

Kerslake Commission evidence submission

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1. Thinking about the response to rough sleeping during the pandemic, which measures, policies, practices or joint working do you think worked well and why?

The investment by central government of financial support and the relaxation of various legal rules, including those relating to people with no recourse to public funds, provided an important context for responses by local authorities, the NHS, third sector agencies, and other partners. It shows what can be done when central government is aligned with what we know about best practice to safeguard individuals and promote their wellbeing and human rights. Local Resilience Forums worked effectively. There were significant enhancements in how local authorities, the NHS and other partners worked together, building on the evidence-base already known for positive practice with people who are homeless.

2. In contrast, which measures, policies, practices or joint working do you think have not worked well and why?

The positive response by central government, and by local authorities and their partners, has masked but not fundamentally altered many of the reasons why people become and/or remain homeless. The impact of financial austerity, the lack of affordable accommodation, welfare benefit rules, and policy towards people with no recourse to public funds, all impose obstacles on what can be achieved in terms of accessing suitable accommodation and the wrap-around support that is often also needed. The immediate response to the crisis certainly made a difference to the wellbeing of many people experiencing homelessness but the underlying "fault lines" remain, meaning that without attention to these systemic features, homelessness will not be eradicated. Safeguarding Adult Reviews have highlighted this point.

3. Please describe the specific challenges, and opportunities, in the next phase of the Everyone In programme and helping people to move on from hotel accommodation.

Opportunities in the form of proactive planning with people who were accommodated in hotels and other settings during the pandemic to enable them to move on into settled accommodation with, when appropriate, wrap-around support. Challenges in the form of accessing quality and affordable accommodation, and providing wrap-around support that is co-produced and aligns with the known evidence-base about "what works." Commissioners, providers and people who are, or have experienced homelessness, should work together to ensure that the "new normal" is not simply a return to the

"old normal" but this also requires central government to play its part with social policies that work to improve the wellbeing of all people experiencing homelessness.

4. And finally, what do you think needs to be put in place to embed the good work that developed during the pandemic, or improve upon it?

The lessons that have been learned need to be placed in the public domain, with all organizations, including central government, then held accountable for the policies that are put in place (or maintained) to eradicate homelessness. Safeguarding Adult Reviews that have focused on homelessness provide important findings. Research into the Everyone In programme provides important findings. Experts by experience also offer the voices of lived experience concerning what is and is not helpful. These sources of knowledge need to be brought together and then social and fiscal policies scrutinized against that evidence-base. That evidence includes a publication on the Local Government Association (LGA) web pages on Adult Safeguarding and Homelessness. Endorsed by the LGA and ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services), a second briefing that extends and reinforces the evidence-base is nearing publication and is available on request.