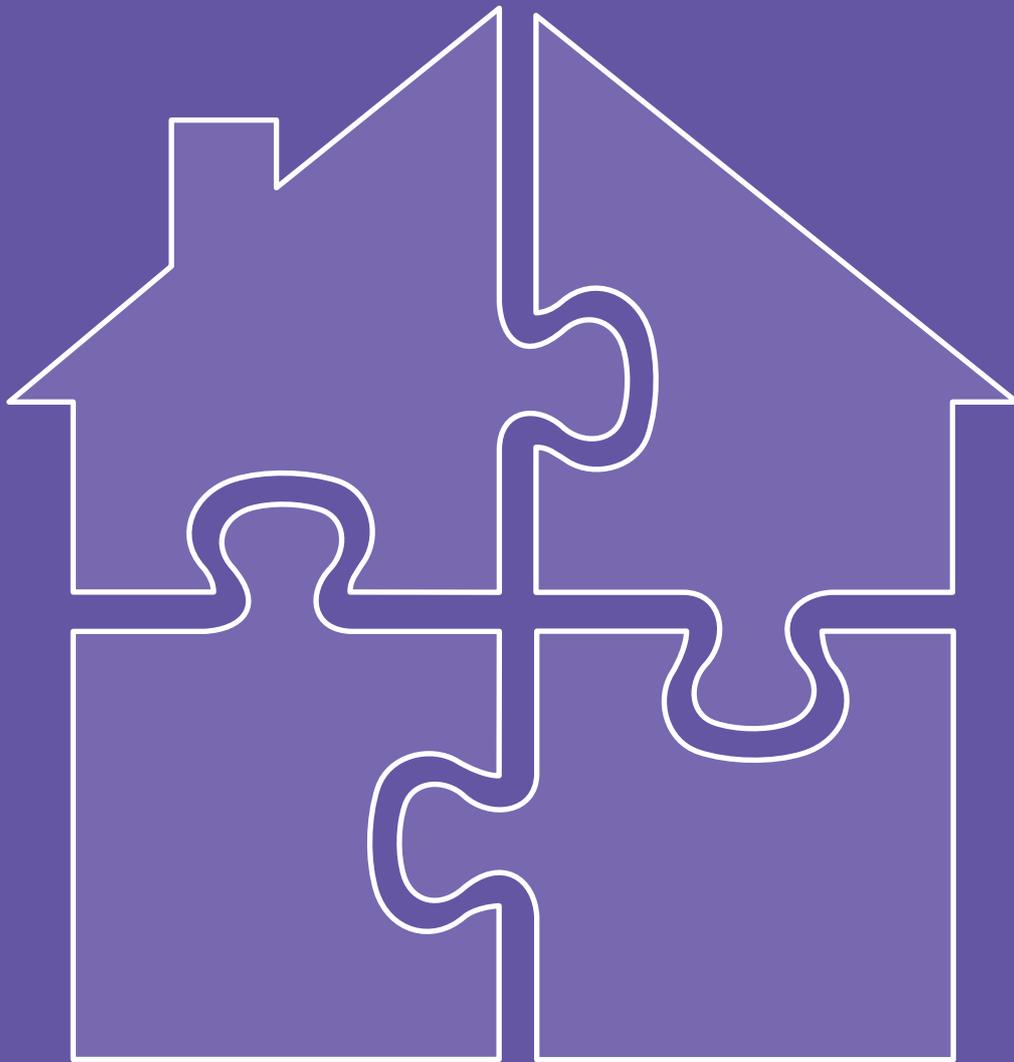




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# Interdepartmental Homelessness Action Plan 2017–18

Year 1 Report

This document contains the results for the first year (2017–18) of the Interdepartmental Homelessness Action Plan.

The Interdepartmental Homelessness Action Plan was developed to complement the NI Housing Executive’s Homelessness Strategy and focuses on addressing gaps in those non-accommodation services that have the most impact, or have the potential to more positively impact, on the lives and life chances of people who are homeless and those who are at most risk of homelessness.

Following an initial Homelessness Workshop involving Government Departments, statutory partners, homelessness service providers and service users, agreement was reached on five main priority areas:

- 1. Health and wellbeing, including mental health and substance misuse;**
- 2. Education and awareness raising – children, young people, schools and providers;**
- 3. Support for those leaving places of care, children’s residential and foster care, prisons, hospitals, mental health facilities;**

- 4. Support for families including support for those experiencing domestic violence, and community support mechanisms;**

- 5. Employability, financial capability and access to benefits.**

A total of nine actions from these priority areas were identified and taken forward in the first year.

The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group (HSSG), which is chaired by the Department for Communities (DfC) and includes representation from the Departments of Health (DoH), Department of Justice (DoJ), Department of Education (DE), statutory agencies and the voluntary sector, had overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the Action Plan. HSSG reviewed quarterly progress reports on the Action Plan and signed-off on the Year 1 results. HSSG will also be responsible for signing-off any future iterations of the Action Plan.

| <b>PRIORITY AREA 1</b><br><b>Health and wellbeing, including mental health and substance misuse</b>                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| Responsible Owner                                                                                                                                                                                   | Actions                                                                                                                                                     | Expected Outcomes                                                                                                                                       | End Year Result                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|  <p><b>DoH</b><br/>Department<br/>of Health<br/><a href="http://www.health-ni.gov.uk">www.health-ni.gov.uk</a></p> | <p>1. Identify barriers faced by people who are homeless in accessing health and social care services with a view to improving access to those services</p> | <p>By 30 November 2017, Department of Health (DoH) to produce a report on findings, providing a basis for identifying measures to address barriers.</p> | <p>A Task &amp; Finish Group was established by the Chief Medical Officer in DoH, the purpose of which was to determine possible service models which will increase access to primary health care and other health and social care services for people who are homeless. The group reviewed existing information on the health needs of people who have experience of Homelessness and known difficulties in accessing health and social care services. A draft report, which includes detail on the barriers faced by people who are homeless, has been completed. Barriers identified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GP Registration</li> <li>• Accessing GP service when registered</li> <li>• Geographical location of services</li> <li>• Difficult and chaotic life circumstances</li> <li>• Mental Health needs</li> <li>• Discharge from hospital and lack of intermediate care/step down facilities</li> </ul> |

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|  <p><b>DoH</b><br/>Department<br/>of Health<br/><a href="http://www.health-ni.gov.uk">www.health-ni.gov.uk</a></p> | <p>2. Promote the use of the Hospital Discharge Protocol across Health and Social Care organisations</p> | <p>By June 2017, establish agreed accountability mechanisms with the Health and Social Care Trusts for the implementation of the Hospital Discharge Protocol.</p> <p>By Autumn 2017, establish and implement arrangements for auditing how well the Hospital Discharge Protocol has been used in respect of people who are homeless being discharged from hospital.</p> | <p>This output has not been achieved by the target date, and the implementation of an audit process will take longer than expected to establish. However, DoH is committed to working with partners to ensure action on this important area is taken forward.</p> |
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| <b>PRIORITY AREA 2</b><br><b>Education and awareness raising – children, young people, schools and providers</b>                                                       |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| <br> | <p>3. Learning in schools – promotion of Homelessness Awareness and development/update of Skills Curriculum thematic units</p> | <p>By 31 March 2018, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) will liaise with partner organisations and other agencies to identify existing materials for use in schools and to explore possibilities for collaborative working.</p> <p>Building on outcome 1, CCEA will establish a database of useful resources/materials to be made available through the CCEA website for teachers to draw upon when teaching active citizenship.</p> | <p>Members of the Homelessness Steering Group identified existing materials from their organisations/other agencies that can be used in schools. The Steering Group identified mechanisms for providing training, engagement and launch events to promote the Homelessness resource in schools in autumn 2018. Throughout the Interdepartmental Homelessness Action Plan cycle, a database of useful resources/materials will be established to support teaching active citizenship.</p> <p>This resource is now available on the CCEA website for schools from autumn 2018 and develop further across the lifespan of the project.</p> |

| <b>PRIORITY AREA 3</b><br><b>Support for those leaving places of care, including institutional care, children’s residential and foster care, prisons, hospitals, mental health facilities.</b>                      |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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|  <p><b>DfC</b><br/>Department<br/>for Communities<br/><a href="http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk">www.communities-ni.gov.uk</a></p> | <p>4. Provision of Joined up Advice/Signposting for those leaving prison/ juvenile justice centres and places of care.</p> | <p>By 31 March 2018, to host benefit clinics in custodial settings and other venues as appropriate eg Housing Association premises.</p> <p>By 31 March 2018, conduct outreach visits for those identified as being more ‘vulnerable’.</p> <p>By 31 March 2018, provide advice and support to Social Workers on potential benefit entitlements and notifications and welfare changes for Looked After Children and care leavers.</p> | <p>Data for April 2017 – March 2018 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 84 Benefit Clinics delivered in the three Prison Establishments with 577 attendees;</li> <li>• 481 attendees received a benefit entitlement check;</li> <li>• 28 females offered service in Hydebank</li> </ul> <p>The Make the Call (MTC) leaflet is placed in each Family Links pack sent to the families of prisoners who have consented to the NI Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) contacting their family with an offer of support. During 2017/18, 1039 packs had been issued to families containing the MTC leaflet.</p> <p>10 Benefit Clinics were delivered within Choice Housing Association to 99 people.</p> <p>The Community Outreach Service has conducted 2 prison visits for the completion of Personal Independence Payment Claims.</p> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                | <p>By 31 March 2018, support the HSCB in its work to encourage providers of supported accommodation, lodging and floating support services for vulnerable young people aged 16-21+ to make maximum use of the IBU Community Outreach services.</p>                                                                                                                                        | <p>A Regional Group on Welfare Benefits Meeting was held with representatives from the Health and Social Care Board and Trusts to discuss the impact of Universal Credit on Care Leavers. It was agreed that a regional information session should be arranged with the 16+ team practitioners and managers, providers of supported accommodation for vulnerable young people and foster carers. Presentation took place on 27 February 2018.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|  <p><b>DfC</b><br/>Department<br/>for Communities<br/><a href="http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk">www.communities-ni.gov.uk</a></p> | <p>5. Work to develop a wraparound support to provide an 'end to end' service/signposting.</p> | <p>By March 2018, the wraparound team will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed a review of existing service provision;</li> <li>• Established new and renewed connection with partner organisations/delivery partners; and</li> <li>• Utilised available evidence sources to proactively target those groups and households identified as vulnerable.</li> </ul> | <p>Standard Operating Model for Make the Call Telephony Service completed.</p> <p>Review of existing structure and Outreach Services to commence 11 June 2018 and due to be completed by 31 July 2018.</p> <p>Review of Analytics existing service provision due to commence 01 September 2018 and completed by end September 2018.</p> <p>Partnership review completed. Work completed with the 5 Health and Social Care Trust's (HSCT) Families in Need Exercise, with the focus on children at risk of going into care. From January 2018 to March 2018, 9 presentations have been delivered across the five Trusts with a further 6 scheduled to take place by the end of June 2018.</p> <p>For the period 2017/18, Make the Call issued 33,600 letters to people with a potential entitlement to benefit inviting them to avail of a free and confidential benefit entitlement check.</p> |

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|  <p>DfC<br/>Department<br/>for Communities<br/><a href="http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk">www.communities-ni.gov.uk</a></p> | <p>6. Substance misuse and reoffending</p>  | <p>By June 2018, an analysis of existing studies in this area will be undertaken and, if appropriate, further research will be commissioned to ascertain the nature and extent of any individual or structural barriers facing this customer group in accessing and sustaining substance misuse services.</p> | <p>Action complete. A joint strategy between Prison Service and South Eastern Trust on the management of substance misuse in custody is in place. DoH is committed to ongoing monitoring of the strategy.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  <p>DfC<br/>Department<br/>for Communities<br/><a href="http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk">www.communities-ni.gov.uk</a></p> | <p>7. Mapping Current Service Provision</p> | <p>By June 2018, completion of the first pilot mapping exercise. Learning from the development of the first pilot will inform the timeframe and scope for the rollout of this project.</p>                                                                                                                    | <p>DfC is working with MACS Supporting Children and Young People (MACS) and the Council for the Homeless NI (CHNI) to help identify any gaps in current provision of services. Young MACS service users have produced a creative piece of work which captures their experiences of homelessness and the current service provision available and any perceived gaps. CHNI is currently undertaking a NI wide scoping and analysis exercise to map and better identify the range of services, outside of mainstream homelessness provision, that can contribute to the prevention and/or alleviation of youth homelessness and to highlight the needs of young people and their experience of accessing services and support.</p> <p>Once the 2 projects are completed and analysed a pilot mapping exercise will be developed.</p> |

| <b>PRIORITY AREA 4</b><br><b>Support for families including support for those experiencing domestic violence, and community support mechanisms</b>                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <br><br> | <p>8. Develop a protocol or framework following the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation to facilitate and encourage relevant Government Departments and statutory partners, where possible, to share information about individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.</p> | <p>By June 2018, produce draft protocol for discussion and agreement with partner organisations and wider stakeholders.</p> <p>By June 2019, run a pilot of the protocol to refine/inform its further development prior to implementation.</p> | <p>The Departments have jointly proposed that the focus for this action in the first instance should be individuals at risk of domestic violence and their families with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention. The Women’s Aid Federation NI has compiled a report, which is NI wide in scope, providing summary/insight of current information sharing processes for this service user group. It reflects the nature and type of information currently obtained by Women’s Aid and looks at the differences experienced across NI to identify areas of good practice.</p> |

| PRIORITY AREA 5<br>Employability, financial capability and access to benefits                                                                                                                                       |                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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|  <p><b>DfC</b><br/>Department<br/>for Communities<br/><a href="http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk">www.communities-ni.gov.uk</a></p> | <p>9. 'Helping claimants who are Vulnerable' Working Group</p> | <p>By March 2018, the Working Group will produce a report for action. The report will be underpinned by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping existing benefit/employability interventions that contribute to addressing/preventing homelessness and identifying potential gaps in services;</li> <li>• Reviewing how other jurisdictions support vulnerable customers to access benefits and employability services and considering the applicability of these support mechanisms in NI;</li> <li>• Conducting customer profiling/segmentation to better understand the needs of vulnerable groups in accessing services.</li> </ul> | <p>A review of the benefit mapping work highlighted some additional work to review European Social Fund, NIHE and Local Authority programmes.</p> <p>The research component is being augmented with a review of approaches in other European jurisdictions.</p> <p>Any recommendations arising will have to be considered before release of the report.</p> |

Available in alternative formats.



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