

After the Housing (Wales) Act 2014: what should the future hold?



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The end goal

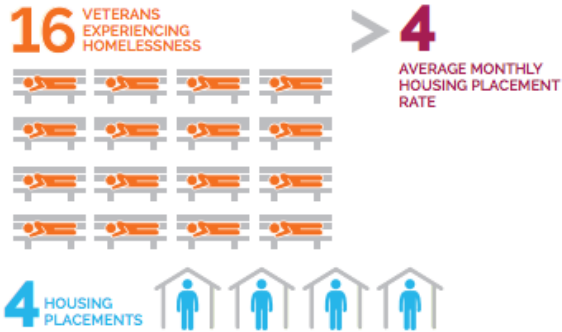
We need to start with and be clear about our end goal.



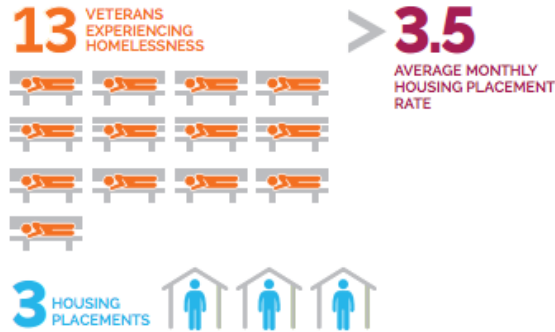
- Functional zero

What is functional zero?

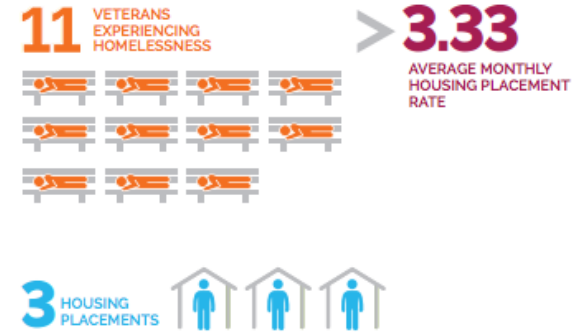
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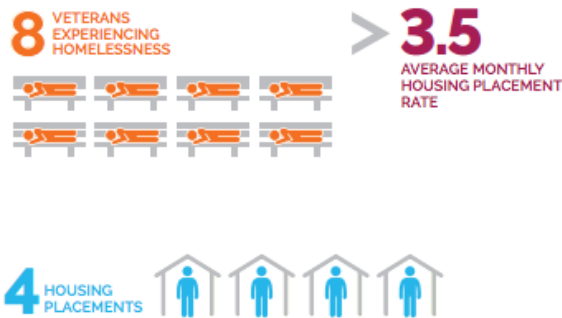
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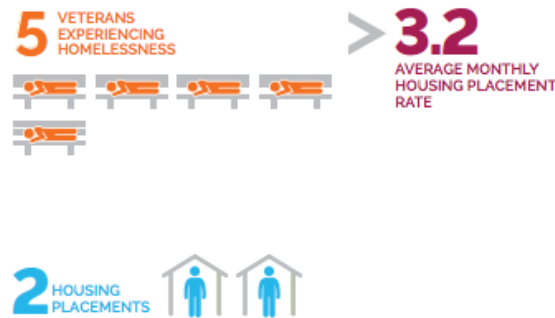
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APR



MAY



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Number of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness



Average Monthly Veteran Housing Placement Rate



Functional Zero

At any point in time, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness in a community will be no greater than that community's average monthly housing placement rate for veterans.

The end goal

We need to start with and be clear about our end goal.



- Functional zero
- Homelessness is **rare, brief and non-recurrent**
- Access to adequate, safe and affordable housing

The status quo

Our efforts focus predominantly on ending homelessness swiftly, with significant recent improvements in efforts to ensure homelessness is avoided, albeit this is at point of crisis.



Rare

Brief

Non-recurrent

The future

We need to move to a position whereby homelessness is rare, avoiding the reliance on our statutory safety net.



Rare

Brief

Non-recurrent

Homelessness is rare

We are doing more to prevent homelessness since the Act but there is a huge opportunity and need to do more, earlier.



- 45-50% of cases are dealt with at prevention stage, with a 66% success rate
- We must focus on the main causes of homelessness: **housing failure, Institutional failure, relations & experiences**

Housing failure



- **Affordable housing** (review)
 - More investment, more building
 - Exclusions and evictions:

In 2015-2016 social landlords undertook an estimated 914 social evictions (Shelter Cymru, 2016)

Housing failure



- **Private Rented Sector**

- Significant recent change
- Key issues: affordability, security and evictions:
Loss of rented accommodation or rent arrears is the cause of homelessness in 50% of cases

Future options?

- Notify authorities when rent problems arise (Amsterdam, Sweden) or evictions start (Vienna)
- Rent caps? Longer, more secure tenancies?

Housing failure



- **Social welfare**

- A decade of decimation
- Welfare reforms (LHA rates and cap, universal credit implementation, sanctions) have impacted significantly on homelessness levels

The most important driver of homelessness in all its forms is poverty (Bramley, 2017)

Institutional failure



- **Prison**

- Despite significant work to address this issue, leaving prison continues to be a major cause of homelessness:

In 3% of homelessness applications the main reason for homelessness is leaving prison

12% of people in the 2018 PIT count were released from custody into homelessness – the joint highest cause

Institutional failure



- **Hospital**

- Some concern regarding discharge into homelessness:

6% of rough sleepers in the PIT count had been discharged from hospital into homelessness within the last 12 months

Future options?

- London (Ontario) programme to stop discharge into NFA. Had a 98% success rate.

Institutional failure



- **Care**

- A period in care continues to be common amongst people facing homelessness

*In 4% of single homelessness cases, leaving care was the cause**

7% of single person priority need cases are care leavers

1 in 5 people in 2018 point in time count had been in care

Relations & Experiences



- Adverse childhood experiences
- Family and relationship breakdown:
Constitutes the cause of homelessness in up to 33% of cases

Future options?

- Upstream Cymru/Geelong – led to a 40% reduction in youth homelessness in Geelong.

Homelessness is brief + non-recurrent

Much of our homelessness system of services is designed to end homelessness swiftly, however it remains that the legislation does not offer an absolute safety net for all.



- Action to relieve homelessness must be taken within 56 days, however we are successful with only 41% of cases
- A focus on: **taking reasonable steps towards ‘sustainable solutions’, assisting all households**

Reasonable steps



- **Reasonable steps**

- Studies have highlighted that reasonable steps are not always taken.
- Reasonable steps are not always suited to the household or individual
- How do we integrate Housing First?

Future options?

- Share learning on what works/doesn't work
- Clearer articulation of reasonable steps; firmer regulation; legislate

Sustainable solutions



- **Sustainable solutions**

- Has legislation ensured homelessness is non-recurrent?
- How do we address evictions from temporary/supported accommodation?
- Are our environments PIE/Trauma informed?
- Do we need a duty to support?

Available to all



- **Assertive outreach**
- **Priority need**
 - Can it/should it be extended and how?
 - What would be the implications (resources, housing markets, legislation)
- **Intentionality**
 - Affects only 160 households a year
 - Is it required?

Conclusion



- If homelessness is to be rare, brief and non-recurrent we must...
- Place a greater focus on earlier prevention, identifying and targeting main causes – this is not only a housing challenge
- Pursue an iteration of the legislation that ensures homelessness is brief and non-recurrent for all

NB This will only be achieved if we improve our data collection, reporting and analysis

Open discussion



- Do you agree with the end goal?
- Do you agree with the main causes identified (housing failure, Institutional failure, relations & experiences) and what more might we do to address these?
- Do you agree with the need for further legislative and regulatory change? What changes would you like to see?

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