



Public Policy Institute for Wales
Sefydliad Polisi Cyhoeddus i Gymru

Tackling Homelessness A Rapid Evidence Review

February, 2015

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Summary

- The Public Policy Institute for Wales (PPIW) was asked by the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty to advise on what more the Welsh Government might do to tackle homelessness.
- We have conducted a rapid evidence review to understand the current state of the evidence on homelessness better, both specific to Wales and further afield, and identify where further research might be needed.
- In the last 15 years, the Welsh Government has commissioned over 15 reports related to homelessness (see Annex 1). These have addressed a number of questions about homelessness prevention in Wales, housing solutions for specific target groups in Wales, the effectiveness of Welsh Government programmes, improving the health of the homeless, learning from experiences of the homeless and homelessness legislation in Wales.
- Beyond these publications there exists a multitude of reports on the causes of homelessness, good practice in homelessness prevention and designing services to meet the needs of the homeless (see Annex 2).
- The evidence shows that homelessness is a complex problem. It often has multiple causes that interact with one another in ways that vary at the individual level and require engagement with multiple policy areas. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach to tackling homelessness is unlikely to be successful. Individualised, professional support from multidisciplinary, joined-up services is important for tackling homelessness, and would likely bring improvements to other public services too.
- In light of our review of the evidence and consultation with Welsh Government officials, we suggest several avenues for work to bolster evidence on tackling homelessness.
 - An evaluation of the implementation of the Welsh Government's Ten Year Homelessness Plan 2009-2019;
 - Data analysis to identify and target at risk groups and match them with appropriate interventions;
 - An evaluation of the role of the Supporting People Programme in tackling homelessness; and
 - Analysis of 'what works' in light of the new homelessness legislation.

Introduction

The Public Policy Institute for Wales (PPIW) was asked by the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty to advise on the evidence about what works in tackling homelessness. As a first step, we have conducted a rapid evidence review of the recent Welsh Government commissioned publications and other useful sources on homelessness. This document catalogues and summarises the relevant Welsh Government commissioned publications (see Annex 1) and provides links to other important publications which deliver comprehensive accounts of approaches to tackling homelessness (see Annex 2). This document highlights areas where the evidence base is rich and identifies those where more research would be valuable.

Existing Evidence

Understanding the scale of homelessness in Wales

The literature demonstrates that examining the number of people experiencing homelessness is difficult for two reasons. Firstly, the definition of homelessness is contested (Fitzpatrick, Kemp & Klinker, 2000). Secondly, homeless individuals are typically mobile which makes them difficult to monitor (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000). The Welsh Government has a clear statutory definition of homelessness¹ and currently publishes data on homelessness on a quarterly basis (Welsh Government, 2014). However, this data captures the number of *households* which are recognised by local authorities to be homeless rather than the number of homeless *individuals*. Furthermore, as this data is based on Welsh local authorities' records only households known to, and defined by local authorities to be homeless, are included and many cases of homelessness remain invisible.

Nonetheless, this data helps to monitor trends in the overall level of statutory homelessness across Wales. According to the most recently published Welsh Government data on homelessness (July to September quarter 2014-2015), the number of households accepted

¹ '1) A person is homeless if there is no accommodation available for the person's occupation, in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, which the person –

- a) is entitled to occupy by virtue of an interest in it or by virtue of an order by court,
- b) has an express or implied licence to occupy, or
- c) occupies as a residence by virtue of any enactment or rule of law giving the person the right to remain in occupation or restricting the right of another person to recover possession.

2) A person is also homeless if the person has accommodation but –

- a) cannot secure entry to it, or
- b) it consists of a moveable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation and there is no place where the person is entitled or permitted both to place it and to reside in it' (Housing (Wales) Act 2014, c. 2).

as homeless rose by 9 per cent compared with the same quarter of the previous year despite a decrease in the number of decisions made on homelessness applications (Welsh Government, 2014). Providing some picture of the geographical landscape of homelessness, the Stats Wales website also hosts data on the number of households classified as homeless by Local Authority area.

In addition to this data, some research has been done into the scale and nature of rural homelessness in Wales. For example, Milbourne, Hughes and Hartwell (2006) reported that homelessness in rural Wales is a significant problem, with 36 per cent of all cases of homelessness in Wales presenting in rural areas. Data and reports such as these help to understand the scale of homelessness in Wales, though we think that further analyses could be done to map people who are experiencing homelessness and where, so that the evidence base on 'what works' in tackling homelessness can more effectively be put to use (see 'Evidence Needs' section for more discussion of this).

Importantly, the new Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local housing authorities to periodically carry out a housing review for its area. This new duty, which comes into force in April 2015, will require local housing authorities to collect data on 'the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness' in the area, the activities carried out to prevent homelessness, to provide accommodation and to satisfy support needs and the resources available to carry out these activities (Housing (Wales) Act 2014, c. 2). These reviews will help to monitor the scale and nature of homelessness more effectively, though greater clarity on exactly what this new data will record might be useful to policy makers at national and local level. Overall, current data collection on homelessness in Wales could be improved (Fitzpatrick, Pawson, Bramley, Wilcox & Watts, 2013).

Causes of homelessness

Homelessness is not seen as simply a housing problem. There is agreement that homelessness can be caused by a multitude of social, individual and economic factors (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000). The general risk factors associated with homelessness are well understood and provide some informational basis for preventative work.

It is generally acknowledged that there are two distinct pathways into homelessness; a 'life events' and a 'life-long' pathway (Harding, Irving & Whowell, 2011). The 'life events' pathway to homelessness is typically characterised by difficult life events such as eviction, bereavement, or relationship breakdown. Some 'life events' cases of homelessness are economically driven. One of the reports commissioned by the Welsh Government

(summarised at the end of this review) found that, in particular, cases of family homelessness are caused primarily by housing affordability issues and can be virtually eliminated if these are addressed effectively (Fitzpatrick and Johnsen, 2012). In the current period of austerity, and with the predicted impacts of the Welfare Reforms (National Housing Federation, 2015), we are likely to see more of these 'life events' cases of homelessness caused by economic factors.

In addition to adverse housing and labour market trends, it is now generally accepted that homelessness is made more likely by childhood disadvantage (Harding et al., 2011; McDonagh, 2011). These cases of homelessness are identified with the 'life-long' pathway. In particular, homelessness in adulthood is associated with parental addiction, domestic violence and living in social housing or local authority care as a child (Harding et al., 2011). Family relationship problems and lack of support networks are common amongst teenagers and young adults who find themselves homeless (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000). Subsequently, during adulthood, homelessness is connected to unemployment, crime, addiction and mental health problems (Fitzpatrick et al. 2000). The specific social and economic factors which lead to homelessness in different areas in Wales are less well researched.

Understanding the causes of homelessness may help to inform targeted prevention interventions for at risk groups (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000). However, we know that homelessness is a complex problem. Often, it has multiple causes that interact with one another in ways that vary at the individual level (such as mental illness, family breakdown, drug and alcohol problems). In light of this, it is important to acknowledge that standardised approaches or a 'one-size-fits-all' model are unlikely to solve the problem of homelessness. Individualised, professional support is therefore an important avenue for intervention (Housing+ Cymru, 2001). In addition, individuals at risk of, or suffering from, homelessness are likely to be in, or require, contact with services across many different policy areas (for example, health, social care, community safety and housing) (Cullen et al., 2007; McDonagh, 2011). Given the diverse, wide ranging causes of homelessness, multidisciplinary teams and joined-up services are necessary (Cullen, Byrne & Hayes, 2007). Whilst this approach would surely help to tackle homelessness, mutual benefits of service improvement would be felt across policy areas.

Homelessness prevention

The paradigm shift in international homelessness policies towards a prevention focus has resulted in proven benefits to society and to individuals at risk of homelessness (Mackie, 2014). Homelessness is expensive to the health care system and is linked to crime. Preventing

homelessness is thus deemed to be more cost effective than mitigating the effects (Pawson, Netto, Jones, Wager, Fancy & Lomax, 2007). This focus is emphasised in the Welsh Government's Ten Year Homelessness Plan 2009-2019 (Welsh Government, 2009). A lot of research has been conducted to inform best practice in the prevention of homelessness but it is quite disjointed and arguably poorly evaluated (Mackie, 2014). Preventative strategies are often argued to be most effective if person-centred (Housing+ Cymru, 2001), needs-led (Housing+ Cymru, 2007) and targeted at individuals experiencing a range of, or specific 'risk' factors (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000). In light of this it is important that at risk groups are identified, understood and targeted when applying best practice from the evidence base (see 'Evidence Needs' section for more discussion of this). Possible preventative interventions include housing education in schools, tenancy support for young people, family mediation services and resettlement programmes for those leaving the armed forces, care and prison (Pawson et al., 2007; Johnsen & Watts, 2014). In addition to these interventions, cases of homelessness caused by housing affordability issues would likely be prevented if this was addressed effectively (Fitzpatrick and Johnsen, 2012).

The Welsh Government publications on homelessness prevention are probably still relevant and useful despite being published in 2004 and 2011 (see Annex 1, Section 2). These emphasised that a person-centred approach must be taken in any future homeless prevention projects and stressed the importance of monitoring and evaluating the impact of prevention interventions (Housing+ Cymru, 2010; Centre for Housing Policy, 2004). Both reports detail examples of good practice in Wales.

Mitigating the effects

Our rapid review found less evidence on best practices in housing solutions for the homeless than prevention measures. This probably reflects the recent focus on prevention within most homelessness strategies in Europe. Good practice literature in the area of resettlement services stresses the need for social contact and purposeful activity in supporting homeless individuals. Homeless people tend to have multiple support needs and benefit from long term support, as well as affordable housing in suitable locations, e.g. close to employment and away from people who are likely to have a negative influence (Mackie, 2008). For some individuals help to move on to and sustain settled accommodation is possible. For others, the end point of a resettlement process may still be a hostel. This reality has to be realised and accommodated for.

However, the Housing First approach to tackling homelessness commonly associated with Denmark is often mentioned as a successful example of intervention (European Commission, 2013). This scheme moves the individuals immediately from the streets or homeless shelters into their own apartments, rather than moving them between a series of emergency and transitional accommodations. This focus on stability has proven to be very effective in Denmark, though importantly not independent of other interventions.

Best practice in mitigating the effects of homelessness in Wales is less well researched than homelessness prevention. The Welsh Government commissioned publications have tended to focus on accommodation options for specific target groups such as prisoners (Mackie, 2008) and young people (Housing+ Cymru, 2007) or the importance of housing support and advice in keeping people off the streets. The more general literature emphasises the importance of flexible, inter-agency cooperation in creating long-term resettlement services (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000). There is also some evidence that employment and training schemes for the homeless need to be flexible and focus on helping people to sustain employment (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000), though these areas are less well understood.

Health and homelessness

Homeless populations have a higher incidence of health problems than the general population, often characterised by having multiple health problems (primarily alcohol and substance misuse dependence, and mental disorders) and premature mortality (McDonagh, 2011; Welsh Government, 2003). If they are not supported and treated effectively, homeless people are one of the most costly populations for the NHS. There is clear evidence that lack of access to appropriate preventive or responsive treatment leads to increased use of services, such as ambulances and accident and emergency departments. Addressing the health needs of the homeless is clearly very costly and it is arguably more cost effective to prevent homelessness than it is to treat the medical risks and complaints that come with it.

Nonetheless, there is evidence that current health services are not accessed by some homeless individuals, in part because of the nature and set up of the services but also because of the discrimination they face (Welsh Government, 2003). Homeless people with dual diagnoses, such as both mental health and substance misuse problems, face particular problems in gaining access to appropriate services (Welsh Government, 2003). The wider literature suggests that behavioural interventions for substance misuse and alcohol dependence can empower homeless people and lead to lasting health gains, as well as helping in treatment retention.

Evidence Needs

Throughout the literature, the **importance of monitoring and evaluating interventions** has been emphasised as a clear evidence need. Further to this, the Welsh Government might benefit from **collecting and assimilating individual level data on cases of homelessness**. This might form part of the new duties on local housing authorities to conduct reviews of homelessness in their areas.

More specifically, in light of this rapid literature review and consultation with Welsh Government officials, the PPIW suggests several avenues for work that would bolster the Welsh Government's evidence on approaches to tackling homelessness.

An evaluation of the implementation of the Ten Year Homelessness Plan 2009-2019

The Welsh Government recognises that homelessness is a significant social problem in Wales and is committed to tackling homelessness. This commitment is articulated in the Ten Year Homelessness Plan 2009-2019 (Welsh Government, 2009) and the reform of the homelessness law in the new Housing (Wales) Act 2014, both of which reflect the key findings from the literature. We understand that an evaluation of the new homelessness legislation is planned. In addition to this, we feel that the Welsh Government would benefit from evaluating the Ten Year Homelessness Plan (2009-2019). The five strategic aims in the Ten Year Homelessness Plan 2009-2019 (Welsh Government, 2009) reflect the evidence about 'what works' and the policy messages in the literature, as do the approaches to delivering the vision. The five strategic aims include:

- Preventing homelessness wherever possible;
- Working across organisational and policy boundaries;
- Placing the service users at the centre of service delivery;
- Ensuring social inclusion and equality of access to services;
- Making the best use of resources.

Over five years into the allotted timescale for Ten Year Homelessness Plan, it might prove fruitful to explore how well the five aims laid out in the plan have been implemented and how they might be built upon and improved in the coming five years. This would firstly take the form of a thorough evaluation of homelessness interventions in Wales, identifying areas of best practice and weakness. Whilst a lot of research has been conducted on prevention, a second

or complementary phase to this work might be to conduct an international review of how some of the less well researched aims in the Ten Year Homelessness Plan (Welsh Government, 2009), such as working across organisational and policy boundaries, have been satisfied in other countries and how these lessons can be applied in Wales. This would prove beneficial to other policy areas beyond tackling homelessness.

Given that the Welsh Government's Ten Year Homelessness Plan appears to be clearly evidence based and well thought out, evaluating its implementation is the next logical step and would help policy makers to understand what is going well and what could be done better. It would also help to identify whether the Ten Year Homelessness Plan has had an impact on homelessness services and the experiences of the homelessness.

Data analysis to identify and target at risk groups and match them with evidence based good practice

Using pre-existing data, the PPIW suggests that Ministers commission a report to paint a dynamic picture of the scale and nature of homelessness in Wales today. Such a report would aim to identify the areas of Wales and the types of people most affected by homelessness. This understanding could be valuable in targeting interventions. This type of project will be made easier by the new duty for local housing authorities to collect more data on homelessness as part of the new Housing (Wales) Act 2014. It would also help to identify where data collection on homelessness is lacking and how it could be improved.

An evaluation of the role of the Supporting People Programme in tackling homelessness

Given the role that the Supporting People Programme plays, an evaluation of its impact on tackling homelessness would be valuable. Such a review might build on the more general evaluation of the Supporting People Programme conducted by Nicholas Pleace from the Centre for Housing Policy in 2013 (see Annex 1, section 4.2). An evaluation of the programme might usefully ask the following questions:

1. Does the Supporting People Programme contribute to tackling homelessness?
2. If the answer to the first question is yes, how does the Supporting People Programme contribute to tackling homelessness?
3. How can the Supporting People Programme be improved to tackle homelessness better?

What works for specific groups in light of the new homelessness legislation?

The PPIW recognises the new duties of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Exploring 'what works' for specific groups (prison leavers, young care leavers etc.) in light of this new legislation would prove beneficial to local authorities.

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Annex 1

Welsh Government Publications

The following Welsh Government commissioned publication summaries are grouped according to seven themes and presented most recent first:

<p>1. Demographics</p> <p>1.1 Statistics on Homelessness</p>
<p>2. Homelessness prevention</p> <p>2.1 Evaluation of one year homelessness prevention projects (2010).</p> <p>2.2 Prevention of homelessness (2004).</p>
<p>3. Housing solutions for homeless individuals</p> <p>3.1 The effects of recent migration on local authorities' allocation of housing and action under homelessness legislation: Study in six local authorities (2009).</p> <p>3.2 This time round: Exploring the effectiveness of current interventions in the housing of homeless prisoners released to Wales (2008).</p> <p>3.3 A study of models of accommodation and support for young single homeless (2007).</p> <p>3.4 Tackling homelessness: Key issues for consideration by Welsh Local Authorities (2005).</p> <p>3.5 The social housing cycle: Lettings and homelessness in Wales 1980-2005 (2005).</p>
<p>4. Reviews of Welsh Government programmes</p> <p>4.1 Homelessness Grants Under s.180 A review commissioned by the Welsh Government (2014).</p> <p>4.2 Measuring the impact of Supporting People: A scoping review (2013).</p>
<p>5. Improving the health of the homeless</p> <p>5.1 Standards for improving the health and well-being of homeless people and specific vulnerable groups (2013).</p> <p>5.2 Homeless people's access to medical, care and support services: A review of the literature (2003).</p> <p>5.3 Good practice framework for the provision of substance misuse services to homeless people and those with accommodation problems (publication date unknown).</p>
<p>6. Learning from experiences of the homeless</p> <p>6.1 The housing histories of people who have experienced homelessness (2004).</p> <p>6.2 Consulting with homeless people (2004).</p>
<p>7. Homelessness legislation</p> <p>7.1 International homelessness policy review: A report to inform the review of homelessness legislation in Wales (2012).</p> <p>7.2 Impact of analysis of existing homelessness legislation in Wales (2012).</p> <p>7.3 Options for improved homelessness legislative framework in Wales (2012).</p>

7.4 Assessing the impact of proposed changes to homelessness legislation in Wales: A report to inform the review of homelessness legislation in Wales (2012).

7.5 Review of the implementation of homelessness legislation by local authorities (2004).

8. Welsh Government commitments, guidance and action plans

8.1 Code of guidance for local authorities' allocation of accommodation and homelessness 2012 (2012).

8.2 Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old people who may be homeless (2010).

8.3 Ten Year Homelessness Plan 2009-2019 (2009).

8.4 Improving the health and well-being of homeless and specific vulnerable groups: Standards 2009-2014 (2009).

8.5 Mortgage rescue action plan 2009-2019 (2009).

Only those published since 2000 are summarised here. For each publication the title, author, publication date, overview and questions answered are provided. This document also lists the Welsh Governments commitments, guidance and action plan documents.

1. Demographics

1.1 Statistics on Homelessness. Quarterly data is published on the Welsh Government website on the number of households accepted as homeless, reasons for homelessness and the number of households in temporary accommodation. The latest form of this data suggests that the number of households experiencing homelessness has reduced.

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/homelessness/?lang=en>

2. Homelessness prevention

2.1. Evaluation of one year homelessness prevention projects. This report, written by Housing+ Cymru and published in October 2011, examines the extent to which the 16 one year homelessness prevention projects funded by the Welsh Government in 2010 were successful. It aimed to provide an objective assessment of the projects funded and the programme itself. The report provides a description of each of the projects and identifies the challenges the projects faced as well as what can be learnt. Overall, whilst the report suggests that there was significant variation in the extent to which projects achieved their aims some of them have the potential to contribute to the prevention of homelessness. Key issues that were common to several of the projects included identifying and evaluating the outcomes, preconditions for delivery, sustainability of projects and commissioning. The report makes recommendations that the Welsh Government should consider the next time it funds such a programme. In order to ascertain value for money, the importance of monitoring to review value for

money was emphasised. Another of the key recommendations stressed that a person-centred approach must be taken in any future homeless prevention projects.

2.2. Prevention of homelessness. This advice note, written by the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York, was published in August 2004 to inform aid voluntary sector agencies in Wales how to develop interventions to prevent homelessness. It provides a systematic desk-based review of existing research and international practices (current in 2004) from the UK, Western Europe and North America and evaluations of effectiveness. The advice note details types of homelessness prevention interventions, provides examples of general prevention programmes as well as examples of interventions targeted on specific groups such as young people and drug users. This publication states that preventative interventions can be effective in helping to reduce the possibility of homelessness but that alone they cannot address the wider structural issues and socio-economic conditions that place people at risk of homelessness. The report documents examples of good practice in preventative interventions and stresses the importance of evaluation.

3. Housing solutions for homeless individuals

3.1. The effects of recent migration on local authorities' allocation of housing and actions under homelessness legislation: A study in six local authorities. The Welsh Government commissioned this report to be undertaken by consultants at Housing+ Cymru and published it in 2009. This report reviewed the scale and nature of cross-border migration and how this affected demands for assistance with housing as well as outcomes for migrants and longer-standing residents. The report provided recommendations for Government action in 2009. It suggested that a revised, clear code of guidance on allocations and homelessness be published as a matter of urgency. A number of recommendations for local authorities and housing associations are also included, for example, the authors recommend that local authorities adopt a 'whole housing market' approach to address the lack of affordable housing.

3.2. This time round: Exploring the effectiveness of current interventions in the housing of homeless prisoners released to Wales. This report was published in May 2008 and written by Peter Mackie who worked closely with Shelter Cymru and Trothwy Cyf. Mackie sought to answer the questions 'How do the experiences of homeless prisoners who have been rehoused after leaving prison compare with those who have failed to find appropriate housing?' and 'What is best practice in the process

of rehousing homeless prisoners?’ The report suggested that prison leavers who were rehoused after leaving prison were better off. Based on the answers to the research questions the report recommended that accommodation providers take note that the location is suitable, supportive, long term and affordable amongst other things. Being close to employment and being away from people who are likely to have a negative influence was also shown to be important.

3.3. A study of models of accommodation and support for young single homeless people. Published in August 2007, this report by Housing + Cymru considers what sorts of models of accommodation for young single homeless people aged 16-24 exist in the UK and beyond, and how suitable and effective, in terms of value for money these models are. The report is aimed at Local Authorities and identifies gaps in provision as well as providing recommendations. The report concludes that in 2007 Wales put a greater focus on universal than targeted approaches in homelessness policy despite the needs of young homeless people being diverse and dynamic. It found that location and geographical issues are crucial determinants of how services are provided. The report stated that young single homeless people need to be offered a range of services in order that provision can be needs-led and that young people can exercise a degree of choice. The report provided evidence of the model of intervention utilised in 2007 and make recommendations based on the 11 examples of good practice examined. The recommendations spanned from ensuring an appropriate range of accommodation and support and addressing gaps in provisions to matching needs and types of provision in rural areas.

3.4. Tackling homelessness: Key issues for consideration by Welsh Local Authorities. This report published in 2005 by Tarki Technology Limited (Housing & Public Sector Consultants) provides recommendations on how local authorities should be tackling homelessness through funding, training and housing advice. This report is the product of a general review of the housing and homelessness situation across Wales and detailed homelessness service reviews undertaken over recent months in four Welsh councils, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Flintshire and Carmarthenshire. This report pulls together the common themes from the four on-site reviews. The key themes discussed include legislation, prevention advice and housing options, temporary accommodation, settled housing and performance indicators. Throughout, the report acknowledges that even with the best will and intentions councils cannot deliver everything they may wish to without the support and practical assistance of the Welsh Government, voluntary and social sector partners and the private sector. The report includes 11 recommendations to do with publishing homelessness

statistics, homelessness champions, action plans and resources amongst other suggestions.

3.5. The social housing cycle: Lettings and homelessness in Wales 1980-2005.

Written by Michael Jones at the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research in 2005 this report reviews the relationship between supply and demand for social housing and the house price cycle. Jones suggests that there is a cycle in the supply and demand for social housing which tracks the house price cycle, but in an inverted relationship. Reasons why the number of households which are classed as homeless and in priority need has tended to rise when the market price of housing has risen are not well understood. In this report Jones offers several possible explanations for this relationship. One of these is the theory that rapid increase in house prices may have a psychological effect on family and friends thus reducing their willingness to offer accommodation to lodgers who they view as less likely to move on to their own accommodation when house prices are high. This report may help to predict times when more individuals are likely to experience homelessness and given an indication of how behavioural change methods may alleviate the problem.

4. Reviews of Welsh Government programmes

4.1. Homelessness Grants Under s.180 A Review Commissioned by the Welsh

Government. Dr Clive Grace and Mike Bennet from the UK Research and Consultancy Services (RCS) were engaged by the Welsh Government to write this report which was published in 2014. They were asked to evaluate how effective the Homelessness Grant Programme was in meeting its objectives in preventing homelessness. The authors discuss eight areas of opportunity where the grants could be made more effective in service delivery as well as cost terms. These eight areas include reducing management charges generally, reviewing individual projects, mainstreaming some projects, possible re-applications/ tendering, encourage best practice communication, recognising strategic partnerships and coordination, consolidating some projects and indivisibility issues. In each instance the authors detail which projects these areas of opportunity applied to. The authors also suggested where there might be gaps in provisions and that the Welsh Government consider performance monitoring and coordinating funding.

4.2. Measuring the Impact of Supporting People: A Scoping Review. This report published in 2013 conducted by Nicholas Pleace at the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York looks at the nature and extent of the Supporting People projects prior to the launch of the new grant. Such a report was recommended in the 2010

Aylward Review. This scoping study was designed to inform the range, methodology and research questions of a large scale assessment of the impacts of Supporting People across Wales. The report presents key findings including the findings that the Supporting People projects were mainly focused on older people and that the outcome data collected was often not suited to assessing the impact of the Supporting People projects.

5. Improving the health of the homeless

5.1. Standards for improving the health and well-being of homeless people and specific vulnerable groups. Published in April 2013, this guidance report written by Public Health Wales aims to provide a summary and update of the original Improving the Health and Well-being of Homeless and Specific Vulnerable Groups Standards, first issued by the Welsh Government in 2009. The report sets out proposals for monitoring the implementation of these standards.

5.2. Homeless people's access to medical, care and support services: A review of the literature. Researchers at the University of Salford produced this review in 2003 to answer the question, 'What are the problems homeless people face in accessing medical care and support services they need and how might these problems be alleviated?' The review identified a number of issues including the heterogeneous nature of people classified as homeless, the often complex and co-existing medical conditions that homeless people experience and the discrimination homeless individuals face in particular those from certain ethnic and complex needs groups. The review indicated a number of conditions that need to be satisfied in order for homeless people to have effective access to medical, care and support services. These included making services more flexible and funding incentives and training to encourage staff to be more understanding and less judgemental of homeless individuals.

5.3. Good practice framework for the provision of substance misuse services to homeless people and those with accommodation problems. Author and publication date unknown. This report considers which substance misuse services are most effective for homeless people and outlines key interventions. The report begins by laying out the context of homelessness before discussing homeless services, specialist substance misuse services and specialist services and accommodation specifically for homeless substance misusers. The report recommends that effective service interventions for this client group require engagement of homelessness service providers in the Substance Misuse Action Teams and Drug Intervention Programme planning/commissioning processes in Wales. In addition the report

emphasises the need for the establishment of effective working relationships, joint protocols and joint training between the specialist substance misuse service providers and homelessness agencies/housing authorities.

6. Learning from experiences of the homeless

6.1. The housing histories of people who have experienced homelessness.

Glamorgan University, Shelter Cymru and Caer Las Cymru were commissioned in 2003 to write this review which was published in 2004. The purpose of this report was to identify factors which led to the successful resolution of homelessness problems. This report highlighted the importance of good quality advice and the problem of lack of knowledge about housing and rights as well as ignorance of services. Front line services were often used as a portal of information for those who had experienced homelessness. Many individuals who were interviewed mentioned the need to improve temporary accommodation, establishing specialist services and increasing levels of support. Indeed, support work was identified by those who had experienced homelessness as the most significant intervention in resolving homelessness by assisting them to resettle into independent accommodation and develop links with in the community.

6.2. Consulting with homeless people. Published in 2004, this advice note was based on work by Charities Evaluation Services drawing on research undertaken in Wales, England, Europe and the United States and organisations such as Shelter Cymru and Oxfam among others. The advice note aims to help public and voluntary sector organisations in Wales consult with homeless people on service planning, service delivery and identifying gaps in services. It explains why it is important to consult service users; consulting adheres to service user rights and desires, helps to improve services, contributes to improving service user confidence and independence and makes services more accountable and on target to meet policy and legal requirements. The report goes on to discuss how best to consult service users, for example, who to consult, when to consult and what to do with the information collected.

7. Homelessness legislation

7.1. International homelessness policy review: A report to inform the review of homelessness legislation in Wales. Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick and Dr Sarah Johnsen (both from the Institute for Housing, Urban and Real Estate Research at Heriot-Watt University) and Beth Watts (Centre for Housing Policy, University of York)

issued this report in 2012. They reviewed the state of homelessness legislation in Wales in 2012 and considered which other countries might provide useful lessons for Wales. The report mentions practices from the UK, France, Germany, Finland and the US. An example of one of the key findings is that evidence from a range of countries indicates that family homelessness is caused primarily by housing affordability issues, and can be virtually eliminated if these are addressed effectively.

7.2. Impact of analysis of existing homelessness legislation in Wales. This report written by Dr Peter Mackie (Cardiff University), Ian Thomas (WISERD) and Kate Hodgson (Cardiff University) reviews the impact of the existing (as of 2012) legislative framework. The report pulls together five key messages. One of the key findings was that a vital safety net was provided in 2012 but that it was selective and rigid in its assessment of priority need amongst other things. Another key finding is that homelessness prevention is effective but that its role within the legislative framework is ambiguous. From this report it seems that as of 2012 homelessness legislation in Wales was applied inconsistently with data to assess it limited.

7.3. Options for improved homelessness legislative framework in Wales. This report published in 2012 and written by Dr Peter Mackie, Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick and Tamsin Stirling (Independent Housing Consultant) amongst others considers how the legislative framework in Wales could be improved from a stakeholder perspective. The report based on 180 individual perspectives sets out three broad directions that the Welsh Government could consider in developing an improved homelessness legislative framework in Wales, a Minor Amendments model, a Breaking the Links model and a Housing Solutions model. For each model the strengths and weaknesses are assessed. They identify that two key areas of improvement relate to all three of the models put forward, the strengthening of responsibilities across different departments within local authorities and across sectors and the importance of improved monitoring and inspection in Wales.

7.4. Assessing the impacts of proposed changes to homelessness legislation in Wales: A report to inform the review of homelessness legislation in Wales. Published in 2012, this report by report written by Dr Peter Mackie and colleagues predicts the impact of the 'Housing Solutions' model recommended by Dr Mackie to facilitate a shift to a prevention focus in Wales.

7.5. Review of the implementation of homelessness legislation by local authorities. This report, published in 2004, was commissioned by the Welsh Government to be written by HACAS Chapman Hendy. The report aimed to review how well Welsh local authorities are implementing the statutory duty set out in the Homelessness Act 2002

(amended from the Housing Act 1996) and how the situation in places falling short can be improved by drawing on good practice elsewhere. One of the key findings suggested that a combination of poor reception services and a poor standard of advice provided by some authorities were resulting in people being denied the opportunity to access the assistance to which they are entitled. Another key finding indicated that the use by some local authorities of their exclusion policies to prevent homeless households being housed permanently within their own stock was a cause for concern.

8. Welsh Government commitments, guidance and action plans

- 8.1. Code of guidance for local authorities' allocation of accommodation and homelessness 2012.** Issued in 2012, this document provides a code which local authorities must take into account when exercising their functions in connection with allocations and homelessness.
- 8.2. Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless.** This statutory guidance issued in 2010 describes what children's social services authorities and local housing authorities should do concerning their duties under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to secure or provide accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year old people.
- 8.3. Ten Year Homelessness Plan 2009-2019.** Issued in 2009 by the Housing Directorate. This document describes the guiding principles for the development and delivery of homelessness services that the Welsh Government is committed to between 2009 and 2019. In line with the main strategy employed by other countries, one of the strategic aims underlying this plan is preventing homelessness wherever possible. Others include placing the service user at the centre of service delivery and making the best use of resources.
- 8.4. Improving the health and well-being of homeless and specific vulnerable groups: Standards 2009-2014.** Issued in 2009, this document explains the need for all local areas in Wales to produce a Homeless People and Vulnerable Groups' Health Action Plan and the standards upon which they should be based.
- 8.5. Mortgage rescue action plan 2009-2010.** Issued in 2009, this document aims to explain how the Welsh Government plan to solve the problem of increased mortgage repossessions and implement the solutions.

Annex 2

Other Reviews and Toolkits

Beyond the Welsh Government commissioned publications (see Annex 1) there has been a lot of research into homelessness and how to tackle it. The publications summarised below deliver comprehensive accounts of causes of homelessness and approaches to tackling homelessness. They were written and commissioned by a range of individuals and organisations. This selection is in no way exhaustive but gives an indication of the sort of evidence already available. In general, 'The Homeless Hub' is a good web-based resource library that provides links to reports on homelessness from across the world.

9. Understanding causes of homelessness

9.1 Homelessness, pathways to exclusion and opportunities for intervention (2011).

9.2 Single homelessness: An overview of research in Britain (2000).

10. Homelessness prevention

10.1 Welsh Local Government Association homelessness prevention toolkits.

10.2 Homelessness prevention and the Welsh legal duty: Lessons for international policies (2014).

10.3 Tackling homelessness and exclusion: Understanding complex lives (2011).

10.4 Toolkit: Early intervention programmes to prevent youth homelessness: Some examples from the UK (2010).

10.5 Homelessness: Early identification and prevention – A good practice guide (2007).

10.6 Evaluating homelessness prevention (2007).

10.7 Developing homelessness prevention practice: Combining research evidence and professional knowledge (2005).

11. Helping the homeless to find housing and improve their health

11.1 Peer review in social protection and social inclusion: Sustainable ways of preventing homelessness (2013).

11.2 Psychologically informed services for homeless people: Good practice guide (2012).

11.3 Effective services for substance misuse and homelessness in Scotland: Evidence from an international perspective (2008).

11.4 Interventions to improve the health of the homeless: A systematic review (2005).

11.5 Homelessness and poverty: Reviewing the links (Publication date unknown)

12. Homelessness in rural areas

12.1 Homelessness in rural Wales (2006).

9. Understanding causes of homelessness

9.1. Homelessness, pathways to exclusion and opportunities for intervention.

Published in 2011 and funded by the Webb Memorial Trust, this report was written by Dr Jamie Harding, Adele Irving and Dr Mary Whowell from Northumbria University for The Cyrenians, a Scottish charity that aims to help alleviate poverty. The researchers sought to establish causes of homelessness and identify points where intervention by services might have reduced or prevented the levels of exclusion that respondents experienced. The report indicates that there are two distinct pathways into homelessness, a 'lifelong' and a 'life events' pathway. For those who experienced the 'lifelong' route, the authors identified that childhood disadvantage was a common factor shared by most homeless individuals. This often included parental addiction, domestic abuse or time in local authority care. Disadvantage typically continued into adulthood, where rented accommodation and unemployment dominated housing histories. For those who experienced the 'life event' route, a traumatic event followed by a downward spiral led to homelessness. With prevention in mind, the research pointed to a need for more effective services for children. Other points at which services might have made a difference in the lives of respondents were prior to being evicted from their own accommodation and on release from prison. Lack of support was identified as a problem for respondents.

http://www.thecyrenians.org/Resources/Tyneside%20Cyrenians/Resources/Research%20Reports/Homelessness_%20Pathways%20to%20Exclusion%20and%20Opportunities%20for%20Intervention.pdf

9.2. Single homelessness: An overview of research in Britain. This 2000 Joseph Rowntree Foundation report written by Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Peter Kemp and Suzanne Klinker draws together the findings of research carried out throughout Britain up until the Millennium. It explores how homelessness is defined, who is homeless and why, and single people's own experiences of being homeless. The authors provide recommendations for further research and policy. Though this review is out of date it provides a strong basis for determining what is already well known. The report explains that there has been a shift from describing homelessness as a 'housing problem' to more complex understanding of the social and economic factors. It describes how the risk factors associated with homelessness are well understood, though local level factors are not. The report stresses the need for social contact and purposeful activity in getting people experiencing homelessness and other problems

back on track. The need for joined up, multi-agency work is also mentioned as well as the absence of robust evidence to support 'best practice' in some areas.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/jr073-homelessness-research-britain.pdf>

10. Homelessness prevention

10.1. Welsh Local Government Association homelessness prevention toolkits.

The Welsh Local Government Association have produced two 'homelessness prevention toolkits' to assist local authorities to develop and adapt their services to comply with duties outlined in the new homelessness legislation which will come into effect in April 2015. The first toolkit focuses on the actions authorities can take to help someone avoid homelessness. The second toolkit focuses on developing private rented sector access schemes to provide accommodation for people who are at risk of homelessness.

<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/homelessness-prevention-toolkits>

10.2. Homelessness prevention and the Welsh legal duty: Lessons for international policies.

This paper written by Peter Mackie at Cardiff University was published in the journal *Housing Studies* in 2014. This paper critically examines the 'implementation of homelessness prevention in Wales' and considers what can be learnt. Mackie writes that 'the paradigm shift in international homelessness policies towards a prevention focus has resulted in proven benefits to society and most importantly to individuals at risk of homelessness. Though Mackie commends the value placed on prevention he suggests that new policies are not being properly evaluated. The paper suggests that the Welsh homelessness prevention commitments should be used as a model for elsewhere but that it cannot be relied on to solve homelessness in its entirety.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02673037.2014.927055>

10.3. Tackling homelessness and exclusion: Understanding complex lives.

This Joseph Rowntree Foundation evidence review by Theresa McDonagh was published in 2011. It summaries the findings from four projects which examined the interaction between homelessness and other support needs and considers ways in which policy and practice can more effectively tackle homelessness. For example, with regards to service provision the research highlighted that there is a difference between the perceptions of service users and providers in terms of priorities. In addition, despite much discussion of the value of joined up working there was very little evidence of integrated working across health, housing and social care, with each

agency undertaking its own 'holistic' assessment of need and setting its own objectives for care and support.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/tackling-homelessness-and-exclusion>

- 10.4. Toolkit: Early intervention programmes to prevent youth homelessness: some examples from the UK.** This document is based on the toolkit provided by the Department of Communities and Local Government to guide local authorities and agencies in the UK in preventing youth homelessness. It was amended in 2010 for the Combating Social Exclusion Among Young Homeless Populations (CSEYHP) project to accompany a DVD on early homelessness intervention in the UK. The toolkit in the link catalogued here summaries approaches to working with young people to prevent youth homelessness relevant to different points in their lives e.g. pre crisis and post crisis. The toolkit includes commended examples such as the programme, 'Safe in the City', which worked in London Boroughs to offer young people at risk of homelessness three separate but linked services related to personal development, education and training and family support.

<http://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/toolkit-early-intervention-programmes-prevent-youth-homelessness-some-examples-uk>

- 10.5. Homelessness: Early identification and prevention – A good practice guide.** This report written by Sue Cullen, Samantha Byrne and Paul Hayes in association with Shelter and funded by the Vodafone UK Foundation was published in 2007. The guide aims to explain best practice examples from across the UK in identifying those who may be at risk of becoming homeless and interventions to ensure the risk is minimised or eliminated. In light of the research the report identifies two areas in which more work needs to be done. The first is regards making joint working effective. The authors highlight that although there are many protocols, many of them have never been implemented or have not been sustained. This may have been caused by a lack of commitment, a lack of follow through or a lack of reality about what is possible on the ground. The second area for improvement relates to the lack of involvement in preventative work of people who are homeless or threatened by homelessness.

http://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/policy_library_folder/good_practice_guide_homelessness_early_identification_and_prevention

- 10.6. Evaluating homelessness prevention.** This review commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government and written by Hal Pawson and colleagues at the School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University was

published in 2007. This research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches to preventing homelessness focusing on value for money. The report provides a good practice guide around the practical implementation of homelessness prevention on the part of local authorities and their partner agencies. The report concludes that the most widely adopted approaches to homelessness prevention are enhanced housing advice, rent deposit and similar schemes to enhance access to private tenancies, family mediation, domestic violence victim support, and tenancy sustainment. The authors claim that most of the homelessness prevention initiatives that could be assessed appeared to be cost effective, in that savings in the costs of temporary accommodation and administration associated with homelessness exceeded the operating costs of services.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/150970.pdf>

10.7. Developing homelessness prevention practice: Combining research evidence and professional knowledge. Published by the fourteenth issue of the journal Health and Social Care in the Community in 2005, this report written by Maureen Crane, Anthony Warnes and Ruby Fu at the Sheffield Institute for Studies of Ageing provides recommendations for the development of homelessness prevention. Specifically the article describes recommendations 'for practice changes, for the concerted development of evidence on the effectiveness of different measures, and for a more systematic approach to the identification and dissemination of good practice'. The article discusses the discrepancy between the high priority that homelessness prevention currently receives and the primitiveness of both the evidence base and the arrangements for good practice dissemination.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2524.2006.00607.x/full>

11. Helping the homeless to find housing and improve their health

11.1. Peer review in social protection and social inclusion: Sustainable ways of preventing homelessness. In 2013, Peer Review participants met in Copenhagen to learn how Denmark has tackled homelessness using an integrated Housing-First strategy. A short report was published on the discussion that came out of that meeting that can be accessed from the link below. The report established that the Housing First Model is very effective at enabling individuals with complex support needs to exit homelessness, with housing retention rates of over 90% demonstrated in both Denmark and a number of other European countries. The goal of Housing First is to provide a permanent housing solution for homeless people as quickly as possible,

combined with flexible 'floating' social support tailored to their needs. This 'Housing First' model – first developed in 1992 by the Pathways to Housing organisation in New York for chronically homeless people with severe mental health problems - has swept across Europe at an astonishing rate and the key principles have been endorsed at European level. Lessons learnt are listed. The Housing First Model is an example of an evidence based programme that could be applied elsewhere.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1884&furtherNews=yes>

- 11.2. Psychologically informed services for homeless people: Good practice guide.** Published in 2012, this interactive document was written by representatives from the Department for Communities and Local Government, Homeless Healthcare, the University of Southampton and RJA Consultancy amongst others. The aim of this guide is to help providers and commissioners to develop or remodel services in order to address identified emotional and psychological issues amongst rough sleepers and young homeless people. The document includes five case studies of services which have been transformed to be psychologically aware. The authors suggest there are five key areas to consider when creating psychologically informed environments: developing a psychological framework, considering the physical environment and social spaces, staff training and support, managing relationships and evaluating outcomes. The authors describe how these five areas have worked in practice through five case studies.

http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/imported/transforms/peripheral-block/UsefulDownloads_Download/A6FD3BB1EB2A449987C12DFF91EF3F73/Good%20practice%20guide%20-%20%20Psychologically%20informed%20services%20for%20homeless%20people%20.pdf

- 11.3. Effective services for substance misuse and homelessness in Scotland: Evidence from an international review.** Published in 2008, this report by Nicholas Pleace from the Centre for Housing Policy for the Scottish Government provides a rapid evidence assessment of international literature on effective substance misuse services for homeless people. The aim was to review best practice in other countries and determine if there were any lessons for Scotland. The author recommends a mixture of services, longer term interventions and modification of generic services amongst other suggestions. These lessons might also be useful to consider for Wales.

<http://www.york.ac.uk/media/chp/documents/2008/substancemisuse.pdf>

11.4. Interventions to improve the health of the homeless: A systematic review.

The American Journal of Preventive Medicine published this review in 2005. The aim of this review was to provide guidance in the development and organisation of programs to improve the health of homeless people. The review concludes that coordinated treatment programs for homeless adults with mental illness or substance abuse usually result in better health outcomes than usual care.
[http://www.homelesshub.ca/ResourceFiles/Systematic_Review_\(AJPM\).pdf](http://www.homelesshub.ca/ResourceFiles/Systematic_Review_(AJPM).pdf)

11.5. Homelessness and poverty: Reviewing the links. This report written by Sarah Johnsen and Beth Watts at Heriot-Watt University forms part of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Anti-Poverty Strategy evidence review. The report investigates the bi-directional links between homelessness and poverty and the effectiveness of policy and practice interventions that aim to break the links between homelessness and poverty. They claim that research has shown that effective homelessness prevention measures targeting 'at risk' households or those with prior experience of homelessness can operate as 'buffers' protecting them from homelessness even in the context of difficult structural conditions such as rising unemployment or worsening housing affordability. Examples of such initiatives include rent deposit schemes, family mediation, tenancy sustainment support, and financial advice. Nonetheless the authors stress that tackling the structural causes of homelessness at the root is the most effective way to break the link between poverty and homelessness.

https://pureapps2.hw.ac.uk/portal/files/7467281/Homelessness_Poverty_FullReport.pdf

12. Homelessness in rural areas

12.1. Homelessness in rural Wales. Published by the Wales Rural Observatory in 2006, this research report was written by Paul Milbourne, Rachel Hughes and Simon Hartwell. The report was commissioned to provide a comprehensive evidence-base of homelessness in rural Wales. The report examines the scale, nature and geography of homelessness in rural Wales (in 2006) and identifies good practice for dealing with this problem. The report suggests that homelessness in rural Wales needs to be viewed as a significant problem with 36% of all cases of homelessness in Wales (in 2006) presenting in rural areas. The authors mentioned six main obstacles to delivering services to homeless people in rural areas. These included logistical problems and additional costs associated with providing services to dispersed

homeless people in rural areas. The report also detailed several points of actions to improve the situation for homeless people in rural areas.

<http://www.walesruralobservatory.org.uk/sites/default/files/Rural%20Homelessness%20Report.pdf>

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