded in the approach to ending homelessness.

**4.2.2** The commitment on pg.38 to ensure arrangements are in place through which the NIHE will listen and respond to people with lived experience is welcomed by Housing Rights. However, the NIHE may wish to review why this explicit commitment is only made in Objective 2. As mentioned in **3.2**, we believe that in order for this commitment to be realised, the correct level of



resources and support need to be allocated to it, and so would suggest the commitment take greater prominence in the strategy.

**4.2.3** At Housing Rights we commend the efforts of the NIHE in agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Communities and Department of Health, which has provided accommodation and support to people with no recourse to public funds throughout the pandemic. Indeed, we welcome and support the commitment of the NIHE to explore alternative routes for continuing this protection in a post Covid context and we recommend that the learning from the MoU is built upon to provide longer-term solutions for people with no recourse to public funds.

### **4.3 Objective 3 – Support customers exiting homelessness into settled accommodation**

**4.3.1** The term ‘affordable’, which is used in this strategy around housing supply, may be conflated with current proposals to increase supply of ‘affordable’ products, like Intermediate Rent and PRS leasing. Housing Rights would caution the use of similar terminology as there is explicit recognition within the current proposals that these products are unlikely to be suitable for households who are experiencing homelessness. Therefore, a clear distinction in the wording would be helpful to create distance between the strategy’s vision of ending homelessness through affordable homes, and the current proposals of affordable products to add to the housing supply.

**4.3.2** **It may be more appropriate to focus the emphasis in this strategy on increasing the supply of social housing rather than housing supply more generally.**

**4.3.3** Housing Rights notes the reference on p.48 to expanding housing options across all tenures. It is unclear from the strategy if the intention is to e.g., do this by using private rented sector accommodation in the discharge of the statutory duty. As referenced above in **3.3.1** it is important that the difficulties with the private rented sector are explicitly recognised in this strategy.

**4.3.4** Housing Rights recognises the current standard of fitness for private rented sector properties in Northern Ireland is outdated and does not ensure tenants are provided with a good, quality home. Furthermore, we do not believe that the PRS is sufficiently regulated to drive the required improvement in standards within the sector. Indeed, between April 2019 and March 2020, Housing Rights dealt with over 2,700 issues relating to housing conditions: 72% of these originated in the PRS, compared to 22% in the social rented sector.

Given that the Local Housing Allowance is based on the bottom 30% of local private rents, it is in this lower end of the market where homeless households

are likely to be placed. Housing Rights notes with concern the findings of the 2016 NIHE Housing Condition Survey that low-income households were among the most likely to live in property that fell below the Decent Homes Standard.<sup>2</sup> Poor fitness standards also often exacerbate the affordability issues faced by those living in the private sector, as homes are not properly heated or insulated.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the NIHE Housing Condition Survey 2016 also reported that, “the tenure with the highest proportion in fuel poverty in 2016 was the private rented sector.”<sup>4</sup> Housing Rights believes that without addressing these crucial issues, loss of private rented accommodation will continue to cause homelessness<sup>5</sup> and the strategy’s preventative work and floating support, will be in vain.

## 5.0 OUTCOMES & INDICATORS

Housing Rights wish to contribute comments on the strategy’s outcome & indicators for the NIHE’s consideration. These are outlined in the table below:

Current (and proposed) outcomes	Current indicator	Housing Rights comment on outcome/ indicator
<b>Outcome 1 - We have support that prevents us from becoming homeless</b>		Agree with outcome 1
	Number of households presenting to the Housing Executive as homeless	Agree with this indicator
	Number of households accepted by the Housing Executive as statutorily homeless	Agree with this indicator
	Number of cases recorded as homelessness prevention (cross-sector and subject to ongoing work on agreeing a definition)	Agree with this indicator
<b>Outcome 2 - We live in suitable homes</b>		It is not clear what suitable means in the context of this outcome– does it relate to

<sup>2</sup>NIHE Condition Survey 2-16, pg. 16 <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Research/HCS-2016-Main-Reports/HCS-Main-Report-2016.aspx> (Accessed 14/12/2021)

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Martina McAuley, Preventing Homelessness and Sustaining Tenancies in the Private Rented Sector: Scoping Project 2020

<https://www.housingrights.org.uk/sites/default/files/policydocs/Preventing%20Homelessness%20and%20Sustaining%20Tenancies%20in%20the%20PRS.pdf> (Accessed 14/12/2021)

<sup>4</sup>Northern Ireland Housing Executive Conditions Survey 2018, pg. 16

<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Research/HCS-2016-Main-Reports/HCS-Main-Report-2016.aspx> (Accessed 14/12/2021)

<sup>5</sup><https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/communities/ni-housing-stats-18-19-full-copy.PDF>

		standards, affordability, security of tenure etc.?  <b>Suggest amending to “we live in safe, affordable and of suitable quality homes”.</b>
	Average length of time spent in temporary accommodation	Unclear why this is an indicator for this outcome - temporary accommodation is not a suitable home. <b>This indicator would be more relevant under outcome 3.</b>
	Number of households placed in temporary accommodation	Unclear why this is an indicator for this outcome - temporary accommodation is not a suitable home
	Number of FDA duties discharged	Agree with this indicator
<b>Outcome 3 - We have the support we require to access and/or sustain a home</b>		Agree with this outcome
	Number of instances of repeat homelessness	<b>This indicator would be more appropriate under Outcome 1.</b>
	Number of applicants presenting to the Housing Executive recorded as experiencing chronic homelessness	<b>This indicator would be more appropriate under Outcome 1.</b>  We would suggest that more appropriate indicators for this outcome would indicate the success of the various elements of support that will be provided to help people access and/or sustain a tenancy E.g. Number of tenancies sustained as a result of Discretionary Housing Payments
<b>Outcome 4- we work together to prevent and alleviate homelessness</b>		Suggest adding this outcome to reflect vision of the strategy to end homelessness together
	Number of instances of interagency working to deliver on this Strategy	Suggest adding this indicator to support Outcome 4
	Number of instances of interdepartmental cooperation in relation to this Strategy	Suggest adding this indicator to support Outcome 4
	Number of Local Area Groups with representation from relevant bodies	Suggest adding this indicator to support Outcome 4

<b>Outcome 5 – people with lived experience are supported in the design and delivery of homelessness services</b>		Suggest adding this outcome to reflect the importance conveyed in the strategy to involving people with lived experience
	Number of opportunities for people with lived experience to be involved in service design/ delivery	Suggest adding this to support outcome 5
	Number of projects funded under the strategy which involve user led design / delivery of services	Suggest adding this to support outcome 5
	Number of new services / projects funded as a result of service user experience	Suggest adding this to support outcome 5
	% Of people with lived experience involved in service design/ delivery who felt their involvement had been meaningful	Suggest adding this to support outcome 5

## **6.0 DRAFT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

Housing Rights would like to suggest the following comments for consideration which may be of use to the NIHE in maximising the effectiveness of their action plan:

**6.1** Housing Rights strongly welcomes the development of standards for providers and would suggest the NIHE detail the criteria for the appropriate standard, in order to strengthen this concept. Without a criterion, it is unclear what would qualify as ‘warm’, ‘clean’ or ‘safe’. Lynne McMordie’s research into temporary accommodation is informed by the lived experiences of those staying in hostel accommodation. Many of the responses mention risks of potential harm<sup>6</sup> associated with the accommodation, and these may be of use to the NIHE when establishing criteria for ‘safe’ standards.

In addition, Housing Rights would suggest that the action plan include provision for tenants to be made aware of their rights. Awareness of rights among tenants may help ensure tenants feel empowered to highlight where standards fall below those which are acceptable and seek redress. Indeed, Housing Rights

<sup>6</sup> Lynne Mc Mordie, ‘Chronic Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Placement in Belfast’ Pg. 9

would suggest that the action plan could be strengthened further by including a system of redress for users to ensure standards are upheld.

**6.2** Housing Rights believes an addition could be made to the suitability standards section, to include a culturally sensitive standard.

**6.3** Under ‘investment in alternatives to temporary accommodation’, access to the private rented sector is listed. As mentioned above in **4.3.3** this sector is in need of crucial reform and Housing Rights would urge the NIHE to exercise caution in relying on the PRS as an alternative to temporary accommodation, as we believe the sector it is currently unsuitable for homeless households to live in.

**6.4** Housing Rights welcome the commitment to training frontline staff and would welcome collaboration here, to allow partner organisations with expertise in certain areas to deliver training to each other. However, Housing Rights recognise that training alone may not be sufficient in itself to address staff retention.

**6.5** Housing Rights welcome the commitment in the Action Plan to ensure customers receive appropriate accommodation and support at the point of need. Understanding the needs of those accessing temporary accommodation is crucial in this process. Our client experience in the suitability of temporary accommodation is that the application of policy LSA (HSG) No. 08/2021 (Letter 1 specifically), can be very detrimental for some people. For those people who refuse an offer of temporary accommodation because they view it as unsuitable, there is no duty to offer them alternative accommodation during the 40-day review process. In our client experience this means people end up on the streets which is at odds with commitments in the Action Plan. As Lynne McMordie’s research into temporary accommodation has shown us, certain offers of temporary accommodation can leave people to varying degrees feeling distressed and vulnerable, which can result in accommodation being refused for a multitude of reasons. What may be suitable for some people, others may find intolerable.<sup>7</sup> Housing Rights would therefore recommend that the NIHE review the policy, with a view to considering if amendments can be made to make the impact less severe. Notwithstanding the larger issue facing someone in these circumstances and the need for additional accommodation options which fully meet the wide range of needs which exist, an initial practical consideration may be to require that the person get independent advice about their options before declining an offer. This may go some way to assisting with the strategy’s ambition of supporting people at the point of need, ensuring they receive appropriate accommodation and the overall objective of preventing homelessness.

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<sup>7</sup> Lynne Mc Mordie, ‘Chronic Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Placement in Belfast’ pg.

Housing Rights are grateful for the opportunity to respond to this consultation. For further information on this submission, please contact, Christine Crossan at [christine.crossan@housingrights.org.uk](mailto:christine.crossan@housingrights.org.uk).

## Appendix 1

### All in for Change

In response to Scotland's First Minister's commitment to eradicate rough sleeping, Ministers subsequently established the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG). This strategic group addressed issues at both national and local level and made recommendations for change. As a result, the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) responded with their Ending Homelessness Together action plan in 2018 (updated in October 2020).

The Ending Homelessness Together action plan included the commitment to develop an Ending Homelessness Together lived experience programme<sup>8</sup>, which later became the 'All in for Change' programme, led by the Change Team.

### The Change Team

The All in for Change programme is a vehicle for policy, by tapping into practice and lived experience of homelessness. Therefore, recruitment for the Change Team was targeted at people with lived and frontline experience of homelessness. Those with lived experience were paid for their time at the real living wage.

The Change Team is crucial for supporting the conversation through which the government and local authorities can listen and respond to people with lived experience, throughout the implementation and further development of the action plan. This helps to ensure that the actions taken are leading to real change and improving the experiences and lives of those who use the services. The team also takes a valued seat at the Scottish Government's Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group (HPSG) and provides feedback on what is working on the ground, and what is causing obstacles.

- **Recruitment**

Over 70 applications were received from across Scotland from frontline workers and people with lived experience of homelessness. Applicants for the team leads were shortlisted based on their connections, their passion, their communication skills and willingness to learn. The team, which stands at 30 people, has equal representation from frontline staff

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<sup>8</sup>Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan 2018 p.15  
<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/11/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/documents/00543359-pdf/00543359-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00543359.pdf> (accessed 21/12/2021)

and people with lived experience of homelessness, and is gendered balanced.<sup>9</sup>

- **Update: September 2021**

Using the connections of the Change Team members, the team set about gathering feedback on the progress being made across Scotland, on the '4 New Directions' in the action plan to ending homelessness. The original plan was a national roadshow, but due to the coronavirus pandemic it was changed into an online conversation, which launched in April 2021. The Change Team's 'Taking the Temperature'<sup>10</sup> report highlights the findings.

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<sup>9</sup>All in for Change: The Story so Far [https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AIFG\\_The\\_Story\\_So\\_Far\\_2020.pdf](https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AIFG_The_Story_So_Far_2020.pdf) (Accessed 21/12/2021)

<sup>10</sup> <https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Taking-the-Temperature.pdf> (accessed 21/12/2021)



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