

Appendix A

Summary of findings from consultation

Across all the consultation responses some clear, common issues have emerged for consideration in the development of the Homelessness Strategy, including:

Information

- Raise general public awareness of homelessness, advice and support services in order to ensure a more widespread understanding of where people can go if faced with a housing crisis.
- Develop an education approach/programme to target young people. Do this in conjunction with young people following a co-production¹ approach.
- Improve use of the internet, social media, and texts to provide information on services and advice that are available.
- Improve understanding of homelessness issues of some professionals – in particular social workers, GPs and the Job Centre. But also important to ensure that all staff have an understanding and empathetic manner.
- Need to ensure that service users are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities. Look at developing Service Standards/Homelessness Charter - should be done in conjunction with service users following a co-production approach.
- Need for effective co-ordination and communication across agencies, e.g. local authority (Social Services, Housing, Education, Supporting People), Health, Probation, 3rd Sector) and also with service users.

Early intervention and prevention

- Need to increase focus on early intervention to prevent problems from escalating.
- Early access to tenancy support before eviction takes place.
- Improved family mediation services.

Rough sleeping

- Increasing levels of homelessness and rough sleeping – need to improve service provision for rough sleepers. E.g. developing a “solution centre” with a wide range of support, advice and facilities available.
- Ensure that the basic needs of people who are unable or unwilling to engage with services are met e.g. access to washing and cooking facilities for rough sleepers.

¹ Co-production is one of the main principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It means encouraging individuals to become more involved in the design and delivery of services that they need for themselves.

Access to housing and support

- Need for rapid access to affordable and appropriate permanent accommodation. For example: need to find ways to improve access to the private rented sector.
- Need to improve provision of housing and support for people with complex needs e.g. mental health, learning disabilities and drug and alcohol issues.
- Substance misuse – service users identified difficulties with recovery in shared accommodation / hostel environments where others are still using.
- Develop a Housing First approach to deal with the needs of rough sleepers and individuals with complex needs.
- Improve information around employment and support to find sustainable work.
- Not enough suitable properties for young single people – more variety/wider range of accommodation is needed.
- Need to improve access to mental health support – across a range of needs including young people; and early access to lower level counselling/support.
- Need to ensure that young people are able effectively have a say in the development of their support packages.

Digital inclusion

- Need for improved access to phones and the internet via service providers.

Address impacts of welfare reform

- Need to develop services/approaches to alleviate the impacts of welfare reform including:
 - Meeting high levels of need/demand for welfare benefits advice
 - Meeting high levels of need/demand for debt and financial advice.
 - Need to develop affordable accommodation for people under the age of 35 – due to introduction of shared accommodation rate. *NB the introduction of the shared accommodation rate in social housing has now been scrapped but there is still a need to provide access to affordable accommodation for under 35s in the private rented sector*