

**Housing
Rights**

www.housingrights.org.uk

@housingrightsNI

**Policy Consultation
Response**

**Response to the Draft Housing
Supply Strategy
February 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 who face a variety of barriers when it comes to finding and keeping their home. The supply of affordable, good quality homes which meet people's needs continues to be the backdrop to many of the housing issues our advisers deal with each day. We therefore welcome the development of the Draft Housing Supply Strategy (referred to in this response as 'the Strategy') and the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

Housing Rights submitted a substantive response to the call for evidence on this Strategy, we note areas where our comments and recommendations have been taken on board in the draft strategy and hope this response can further advance the development of this strategy.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Housing Rights view it is crucial that:

- **This Strategy is adopted at an Executive level, in order to give effect to the cross-departmental approach required.**
- **The Department should bring forward legislation for a statutory duty to cooperate on preventing and alleviating homelessness to be placed on statutory bodies across housing, health, education and criminal justice.**
- **A 6th Objective is added to the Strategy: Supporting the meaningful involvement of people with lived experience of poor housing and homelessness in the design, development and delivery of the strategy. This would ensure that people with lived experience of housing problems are meaningfully involved in the oversight of the strategy and are involved at each level of its delivery.**

Housing Rights further recommends that:

- **The easy read version of the title "A plan for housing for people in NI" is used as a sub-title for the Strategy in order to make the strategy's overall purpose clear.**
- **The Strategy is given clear strategy outcomes which sit under the PfG outcomes, with indicators which are clearly linked to the measurement of Strategy outcomes (see table under Q6).**

With regard to the proposed long-term policies and interventions, Housing Rights recommends that:

- **Under Objective 2, the amendment underlined is added to the intervention to "Improve our response to homelessness with a focus on prevention and learning the lessons from what worked so well during the pandemic as well as**

innovations from elsewhere, to inform and include a review of policy and legislation".

- An additional intervention is added under Objective 2 to "Work collaboratively across agencies at an inter and intra departmental level to ensure people have access to the support required to access and sustain homes."
- Under Objective 3, the amendment underlined is added to the intervention to "Update existing policies and develop new policies that will ensure our housing standards support the delivery of higher quality homes across all tenures to improve health and well-being".
- Under our proposed Objective 6, the following interventions should be considered:
 - Developing a flexible framework which provides for effective and meaningful participation of groups with lived experience to participate in the decisions made in the Strategy.
 - Adopting a co-design approach to involving people with lived experience in the development and delivery of the Strategy and its actions.

3.0 STRATEGY QUESTIONS

3.1 Strategic Framework

Q1. The Call for Evidence consultation showed that there was broad support for the proposed vision, objectives and timeframe for the Strategy. Based on the comments received we have updated these for the draft Strategy – are you content with these?

Vision

Housing Rights agrees with the vision, and welcomes the alignment to the specific housing outcome which was committed to in the New Decade New Approach Deal. **The Vision may need to be reviewed if a housing outcome is included in the Programme for Government which has different wording, to ensure this Strategy's vision reflects the finalised wording of the outcome.**

Objectives

Housing Rights supports the objectives in the Strategy and particularly welcomes the focus on prevention of homelessness in Objective 2, as well as the recognition of the 'particular issues with the quality, security and safety of our Private Rented Sector' under Objective 3.

Adding a Lived Experience Objective

Housing Rights welcomes the recognition in the Strategy that 'the lived experience of those "in the system" need to help us shape solutions.' However, we are concerned that this is only mentioned once in the strategy narrative, with no further detail on how this will be achieved.

Housing Rights views it as imperative that the expertise of those with lived experience of housing problems and homelessness is used to develop and deliver effective housing policy and services. Not only is doing so in line with human rights and equality norms, it is also more likely to result in improved policy decisions. Housing Rights' experience in supporting the participation of people affected by issues in the private rented sector specifically and beyond, in our own work, show us that such an approach cannot be delivered without an appropriate and sustained level of dedicated resources. In order to ensure the correct focus and resources are directed towards it, Housing Rights recommends that it should be a key objective of this strategy. In so doing, the Strategy will signal the importance of involving people with lived experience of poor housing and homelessness, in the flagship housing strategy in Northern Ireland. **We therefore recommend that a 6th Objective is added to the Strategy: Supporting the meaningful involvement of people with lived experience of poor housing and homelessness in the design, development and delivery of the strategy**

In our view, the inclusion of this objective would be necessary in order to realise the Minister's stated intention in her forward that the approach to transforming housing supply must "major on engaging with those people who are in most housing need" and to turn her recognition that "those who are affected by poor housing are best placed to help design or redesign it" into practical action throughout the lifespan of the strategy.

The inclusion of this objective would also ensure the involvement of people with lived experience is monitored and built upon throughout the life-span of the strategy in order to work towards and adopt a co-production approach. To enhance stakeholders understanding of the approach to be taken by the Department in this work, Housing Rights suggests the strategy detail how they plan to engage with and work alongside those with lived experience. Usefully, the strategy could consider who exactly are the people they want to engage with. In Housing Rights' view it would be especially important to engage with those groups identified in the EQIA as experiencing inequality in relation to housing (please see further detail under Q12).

Title of Strategy

In our previous submission we explained that in Housing Rights' view, the impact of the strategy could be more fully delivered if the title of the strategy was more representative of the strategy's proposed objectives. "Housing Supply" is a technical term which is directly relevant to the first proposed objective. We therefore suggested that a broader title may more fully encompass the breadth of objectives in the strategy. **We note the easy read version of the title "A plan for housing for people in NI" and would suggest that it may be appropriate to use this as a sub-title for the Strategy in order to make the strategy's overall purpose clear. This would also assist in making the Strategy overtly relevant to people who may not traditionally engage with high level policy documents but whose experience is important to policy makers.**

Timeframe

Housing Rights has no issue with the proposed 15-year strategy and views it as appropriate for a strategy of this type to be programmed over a 15-year period. We welcome the fact that the strategy will be subject to an ongoing review as it is **important that the strategy is capable of being responsive and agile to changing socio-economic environment within the 15-year period. For this reason it is important that the strategy is broken down into shorter time periods so that its impact can be evaluated on an ongoing basis and to allow the opportunity to emphasise / de-emphasise areas of focus based on the socio-economic context.**

Q2. The assessment of the Call for Evidence has enabled us to develop a total of 15 longer term policies and interventions that will provide the basis to develop appropriate action plans. Do you agree with the focus of these 15 high level long term policies and interventions?

Housing Rights supports the 15 longer-term policies and interventions in the draft Strategy, however we would recommend that consideration is given to including the following amendments and additions:

Interventions under Objective 2

- We recommend that the intervention to “Improve our response to homelessness with a focus on prevention and learning the lessons from what worked so well during the pandemic as well as innovations from elsewhere” is amended to include **“to inform and include a review of policy and legislation”**. **In our view this would ensure that learning and improvements translate into change in policy and legislation which is especially important in the context of ensuring collaboration during the pandemic is continued in the long term and given a statutory footing.** See further detail on the importance of a statutory duty to cooperate on homelessness in Q3 below.

In terms of enabling activities under this intervention, Housing Rights recommends that further consideration is given to innovative steps taken in other jurisdictions, for example by considering the introduction of a ‘Zero Evictions into homelessness’ policy for social landlords, as has been successfully adopted by a number of Housing Associations in Wales.

- **We further recommend that an additional intervention is added under this objective to ‘Work collaboratively across agencies at an inter and intra departmental level to ensure people have access to the support required to access and sustain homes.’**

Given the impact of housing on poverty and vice versa, and the crucial role that social security support plays in alleviating poverty and preventing homelessness, **effective partnership with the social security division of the Department will be critical in the success of the Housing Supply Strategy. Effective collaboration across agencies and Departments is also necessary in the context of people being discharged from hospital, prison or care settings and could be more robustly addressed if the intervention above were included under this objective.**

Interventions under Objective 3

- We recommend that amendment in bold is added to the intervention to ‘Update existing policies and develop new policies that will ensure our housing standards support the delivery of higher quality homes across all tenures **to improve health and well-being**’

In our view it is important to explicitly state the purpose of the intervention particularly in the context of the direct impact on health and wellbeing of this intervention. In doing so this intervention will directly affect improvement not only in housing, but also in improving health outcomes and also in generating cost savings to the public purse. Indeed, in 2016 the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) reported that the cost to the NHS in dealing with 'Category 1 Hazards'¹ which are deemed to equate to 'poor housing,' was £39.5 million per year.² NIHE further reported that this cost to the NHS only represents 10% of total societal costs of poor housing, which are estimated to be £401million per annum.³

Interventions under proposed new Objective 6

As noted above, we recommend that a 6th Objective is included '**Supporting the meaningful involvement of people with lived experience of poor housing and homelessness in the design, development and delivery of the strategy**' and we would suggest that the following interventions could be considered in order to achieve this objective:

- Developing a flexible framework which provides for effective and meaningful participation of groups with lived experience to participate in the decisions made in the Strategy. This may include considering those groups whose voices are not currently heard in policy/ service development relevant to the strategy, assessment of the mechanisms by which such groups could be involved and the provision of direct support – through both the development of policy in this area and the allocation of resources / funding for this purpose.
- Adopting a co-design approach to involving people with lived experience in the development and delivery of the Strategy and its actions.

Q3. The Strategy includes an enabling principle to: 'Adopt a whole system approach, collaborate with central and local government and the third and private sectors to inclusively transform supply.' Do you agree with the proposed enabling principle?

Housing Rights agrees with the proposed enabling principle. **Indeed, we believe that in effective cross departmental strategic and operational involvement, alongside a cross-tenure focus, will be crucial in achieving the strategy objectives.**

Inter-departmental impact of homelessness and poor housing

Failure to invest in preventing homelessness and tackling poor housing is not cost neutral. In addition to the human cost, homelessness has significant financial implications across the public sector, as the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) highlighted in their 2017 report on Homelessness in Northern Ireland.⁴ Indeed the annual cost to the NI public purse of each homeless presentation was estimated in 2015 to range from £4,972.36 to £36,119.34 (depending on the complexity of the situation), with the average deemed to be £15,470.⁵ Adequate funding for homelessness prevention will therefore save spending across a number of Departments including Communities, Health and Justice. Where prevention has not been successful, it is also crucial that sufficient funding is provided to services aimed at alleviating homelessness.

¹ These include excess cold, damp & mould, and falls on stairs

² <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Research/HCS-2016-Additional-Reports/The-cost-of-poor-housing-in-Northern-Ireland-2016.aspx>

³ <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Research/HCS-2016-Additional-Reports/The-cost-of-poor-housing-in-Northern-Ireland-2016.aspx>

⁴ [Homelessness in Northern Ireland Full Report 0.pdf \(niauditoffice.gov.uk\)](https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/Homelessness%20in%20Northern%20Ireland%20Full%20Report%200.pdf)

⁵ Calculating the cost of homelessness in Northern Ireland? A desk-based study of the range of costs relating to homelessness" Fiona Boyle, 2015

Interdepartmental working at an Executive and Statutory level

Housing Rights is mindful of the time and resource constraints facing government Departments and statutory bodies. **It will therefore be key that a standalone Housing Outcome is included in the Programme for Government, and that this Strategy is adopted at an Executive level, in order to ensure that relevant Departments and Statutory bodies are able to appropriately prioritise interventions and resources to deliver the objectives of the Strategy. Housing Rights therefore strongly welcomes the Minister's stated commitment in the Strategy to a standalone Housing Outcome.**

In a similar vein, **Housing Rights has been calling for a statutory duty to cooperate on preventing and alleviating homelessness to be placed on statutory bodies across housing, health, education and criminal justice.** A study of the approaches to homelessness taken by different regions in the UK and produced by Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick and her team in 2019 concluded that there was a pressing need for public sector wide duties in relation to homelessness.⁶ Again, we are mindful of the time and resource constraints increasingly facing providers of housing, healthcare and other support services. It is natural that under such constraints, such bodies prioritise those duties which they are statutorily obliged to carry out. A statutory duty to co-operate would ensure that those bodies with responsibilities in relation to homelessness, are able to appropriately prioritise interventions and facilitate the pooling of resources to tackle homelessness, and ensure consistency of delivery.

Without these high-level commitments to inter-departmental working at an Executive and legislative level, the interdepartmental working which is crucial in delivering each of the objectives, is unlikely to succeed.

3.2 Measurement

Q4. Do you agree with the proposed ambition to deliver 100,000 plus homes over the 15-year lifespan of the Strategy?

The lack of social housing underpins the myriad of housing issues faced by our clients and we therefore strongly believe that increasing the supply of social housing should be prioritised in public spending. Housing Rights sees it as crucial that, resources are directed at those in most housing need, and therefore strongly support government interventions which place the supply of social housing front and centre. Indeed, we recommend that over the 15 years of the strategy, increasing the supply of new social homes is prioritised wherever possible.

We note and welcome the Minister's ambition to deliver a significant number of intermediate homes through the use of Financial Transactions Capital. However, as we noted in our response to the Department's Intermediate Rent consultation, Housing Rights does not believe that this intermediate rent product would be affordable for the majority of our PRS clients who are living on a low income, many of whom rely on social security benefits paid at the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate to meet their housing costs. Housing Rights' support for the intermediate rent model is therefore contingent on this product adding to existing stock, primarily through new builds. In our view this is crucial in order to ensure that emergence of this intermediate rent product does not have an unintended consequence of displacing properties from an already

⁶ <https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Homelessness-Prevention-in-the-UK-Policy-Brief-July-2019-final.pdf>

⁷ M Freidman, 'Trying Hard is Not Good Enough' 005 8
Ibid pg 19

limited supply of private rented properties, and further drive up rents for those with too low an income to access intermediate rent tenancies.

Q5. Do you agree with the proposed indicators to measure the success and progress of the Housing Supply Strategy?

Q6 Are there any additional indicators that you consider would add value in measuring success and progress?

Housing Rights welcomes the move towards an outcomes-based approach to measuring progress of the Strategy and views it as appropriate in the context of the Programme for Government (PfG). We wish to offer some comments on the use of outcomes and indicators in the strategy to assist in refining their use.

The use of outcomes & indicators

Prior to making comment on indicators Housing Rights wishes to address the strategy outcomes.

Housing Rights understands from the Department's consultation events their intention to use the indicators listed in the Strategy to measure the 3 outcomes from the draft PfG which are listed in the Strategic Framework on page 8 of the Strategy. In our view this is not clear from the table on page 8.

The intention to use the indicators listed in the strategy to measure the 3 PfG Outcomes is also not made clear in the text of the Strategy where it is instead stated that "the measurement of the impact of the Housing Supply Strategy will be monitored and reported upon with reference to a basket of indicators."

If it is the case that the Department propose to use the PfG outcomes (in place of creating specific strategy outcomes which sit under the PfG outcomes) it should be noted that the current presentation is unclear. Furthermore, Housing Rights is reminded of the definition of an indicator used by Friedman in his book 'Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough' upon which the NI Executive approach to OBA as referenced in the draft Programme for Government is based: 7

"An indicator is a measure that helps quantify the achievement of a result [an outcome]. Indicators answer the question "How would we recognise this result [outcome] if we fell over it?"⁸

Based on this definition relationship between the indicators proposed in the strategy and the PfG outcomes is unclear.

In Housing Rights' view it would be more appropriate for the Housing Supply Strategy to have clear strategy outcomes which sit under (i.e. clearly relate to) the PfG outcomes. Housing Rights notes that the strategic framework identifies 6 headings under which indicators are listed. It may be appropriate to develop outcomes which capture the key themes addressed in each heading. Indicators can then be linked to such outcomes to "quantify the achievement of a result". Where possible such outcomes and indicators should be linked to those in other relevant strategies. Housing

Rights has made suggestions with some examples as to how this could be approached in the table which follows:

Specific comment on the indicators proposed:

PFG outcome	Strategy outcomes	Strategy indicators	Commentary
We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment	Everyone has access to a good quality home	<p>- Number of households with one or more Category 1 risks under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (Source: House Condition Survey) <i>Interim indicator</i></p> <p>- % of homes that meet the Fitness Standard (Source: House Conditions Survey) <i>Post Fitness Standard review indicator</i></p>	We agree with the Department that the 'Percentage of homes that meet the Fitness Standard' indicator will be more relevant post completion of work to review the Fitness Standard. We would therefore recommend that the Department consider indicators which could be used in the interim to measure standards until an appropriate fitness standard is in place, such as the interim indicator proposed.
We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives	People have the support that prevents them from becoming homeless	- Number of households who are homeless both presentations and acceptances (Source; NIHE)	This strategy outcome and indicator mirror those used in the draft Homelessness Strategy which we believe would help to ensure alignment between the two strategies.
	People with lived experience are supported in the design and delivery of housing and homelessness	- Number of opportunities for people with lived experience to be involved in strategy development and	Given the importance of involving people with lived experience, Housing Rights anticipates that some work will need to be done to develop

	services and policy	service design/ delivery - % of people with lived experience involved in strategy development and service design/ delivery who felt their involvement had been meaningful	appropriate indicators and gather the data needed. We would be happy to work with the Department to do so. We recommend that consideration is given to the proposed indicators which are aligned to those we have recommended for inclusion in the Homelessness Strategy.
People want to live, work and visit here	Everyone can afford to access and sustain a home which is	-% of households spending more than 30% of household	We welcome the inclusion of an indicator to measure the % of households spending more than 30%
	suitable for their needs.	income on housing costs -% of households at risk of poverty after housing costs (Source: Family Resource Survey (NISRA))	of household income on housing costs and believe this could be strengthened by including the 2 nd indicator proposed. In our view it is important to measure poverty after housing costs given that housing costs are an essential and non-negotiable expense.
	We work together to ensure everyone has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate for its needs	-Number of instances of interagency working and interdepartmental cooperation to deliver the Strategy	Given the importance of Departments and Statutory agencies working together to ensure the success of this Strategy, we believe a specific outcome and indicators should be included to reflect and measure this.

In Housing Rights' view it would be important for each of these indicators to be disaggregated on the basis of tenure.

Housing Rights strongly welcomes the Minister's commitment to a standalone housing outcome in her forward to the Strategy. Should this be achieved in the next assembly mandate, we note that each of our proposed Strategy Outcomes would sit beneath the overarching Housing Outcome, namely: "Every household has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate for its needs."

3.3 **Delivery and Oversight**

Q7 How can we best ensure that key strategic partners such as other Departments, local government, the Voluntary & Community sector and private sector can participate in the delivery and oversight of the Supply Strategy delivery?

Delivery Structures

As noted above, Housing Rights believes that effective cross departmental strategic and operational involvement will be crucial in achieving the strategy objectives. Housing Rights therefore recommends that further consideration is given to the structures that will be required to deliver the strategy effectively. In this regard, it may be useful to consider learning from the evaluation of the cross-departmental structures established to deliver the homelessness strategy, as well as from the structures used in Housing Strategies in other jurisdictions such as ‘Housing to 2040’ in Scotland.

Should a specific and standalone housing outcome be included in the forthcoming Programme for Government, a specific Delivery Plan will be developed for this outcome which will, Housing Rights understands, include senior responsible owners from across government departments required to work together towards the realization of outcome. This structure may provide a useful vehicle to operationalise the cross departmental co-operation required to progress work under the Housing Supply Strategy. Housing Rights would encourage the Department to consider how best to involve non-governmental stakeholders in such structures. Should a specific housing outcome not be included, however, the Department will need to consider what appropriate and effective structures can be used for the delivery of the strategy. The comments in the previous paragraph may be particularly useful in this regard.

As highlighted throughout this response, **Housing Rights sees the role of people with lived experience of housing problems as key in the delivery and oversight of the strategy and should be involved at each level of its delivery.** As is discussed in further detail under Q9, Housing Rights views with interest the Change Team for their pioneering work and believes this kind of model could be considered in the delivery of this strategy. (See also Appendix 1)

3.4 **Action Planning**

Q8 Are there any proven or new approaches you are aware of, that you believe would help us work best with other organisations to develop and deliver the action plans?

As noted above, it would be useful for the Department to consider the learning from other jurisdictions, for example the Department may wish to assess the effectiveness of the action plans used under Scotland’s Housing to 2040 Strategy.

3.5 **Citizen Engagement**

Q9 There was broad support in the Call for Evidence for the need to engage local communities in housing supply to create sustainable, thriving and inclusive communities. In what way do you consider this could best be achieved and do you have any examples of best practice in this area?

As discussed above, Housing Rights believes it is imperative to involve people with lived experience of housing problems and homelessness in the design, development and monitoring of the Strategy.

Given the cross-tenure nature of the strategy Housing Rights believes that there should be a focus on including groups such as people living in the private rented sector, as well as people experiencing homelessness, whose voices are often not heard.

We recommend that consideration is given as to how best to involve people with lived experience at different stages of the process. For example, from the focus group consultations during the initial consultation on the Strategy through to longer-term participation, involving people with lived experience in government decisions regarding housing and homelessness, through to the co-design development of housing policy and in-service delivery.

Housing Rights notes the importance of adopting a different approach for different groups of people. Those with lived experiences of housing problems and 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.

As noted in the section below, Housing Rights recommends that particular consideration is given to how to meaningfully involve the groups identified in the EQIA.

The Department should consider good practice examples of participation such as Renters' Voice, UC:Us and the Northern Ireland Youth Forum, as well as examples of co-design. For example, Homeless Network Scotland are currently leading the way in co-production, 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 pioneering work and believes this kind of model could be considered in the delivery of this strategy. (See Appendix 1)

Housing Rights intend to commission research to identify:

- Groups impacted by poor housing and homelessness in Northern Ireland whose voices are not heard, and expertise not taken into consideration in policy development and service delivery
- Good practice examples of participation and co-production in housing and homelessness policy and services.

We hope this might complement and inform the Departments work in this area and would welcome the opportunity to support the Department in developing participative and co-design approaches throughout the lifespan of the strategy.

3.6 Equality

Q10 Do you agree with the findings of the EQIA?

Housing Rights welcomes the consideration given in the EQIA to the different groups experiencing difficulties with housing and homelessness. However, we note the absence of reference to people with no recourse to public funds who cannot access social housing nor the majority of social security benefits and therefore risk homelessness and destitution if they do not have access to employment. In our view it would be important to include this group in the EQIA.

We also note the data gaps in the EQIA with regards to the housing outcomes of LGBT+ individuals, as well as gaps regarding the experience of people with a disability in social housing allocations. We recommend that work in undertaken to gather data in these areas to ensure focus is given to addressing the needs of these equality groups.

In line with the spirit of the s75 Northern Ireland Act, it is crucial that the Department works to meaningfully involve these groups in the design, development and delivery of the strategy in order to ensure the Strategy promotes equality of opportunity for those groups identified as experiencing inequality. **In our view, the proposed Objective 6** involving people with lived experience, would help to facilitate this process for the various groups identified in the EQIA.

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 programme⁹, 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 and people with lived experience of homelessness, and is gendered balanced.¹⁰

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'¹¹ report highlights the findings.

⁹ 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)

¹⁰ All in for Change: The Story so Far https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AIFG_The_Story_So_Far_2020.pdf (Accessed 21/12/2021)

¹¹ <https://homelessnetwork.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Taking-the-Temperature.pdf> (accessed 21/12/2021)

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