# The lived experience of homelessness

This report has been developed by design consultancy, Uscreates

As part of the first phase of Crisis' 'Have Your Say' consultation on how to end homelessness, Uscreates were asked to design workshops with people with lived experiences of homelessness (PLEH) that could be scaled across the UK, reaching a large number of PLEH in different locations. These sessions aimed to better understand the causes of homelessness and its effect on people's lives, and find ideas to prevent and end it (from the perspective of those who have experienced it). After an initial workshop facilitated by Uscreates with PLEH, Crisis and Groundswell staff were trained to deliver a further 12 workshops at Crisis' 12 Skylight centres and 21 workshops conducted by Groundswell at homelessness organisations across England, Scotland and Wales. The findings in this report will feed into the second phase of the consultation: a series of policy roundtables that will combine this insight with findings from policy workshops and written consultation responses to develop consensus around a set of ideas, which will be developed further during the third (final) stage of the consultation.

# Introduction

## Methodology

Uscreates is a social design and innovation agency that specialises in health, wellbeing and the public sector. We work in a user-centred way to design better ways of working, better services, better experiences, and - ultimately - better futures for people. Uscreates were brought onto this programme of work to ensure that the consultation was informed by PLEH. We adopted a co-design approach for the Skylight workshops in order to involve all stakeholders in the design process and encourage the generation of ideas that reflect their needs and are relevant.

The methodology for the consultation involved:

- Initial testing of the overall workshop design with PLEH, and iteration to adapt it to people in vulnerable circumstances.
- An initial 'workshop for depth' (facilitated by Uscreates) to understand people's experiences of homelessness, the root causes of homelessness, and facilitate a creative process to generate ideas to prevent homelessness.
- The findings from the initial workshop were used to create a plan/guide for Crisis and Groundswell representatives to run further workshops with PLEH across the UK.
- Uscreates ran a training session with the representatives to iterate and handover workshop tools. Groundswell tested the materials with PLEH and amended the workshop content in light of their feedback.
- Crisis ran 12 Skylight workshops and Groundswell carried out 18 with PLEH and 3 with frontline staff working with participants.
- The findings from all the workshops were brought together into a synthesis and analysis session to identify the most common issues and plot the ideas against the policy framework, which forms the basis of this report.

## Three priorities

Crisis is developing a plan to end homelessness as part of its 50th anniversary. For this, Crisis is carrying out a consultation with policy experts and people with experience of homelessness to identify the key problems and solutions. The work undertaken as part of these workshops forms part of the process to gather an evidence base for change - as well as establishing a new narrative for transformative policy change - and formed the basis of the consultation with PLEH. Therefore, the findings from the Skylight workshops have been analysed under the lens of the three homelessness priorities from a policy context: preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place; responding rapidly so problems don't escalate; and ensuring long-term solutions are in place for those that need support with more complex issues. There is a final section which addresses overarching issues and solutions that cut across all three themes.

# 1. **Prevention**

### Scope of prevention

There is a debate about how far we can go in our understanding of prevention. The Homelessness Reduction Act extends the duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness for 56 days before eviction. However, homelessness has multiple and complex causal factors and deep roots; and in order to really prevent homelessness, intervention needs to be taken earlier. While there is no absolute line, it is beyond the scope of this consultation to address some of the very deep causes (for example, tackling childhood poverty or trauma) and focus on activity leading up to the 56 days. However, we do feel that we should report on the issues identified by people with a lived experience of homelessness and any ideas to address them, even if they do not get taken forward through this process.

# 1. Prevention

## 1.1 Economic poverty

### 1.1.1 Issues

We heard from PLEH that - increasingly - the benefits system is not generous enough and no longer provides a safety net. This means that people do not have enough money to save for periods of unemployment or unstable employment, high debt, sanctions (which can leave people without employment and housing benefits), a move to Universal Credit (which can take time), and increased rent. When these things happen (often quickly), there is no protective cushion. Sanctions lead to terminated or delayed benefits, and often Universal Credit frontline staff do not fully understand the vulnerability of the people they are working with, and the difficulty they experience in keeping appointments, managing debt and living at the same address. There is a societal stigma around worklessness and poverty which has created the political conditions for removing this safety net. We heard much discussion about the documentary series, *Benefits Street*, and the role this played in creating negative stereotypes that need to be challenged.

### 1.1.2 Stories

> I was threatened with sanctions because they were telling people to attend unreasonable appointments or sending letters too late. The staff don't understand how to talk to vulnerable people. This delayed my first UC payment and I had to sign on daily and sofa surf. *(Crisis Liverpool)*

> It's very difficult to get secure employment with temporary contracts, zero hour contracts and disposable employees. You lose your income and you can't pay the rent and the landlord kicks you out. It would be different if you could get benefits to help with the time lapse in between getting a new job. I have seen friends in this position, they hadn't had help because the job centre said he made himself jobless. *(Crisis Liverpool)*

> I lost my job and then lost my home, I had to sleep on a friend's sofa. I had difficulty finding work due to stress, anxiety and learning/literacy difficulties. *(Crisis Brent)*

> You have to get a job to be able to pay rent, even if you get benefits. Certain jobs are not accessible to some - there are limited options. *(Crisis Brent)*

# 1. Prevention

> The benefits system doesn't accurately reflect the real cost of living, it doesn't cover rent. *(Crisis Croydon)*

> People are losing the will to progress out of sheer exhaustion from dealing with the system. *(Groundswell Leicester Staff)*

### 1.1.3 Ideas

- 💡 **Employer duty for rent after redundancy.** This idea recommends that employers be required to cover any soon-to-be redundant employee's rent for a period after contract termination. Such an action would help prevent homelessness after job loss. *(Crisis Liverpool)*

- 💡 **Easy navigation of the system.** This idea argues for the importance of clear support, guidance, and troubleshooting advice when navigating the benefits system. Such a provision would positively impact homelessness by helping to ensure that people receive their full benefits, avoid sanction, and ultimately avoid economic poverty and subsequent homelessness. *(Crisis South Yorkshire)*

- 💡 **End zero-hour contracts.** This draws on the fact that zero-hour contracts have the potential to cause homelessness for many people. The uncertainty of a guaranteed salary means that people do not know whether they have enough money to pay their rent and other expenses. This can also cause significant stress and anxiety for the resident. *(Crisis Liverpool)*

- 💡 **New financial models to support the homelessness prevention budget.** This idea explores the notion that reinvesting a percentage of local rental payments into property purchase and community-led funding initiatives could support homeless provision in local areas. *(Idea amalgamated at insight workshop)*

- 💡 **Promoting independence, not dependence.** This solution identifies the fact that many other ideas call on councils or the government to do more; and whilst more can be done to address homelessness, it is important that delivery of services encourages people to be proactive and independent, rather than relying on the council to fix any problems. *(Idea amalgamated at insight workshop)*

# 1.  Prevention

## 1.2  Family mediation & schools

### 1.2.1  Issues

Breakdowns within families can sometimes be inevitable, but they do not have to lead to homelessness. However, the effects of such an occurrence can be serious and sweeping. In addition to the practical issues associated with family breakdown or loss (for example, the cost of moving out or lack of income), we heard from PLEH with regard to how detrimental the removal of a support network can be, as this can help people cope with wider life issues (such as unemployment). People commented that bereavement can often trigger a family breakdown as everyone in the family needs support, but no-one is able to provide it as they are all suffering. Additionally, relationship breakdowns due to domestic violence can bring about compound support needs for an individual (i.e. depression, anxiety, loss of self-esteem).

### 1.2.2  Stories

> You build your life around your family, that's your foundation, so the breakup of your foundation is a causal effect of other breakdowns (i.e. job, home, etc.), leading to homelessness. *(Crisis Birmingham)*

> I don't see eye to eye with my stepdad, and one night I had enough, so I left and slept in the woods. When I was living on the street, my family wouldn't let me stay - there was no room and the relationship had broken down. I felt stuck as to what to do and where to live. *(Crisis Coventry)*

> I was abused by my ex - I ended up losing my ex and losing my mind. This led to my homelessness. *(Crisis Coventry)*

### 1.2.3  Ideas

- 💡 **Mediation service.** This draws on the fact that family breakdown can be a cause of homelessness, either in terms of adult children being asked to leave the home, or following a marital breakdown. The idea supports families to come together and attempt to work through their problems, preventing homelessness. Similarly, community approaches could prevent loneliness and build up support networks within the community. *(Crisis Birmingham)*

# 1. Prevention

## 1.3 Institutional failures (in public services)

### 1.3.1 Issues

Large amounts of public sector resources are spent on people while they are in institutions (the care system, prisons, etc.), but we heard much about the lack of continued support when people leave. Recent policy changes help - such as the alteration to the duties local authorities have towards young people, which has been extended to age 25 - but there is not the related funding provision for this service. Quite often partners from across public sector services do not know how to spot those at risk of homelessness and refer them to other services; people also commented that they did not feel staff in the public sector knew how to treat vulnerable people with empathy. Services (and employers) could do more to identify those at risk and support them to prevent their homelessness.

### 1.3.2 Stories

I came out of prison with £47 and needed a bond so I started in debt. All the processes for getting bonds - for furniture and housing - were difficult, uncoordinated and you're not given any advice about them. You only get help if you are 'lucky', it's like a lottery, you stumble across it, but it's not coordinated. Prison officers are target driven, but not for rehab. *(Crisis Liverpool)*

There's no support after institutionalisation, there's no preparation for your release. I was in a hostel on release but had no forward plan. *(Crisis Birmingham)*

### 1.3.3 Ideas

**Education/preparation services coming to prisons.** This draws on the notion that people who have been released from prison can struggle to adjust during the transition period. The idea argues for services to come to prisons to act as educators, preparing them for release and ensuring they have the support and skills necessary to manage the transition. *(Crisis Birmingham)*

# 1. Prevention

- **Schools programmes.** This idea argues for the development of a school-based programme focusing on developing mental resilience in young people, helping them to cope with difficult stages of life and avoid addiction to drug and alcohol services. *(Groundswell Chelmsford)*

- **Job centres to offer more personalised services.** This idea calls for more personalised services on offer in job centres to increase the likelihood of finding a job and escaping economic poverty. *(Crisis Liverpool)*

- **Co-production and restorative practice.** This potential solution argues for the engagement of residents in the co-production of services, which should help to ensure that developed services (including restorative practice) match the needs of residents. *(Groundswell Hertfordshire)*

- **Working with partners.** This idea advocates the importance of close partnership working, which will be an important component of future efforts to address homelessness. Such a method brings numerous potential partners together, improving collaboration and communication, addresses competitive and short-term contracts, and offers a more holistic approach that will ensure people do not fall through cracks of the system. *(Crisis Brent, Crisis South Yorkshire, Groundswell Newport)*

- **Safe, stable accommodation for former prisoners on release.** This solution proposes medium-term accommodation that enables prisoners to have stability while attempting to adjust to life after release. *(Crisis Birmingham)*

# 2. **Rapid response**

## Scope of rapid response

Like prevention, there is some debate about what rapid response captures. It is defined as proposals for interventions that will occur immediately once someone becomes homeless. The interventions are targeted at people with low-level needs and aim to move people out of homelessness rapidly as a result.

# 2. Rapid response

## 2.1 Economic poverty

### 2.1.1 Issues

Economic poverty is a significant issue that could benefit from rapid response. There are two main causes: an individual might lose their job and be unable to afford their rent; or they may have a benefit sanction. These are important issues for a rapid response to address. When a person loses their job, it places a significant strain on their finances; and, without the ability to pay rent, they are unlikely to be able to find somewhere to live. This leads to stress and anxiety, which - as they feel unable to find a job and address the challenges they face - can result in people being more entrenched in a seemingly hopeless position.

Benefit sanctions are also issues that can require a rapid response. We heard from people (particularly those who did not speak English to a high level or had low literacy levels) who reported having difficulty reading, understanding and completing benefit forms - which seemed to correlate directly with them subsequently receiving benefit sanctions. Correspondence received in relation to benefits is often lengthy (up to five pages at a time), and as such is also difficult to read and understand.

After experiencing any of these problems, a person can be penalised, have their benefits cut, and end up in a very vulnerable position. Landlords offer little protection when this happens - it's often preferable to evict the tenant rather than wait for them to be in a position to pay their rent. At this point, the tenant may be unable to afford to find another home, and this can lead to longer-term homelessness.

### 2.1.2 Stories

> I lost my job and then lost my home. I had to sleep on my friend's sofa but that isn't long term. It was difficult to find work after because I felt stressed and anxious and have some learning difficulties. *(Crisis Brent)*

> I found the forms very difficult to complete, which meant that my housing benefit was not processed. My landlord was also not patient and didn't want to wait for the rent because of the housing benefit delays. [...] There is also a lack of support from the job centres. *(Crisis South Yorkshire)*

# 2. Rapid response

> Housing benefit stops when you have a sanction. You're unable to pay rent, unable to pay bills, and leads to debts and arrears. *(Crisis Liverpool)*

### 2.1.3 Ideas

💡 **Increased resource for services.** This proposes an obvious but necessary solution, arguing that it is worth acknowledging that homelessness services in the UK are struggling and under-funded. Increased resource for services could potentially ensure that, if someone does suddenly lose their job or faces a benefit sanction due to an incomplete form, there could be financial support available to help them at the point of emergency, ultimately preventing their longer-term homelessness while they secure new work or fix the issues with their benefit application. This provision would be enormously beneficial to the person facing homelessness as it could reduce the burden of stress and anxiety they face, enabling them to feel secure while attending to their financial issues. *(Crisis Brent).*

## 2.2 Housing

### 2.2.1 Issues

Emergency accommodation was a significant issue identified under the heading of housing and one that could benefit from rapid response, especially for people who suddenly become homeless. For example, the lack of emergency accommodation was highlighted as an issue by people who are leaving prison, who often have nowhere to go, personal problems to deal with, and little support to do so, and by people who have experienced relationship breakdown.

PLEH identified a shortage of emergency accommodation as particularly important. In some cases, where emergency accommodation is full, people have been offered a place to sleep on the floor and the choice not to accept it can mean that the person is not considered for a hostel place once one comes free.

### 2.2.2 Stories

> The emergency options available are pretty grim. It is only floor space when it is full, people may be sleeping on the floor. It is very chaotic and the first night is terrifying. *(Groundswell Cardiff)*

# 2. Rapid response

> I think the point is that it would be easy from this sort of emergency accommodation for things to become much worse quickly. So someone who might have been a long way from homelessness and the vulnerabilities associated just a few nights ago could become very close. *(Groundswell Cardiff)*

> People need support, but accommodation with support is thin on the ground. *(Groundswell Glasgow)*

### 2.2.3 Ideas

- 💡 **Family crisis emergency accommodation.** This idea proposes a provision for when a family lose their home and have nowhere else to turn. Increasing family emergency accommodation may be a valuable rapid response in these circumstances. This could ensure that families have a place to stay over the short term as they seek to stabilise their housing situation and a long-term, sustainable tenancy. *(Crisis Edinburgh)*

- 💡 **Increasing sharing options.** This solution acknowledges the effects of economic poverty - that a person experiencing economic poverty may not be able to afford to stay in their current residence. It proposes easing access to shared housing for people who have been homeless, and increasing the sharing options available to people facing homelessness. This solution could include a matching system that brings together people of a similar age or background, ensuring they have a more affordable home. Such a system would not only ensure that people have homes, but would also offer the opportunity for them to develop a new network of social support that could be a crucial aspect of their resiliency in future. *(Groundswell Nottingham)*

- 💡 **Safe, secure, clean emergency accommodation for South Wales.** Residents from Cardiff proposed an idea that sought to create safe, secure and clean emergency accommodation across South Wales. This involved somewhat private accommodation for people, taking the form of individual cubicles with lockers to stow your belongings. This would also have showers, washing machine and with supportive, well-trained staff (not just security guards) who can help people overcome any issues they face. While it would ideally have a lounge with a television, the focus more is on something basic, clean, safe, and secure. This would be highly beneficial for PLEH, protecting their mental health and wellbeing. *(Groundswell Cardiff).*

# 2. Rapid response

## 2.3 Moving from prison/care and being stuck in the system

### 2.3.1 Issues

A lack of support to help people moving from either prison or care services was identified as a significant issue causing homelessness. People released from prison report moving into often chaotic hostels where it is difficult to remain out of trouble and how there is little practical support from probation services to help them deal with any challenges they face. Similarly, people who leave drug rehabilitation services speak about sharing accommodation with others who are using drugs regularly, making it very difficult to remain clean. Consequently, people find it difficult to move through the system after leaving care or prison, often finding themselves trapped in a cycle of institutionalisation and homelessness.

There is potential for longer-term accommodation for vulnerable people, such as those released from prison or care. However, this often requires being in a hostel for six months before being approved and this proves very difficult given the chaotic environment. This longer-term accommodation is often in undesirable areas, placing people who are struggling together and making it almost impossible to move on. In addition, someone released from prison may not be able to return to family or their local area, depending on the conditions of their release. Combined with challenges of finding work with a criminal record, substance misuse or mental health issues, many people become stuck within the homelessness system and are not supported to move on and achieve stability.

### 2.3.2 Stories

> I was terrified when I came out of prison and it was a struggle. I went to the council but it was just complicated. *(Crisis London)*

> There is accommodation available in some areas – one suggested they could have got housed in six months if they had selected an undesirable area-another said that people get pushed back into homelessness if the get placed in unsuitable areas. The council put people who are struggling together, making it impossible for them all to move on. *(Groundswell Dundee)*

# 2. Rapid response

> The most vulnerable don't recognise it, people have very profound mental ill health issues unable to get through the system (waiting at the job centre, speaking on the phone, dealing with interviews) to access what they need – this leads to eviction, ASBOS – further social exclusion. *(Groundswell Plymouth Staff)*

> When you come out, you sign in once a week and if you get into any problems with your housing that's your problem. *(Groundswell Nottingham)*

> They are released without accommodation, depending on their offenses they might not be able to return to family, or local area (because of conditions of release), a lot come out with substance misuse and mental health issues, very hard to get employment with a record, they are socially isolated – 'we have a disproportionate number of sex offenders in this area', who are very difficult to find accommodation for. This problem has been happening 'forever'. *(Groundswell Plymouth Staff)*

### 2.3.3 Ideas

- 💡 **System designed to move people through quickly and efficiently.** This idea highlights the need for a fast, efficient, streamlined system that does not keep people stuck in limbo, including strictly enforced time limits and regular updates. *(Crisis Birmingham)*

- 💡 **Increased training of specialist, experienced support workers.** This idea speaks to the need to have experienced support workers who have specialist training in mental health issues and drug addiction, among others. Experience and training is considered crucial to ensure that people at the lowest ebb are given appropriate support by someone who has experienced this all before rather than someone who may be younger, inexperienced, and not having dealt with similar issues previously. *(Groundswell Plymouth Staff)*

# 3. Sustained solutions for those with complex needs

**Scope of sustained solutions for those with complex needs**

The scope of 'sustained solutions' is around the continued support for those with a housing problem that encompasses more than simply needing a roof (i.e. those with mental health issues, those with addictions, prison leavers, care leavers). Experiencing one or several of these issues can make it difficult for a person to obtain or sustain accommodation. This report will address issues raised by people with lived experiences of homelessness who have complex needs, as well as ideas that focus on ongoing wrap-around support.

# 3.  Sustained solutions

## 3.1  Person-centred/personally-delivered (in public services)

### 3.1.1  Issues

Services often take a 'one size fits all' approach to support, which can isolate those with complex needs. Each individual's circumstance and support need is unique and cannot be remedied by the same solution. The form in which a person receives support or is required to access support (i.e. applying for Universal Credit online) can adversely affect their experience, too. Online forms and benefit claiming systems can be difficult to use, particularly for those with mental health, disabilities or addiction issues, which can prevent them from accessing the financial support they need to maintain accommodation. Furthermore, if face-to-face interactions with staff lack empathy and are inconsistent, a person can potentially disengage.

### 3.1.2  Stories

Services are negative and not approachable. *(Crisis South Yorkshire)*

Unless you have someone acting on your behalf it is difficult to access services you need. *(Crisis South Yorkshire)*

When you get into rent arrears they don't send someone out with a friendly face, but an official with a badge and a folder saying all the things you haven't done. If you're suffering with mental health issues, yes, they need to be honest with you, but also help! *(Groundswell Dundee)*

People with profound mental health issues are unable to get through the system (i.e. waiting at the Job Centre, speaking on the phone, dealing with interviews) in order to access what they need, leading to eviction, ASBOS, further social isolation. *(Groundswell Plymouth Stafs)*

# 3. Sustained solutions

### 3.1.3 Ides

💡 **Live-in rehab for young people with comprehensive aftercare and housing.**
This idea proposes the development of a client-controlled, multi-agency, individualised service which could be a social enterprise. The enterprise would work with a small number of people with multiple and complex needs, adhering to a schedule of regular case reviews and action points and obligations, providing transparency and insight for other services. *(Groundswell Leicester Staff)*

💡 **Specialist support worker in temporary accommodation.** This idea proposes the appointment of a dedicated support worker who is based in temporary accommodation, and who is available to offer full-time help to clients with the most high-risk, long-term needs and most likely to drop out of accommodation. Central to this plan is to improve pay and conditions for the position, ensuring that it attracts well-trained, high-calibre staff who can support residents when at their most vulnerable. This is especially important given the range of roles support staff often need to play in temporary accomodation. *(Groundswell Plymouth Staff)*

## 3.2 Domino effect

### 3.2.1 Issues

A change in a person's circumstances (e.g. unstable finances, bereavement or relationship breakdown) can have a rapidly detrimental effect on their wellbeing, and as a result hinder their ability to sustain accommodation. For example, if a person loses their job and is unable to pay rent, this can cause them to spiral into depression, which not only affects their ability to find a home but also to find and maintain another job. People expressed that mental ill-health and addiction go "hand in hand" - stating that the former often leads to the latter, making it difficult to break the cycle.

### 3.2.2 Stories

> Couldn't work due to mental health problems - got into arrears, was suicidal. Didn't need anything, certainly not a house I couldn't afford, so I basically threw everything away. *(Groundswell Chelmsford)*

# 3. Sustained solutions

> When you have issues with your mental health, you're unable to concentrate, you have low motivation to make changes and every day feels harder. It affects your self-esteem, making it harder to communicate and to address problems. *(Crisis Edinburgh)*

### 3.2.3 Ideas

💡 **Peer support to help people to sustain tenancy when facing health challenges.** This idea highlights the potential value of peer support through mentoring, advocacy and navigation as a way to overcome issues around homelessness. Peer support ensures empathy, understanding, and practical support, couched in real lived experiences of homelessness. Being able to follow the advice of someone who has been homeless - and has come through it - is considered vital to maintaining confidence. This can be extended to peer involvement in the design of services *(Crisis Liverpool)*

💡 **Developing self-respect, wellbeing and resilience.** Becoming homeless can be both a cause and effect of low self-esteem, wellbeing, and resilience. This solution focuses on the creation of programmes to support people in danger of becoming homeless, with the aim of helping them develop the requisite coping skills to deal with challenges. *(Crisis Croydon, Groundswell Plymouth)*

## 3.3 Suitable accommodation for vulnerable groups

### 3.3.1 Issues

Vulnerable people can often be placed/find themselves in accommodation that does not support their needs and which potentially worsens their behaviours, creating an unsafe environment. For instance, hostels with substance users can propagate violence, bullying, and increased substance use. It's understandable that a person who is young, intimidated and lacks knowledge of where to go for support might react by leaving their accommodation because it feels "safer on the street". Additionally, bullying from landlords and lack of support from staff can lead to distrust in the system and cause a person to be isolated out of fear of "making things worse".

# 3. Sustained solutions

### 3.3.2 Stories

I experienced bullying where I was living - I felt vulnerable and not able to stand up for myself and often worried about threats from the landlord. I didn't know what to do and staff/support workers weren't supportive. I didn't want to report it because I thought it might make things worse. *(Crisis Coventry)*

Councils throw people into accommodation - there's no vetting unless you have a disability. *(Groundswell Leicester)*

People with different needs all end up in the same place - offenders, drug and alcohol users and people who are not. It is unsafe, chaotic, people get robbed, bullied - especially if they are vulnerable (i.e. with special needs, young, just not street wise). *(Groundswell Leicester)*

The council put people who are struggling together, making it impossible for them all to move on. *(Groundswell Dundee)*

The landlord was intimidating and displayed threatening behaviour, it made my Mum's mental health deteriorate. I reported to police but no action was taken. *(Crisis Coventry)*

### 3.3.3 Ideas

💡 **Understanding residents' needs and fitting suitable accommodation to them.** This idea focuses on the importance of housing support officers understanding the needs of residents, and working to ensure that the accommodation they are being placed into has the requisite support. *(Crisis Coventry)*

💡 **Preventing bullying in tenancy.** This idea highlights the need to provide support to vulnerable tenants who may face bullying (both from their landlords and also from other unwelcome visitors who may try to take advantage of their vulnerability). *(Crisis Coventry)*

# 3. Sustained solutions

💡 **Close council or charity engagement with landlords.** This solution identifies the need to train and educate landlords so that they can better understand the experiences of tenants, providing a method by which to prevent or respond to homelessness and sustain tenancies over time. *(Crisis Coventry)*

## 3.4 Chaotic lifestyles of those with addictions

### 3.4.1 Ideas

We heard from people regarding the chaotic nature of their lifestyle when dealing with addiction. Addiction (i.e. drugs and alcohol, gambling, sex addiction) can lead to a person not having the capacity to look after their home; potentially being involved in crime; and missing appointments that cause them to be sanctioned, all of which can lead to an eviction. The feelings of low self-esteem and lack of motivation suffered by addicts make it difficult for them to keep a job and to manage their money.

### 3.4.2 Stories

> Addiction and crime go together - you're always getting your door kicked off and you get evicted. *(Groundswell Glasgow)*

> There is a lot on offer, but people give up when they're addicts - alcohol and drug addicts are fixated on that way of life. *(Crisis Croydon)*

> I lost my job, I chose to drink, and I neglected my bills. I became anxious about money, which led to more drinking and I ended up rough sleeping. I would break into properties to find somewhere to sleep. I lost it all - family, friends, clothes, possessions. I didn't want to face reality- I would absolve myself from responsibility by letting others to make decisions for me. *(Crisis South Wales)*

# 3. Sustained solutions

### 3.4.3  Ideas

- **Promoting independence, not dependence.** This solution identifies the fact that many other ideas call on councils or the government to do more; and whilst more can be done to address homelessness, it is important that delivery of services encourages people to be proactive and independent, rather than relying on the council to fix any problems. (Idea amalgamated at insight workshop)

# 4.Overarching solutions

## Scope of overarching solutions

Several solutions were suggested that either cut across all three categories (prevention, rapid response, and sustained solutions for people with complex needs) or were beyond the scope of these categories. These related to areas that had a whole system impact in terms of their interaction and integration with people experiencing homelessness (or those at risk of homelessness); or focused on how to address public perceptions and raise awareness.

# 4. Overarching solutions

## 4.1 Housing

### 4.1.1 Issues

In general, PLEH feel that there is a lack of adequate and affordable housing. We heard from people with concerns about reporting inadequate housing because they are worried that their landlord will evict them, particularly as there is no legal recourse. In Scotland, this type of eviction is called 'revenge eviction'. There is a lack of sufficient regulation of the PRS. If people do want to move, they can be trapped by the deposit gap and are unable to get enough funds together to move to more suitable accommodation. Inadequate housing, bad landlords who increase rent (or do not accept housing benefit), overcrowding, and living in close proximity to anti-social tenants impacts on physical and mental health, and contributes to family/relationship breakdown. People commented on the shortfalls of Universal Credit and how much difficulty it can cause with landlords, who often aren't willing to wait weeks for rent/deposit. Due to the lack of housing and support services, PLEH living in rural areas felt that their situation was worse than people living in cities.

### 4.1.2 Stories

I was bullied out of the property by the landlord who raised rent "for capitalist reasons", aggressive co-habitants and neighbours, and I had to use a lot of my benefit to pay the rent difference. There are not enough social houses where they are needed. *(Crisis Oxford)*

The [floating support] workers were not being supportive, they allowed bullying by others and themselves. I felt vulnerable and not able to stand up for myself. But I was unwilling to report it as I lived next to the bullies and it might make it worse. Being beaten up makes you worried and scared so you leave the property. [Then moved to PRS]. I felt intimidated and scared and worried about threats from the landlord. [This person lives in supported accommodation as they talk about landlord and staff]. *(Crisis Coventry)*

There is a lack of suitable and genuinely affordable housing - they are often poor quality and overcrowded with utterly high rents, which benefits don't cover. The private rented sector is unstable, and [it is] far too easy to get evicted. *(Crisis Croydon)*

# 4. Overarching solutions

> Universal Credit (UC) causes mistrust when renting. Shortfalls/delays in UC payments means you're not able to cover deposit or rent, which the landlord doesn't understand and isn't willing to wait for. *(Crisis Newcastle)*

> It's easier to get help in the city - in rural areas the problem is hidden. *(Groundswell Glasgow)*

### 4.1.3  Ideas

- 💡 **Using empty homes.** This idea recognises the potential for empty home use or the repurposing of other existing, unoccupied buildings. *(Groundswell Cornwall, Groundswell Bournemouth, Groundswell Plymouth, and Crisis Edinburgh)*

- 💡 **Regulate rights for tenants and rogue landlords and design a complaints process.** This idea highlights the need to regulate landlords' practices and ensure tenants' rights are met. The solution focuses on regulation through more stringent enforcement and prosecution when landlords act in bad faith. *(Crisis Coventry, Groundswell Canterbury)*

- 💡 **Eliminating barriers to basic/social housing.** This potential solution advocates a minimum standard of accommodation that can be provided to anyone as soon as they become threatened with or experience homelessness. This would especially cater for people with rent arrears or other issues that have previously prevented them from receiving social housing. *(Crisis Oxford, Crisis South Yorks)*

- 💡 **Shared landlord/tenant education programme.** The idea for a shared educational programme relates to the need to develop empathy and understanding between landlords and tenants, as well as creating an agreed pathway for how both should act when a tenant is facing economic poverty or potential homelessness. *(Crisis Oxford)*

- 💡 **Increase supported sharing options for homeless people.** This draws on the fact that housesharing is a potentially underexplored avenue for people facing homelessness. Housesharing may prove a more affordable way for someone to have a safe, secure, and comfortable home. There is also potential to grow networks of social support through shared housing, which can be an important aspect of resilience. *(Groundswell Cornwall)*

# 4. Overarching solutions

- **Affordable renting programme/rent controls.** Two potential solutions recognise the need for systems that can make renting more affordable. One focuses on an affordable renting programme, operating as "help to rent". The other calls for strict controls on rental prices, ensuring they remain reasonable and affordable. *(Crisis Croydon, Crisis Oxford)*

- **Safe, stable accommodation for former prisoners on release.** This solution proposes medium-term accommodation that enables prisoners to have stability while attempting to adjust to life after release. *(Crisis Birmingham)*

- **Councils sharing resources to buy properties.** This solution proposes that councils could band together and share resources with the aim of purchasing properties. These measures would reduce costs and create a pool of resources that could be directed to the areas that are in most urgent need of intervention. *(Crisis Croydon)*

- **Private landlords and housing associations doing more to house people with rent arrears.** This idea focuses on housing associations and private landlords being incentivised to provide tenancies for those who have been in rent arrears. Incentivisation could include an offer of support from the local authority to help the person manage their finances and maintain the tenancy. *(Idea amalgamated at insight workshop)*

## 4.2 Lack of social education

### 4.2.1 Issues

A lack of social education can prevent people from leaving homelessness behind; it also casts a negative light on people who have experienced homelessness and carry that burden with them. Many people do not understand the causes of homelessness and how an individual's homelessness might have been resolved through simple, rapid action to address a psycho-social issue. Additionally, there is a pervasive misunderstanding concerning the socio-demographic characteristics of the homeless population, and a failure to appreciate the variety of backgrounds and experiences of people who are homeless.

# 4. Overarching solutions

### 4.2.2 **Stories**

> There is a lack of support, which means you can easily become stuck in a system that doesn't move you forward. However, the rest of society doesn't realise this. Instead they blame the person rather than the system. *(Crisis South Wales)*

> There's a public perception that people want to be homeless - it's all bad media. *(Crisis Coventry)*

### 4.2.3 **Ideas**

**People with lived experience sharing as part of mainstream media.** This solution places importance on changing societal perceptions - we heard that this was a priority for people with lived experiences of homelessness. It submits that sharing experiences via mainstream media will help change attitudes towards people with lived experience, shifting from blaming the person to blaming the system. *(Crisis Nottingham, Crisis Oxford)*

## 4.3 Campaigning and awareness raising

### 4.3.1 **Stories**

A significant problem for PLEH is that the public often perceive them as being troublemakers, addicts, or generally unsavoury. However, there are several pathways to becoming homeless (such as rogue landlords evicting tenants). Mental illness, relationship breakdown, or traumatic life events are also known causes of homelessness. We heard from people who felt that - as a result of this misperception - there is less public goodwill to tackle homelessness. This also impacts political impetus to bring people together and tackle some of the root causes of homelessness. Consequently, PLEH expressed very strongly that awareness-raising exercises - such as media campaigns - need to be implemented, in order to change perceptions of homelessness and PLEH among the public.

# 4. Overarching solutions

### 4.3.2 Stories

> When you're on the street, people really look down on you. They probably think you're hooked on drugs or an alcoholic. Often you can be, but that is a consequence of being homeless rather than the initial cause. I think if people really thought about what caused me to be there, they might be more sympathetic and not acted like I was invisible. *(Crisis Skylight London)*

> When people see homeless people on the street, they think the worst. I was on the street for a bit before coming to Crisis and sometimes you just want someone to smile at you when they go past, just so you know you feel human. *(Crisis Skylight London)*

### 4.3.3 Ideas

- **Campaign to reduce stigma around mental health.** This is a campaign that focuses on encouraging people with mental health issues to come forward, as well as highlighting to the public - from the perspective of people going through the experience - the role mental health can play in subsequent homelessness. This cuts across prevention, rapid response, and sustained solutions. *(Groundswell Newport)*

- **Campaign to reduce stigma associated with poverty and homelessness - "That could happen to you".** The campaign focuses on getting people with lived experiences of homelessness and/or poverty into the media, conveying - and humanising - their individual stories, to create a different and more realistic portrayal of their experiences than shows like Benefits Street. This would also help people with lived experiences develop confidence. *(Groundswell Nottingham)*

## 4.4 Funding and systems change

### 4.4.1 Issues

For many PLEH, the homelessness system needs a significant overhaul and increased funding.  We heard from people about how staff did not understand how to support them, particularly those who initially became homeless due to mental health problems. As a result, these people entered a system that was ill-

equipped to help them, were placed in an environment that was ill-suited to them, and then became homeless again: a vicious cycle.

People felt very strongly that homelessness services need to receive more funding in future, either to enable councils to buy more housing stock, or to upskill frontline staff so that they can respond to people with complex needs when they first present to homelessness services. Increased funding might also mean that people who have benefit sanctions or delays could be supported to remain in their homes rather than be evicted.

### 4.4.2 Stories

> People with different needs all end up in the same place, offenders, drug and alcohol users and people who are not. It is unsafe, chaotic, people get robbed, bullied – especially if you are vulnerable (i.e. with special needs, young, just not street wise). Sometimes people feel safer on the street. *(Groundswell Leicester Staff).*

### 4.4.3 Ideas

- **Increased collaboration of services, mediation.** This calls for council services to work together - and also intervene - in mediation, either in terms of disputes within services or between tenants and landlords. This is seen as a way to stop people becoming homeless by çreating solutions together before crisis point is reached. *(Crisis London)*

# 4. Overarching solutions

## 4.5 Joined-up systems/transitioning (in public services)

### 4.5.1 Issues

Services currently don't 'talk' to each other, a situation that can cause contention and worsen outcomes for a person within the system. For example, long-term hospital stays can lead to an individual's benefits being stopped (wrongfully), which has a detrimental effect on their finances. Furthermore, for care leavers, ex-armed forces and people coming out of the criminal justice system, the transition to independence can be abrupt, leaving a vulnerable person ill-equipped to look after themselves. A lack of skills and understanding with regard to navigating the system may hinder their ability to get financial support and maintain tenancy. In addition, not knowing where to go for support can leave people isolated and unable to address their issues. We heard from people regarding the fragmented nature of the system in terms of being signposted to support.

### 4.5.2 Stories

> Services give out fragmented advice in fragmented departments. There's a gap between payments and different types of benefits. *(Crisis Brent)*

> There's a lot of 'passing the buck' in statutory services - probation, social services, treatment services, etc. It's like they see that this person has a support worker and 'passes the buck'. *(Groundswell Leicester Staff)*

> Trying to find private accommodation using information given by the council - none of the recommended landlords accept housing benefits. *(Crisis Brent)*

> The information you're given (by councils) is not consistent and not accessible - you're told different things by different people. They're referring people to the wrong organisations, the websites aren't updated and they're giving incorrect information. It's as if they tell you what you want to hear and try to get rid of you. *(Crisis Brent)*

# 4. Overarching solutions

### 4.5.3 Ideas

- 💡 **Open access, 24-hour 'one stop' shop.** This idea proposes that all services be situated under one roof (ideally located in the middle of the town or city), providing support for all problems (no matter how big or small). The 'one stop' shop should be able to connect people in need with those in power so they are aware of the lived experiences of homelessness. *(Groundswell Newport)*

- 💡 **Key worker/peer mentor.** This idea focuses on key workers and homelessness advocates, and identifies their potential to make a positive difference across all themes. These workers would be the sole point of contact for a resident and would guide them through the service, identifying appropriate support based on the individual needs of the resident. *(Crisis London)*

- 💡 **Working with partners.** This idea advocates the importance of close partnership working, which will be an important component of future efforts to address homelessness. Such a method brings numerous potential partners together, improving collaboration and communication, and offers a more holistic approach that will help ensure people do not fall through the cracks of the system. *(Crisis Brent, Crisis South Yorkshire, Groundswell Newport)*

- 💡 **Initial assessment of need carried out by a GP service.** This idea proposes the implementation of an assessment by GPs (developed by PLEH), the outcome of which would refer people to appropriate services. The involvement of PLEH would ensure that the assessment would meet the needs of its users. *(Idea amalgamated at insight workshop)*

## 4.6 Mental health (in public services)

### 4.6.1 Issues

The stigma attached to mental health means that people find it hard to discuss, and often they avoid the subject completely. On a frequent basis, people do not come forward early enough to access the necessary services to address mental health issues; or because there are few services for low-level mental health (e.g. talking therapies) some people can only access services once their mental health has deteriorated. If left untreated, the outcomes are progressively worse, particularly as staff are under-resourced and often do not possess the relevant skills to deal with this complexity. We heard from people on how the stigma can be reinforced by interactions with service providers, who use judgmental language or treat them with

scepticism at times, implying that they are 'gaming' the system. The deterioration of health and increased symptoms due to lack of access or availability of treatment can both impact on other issues (for example the ability to maintain a tenancy, or drug and alcohol dependency) and be exacerbated by other related problems (e.g. homelessness, economic poverty, and inadequate housing situations). For example, we heard how people living on benefits often feel depressed, and how maintaining relationships with difficult landlords can be stressful and cause anxiety. Mental health is both cause and effect.

### 4.6.2  **Stories**

> Services don't talk to each other, meaning that problems can spiral out of control. For example, child mental health services don't speak to adult mental health services. This leads to gaps in support and allows issues to get worse, which has a domino effect on things like homelessness and whether someone can sustain their home. *(Crisis Newcastle)*

> When people have had their own tenancy, it is difficult to maintain because of their mental health and they end up getting evicted. Unless you have someone acting on your behalf, it is difficult to access the services you need. There is a lack of understanding from councils and landlords, and the services themselves are negative and not approachable and there are long waiting lists. *(Crisis South Yorkshire)*

> I left the armed forces with PTSD but there were no joined-up services between drugs and mental health. I was on continued medication, but this was not sufficient. *(Crisis Coventry)*

> If you've got mental health problems you're a leper... they don't want to know you, and I prefer to suffer in silence. *(Groundswell Dundee)*

> I was deemed 'fit for work' based on my physical health not mental health, people aren't trained to assess mental health. *(Crisis Edinburgh)*

# 4. Overarching solutions

> People look at people experiencing homelessness like we're scum. They don't realise the issues we're experiencing e.g. mental health. There is a general lack of awareness as to how homelessness happened to people and what that experience is like. *(Groundswell Leicester)*

> Homelessness has got a bad name - stigma, it's shameful — you don't put yourself forward for help. *(Groundswell Glasgow)*

### 4.6.3 Ideas

💡 **Peer involvement in service design and delivery.** This idea suggests that involving PLEH in the design and delivery of services may ensure subtle warning signs relating to homelessness could be identified (and appropriate support offered). Their first-hand knowledge of causes of homelessness - and identification of crucial moments when rapid response would be most beneficial - can ensure the development of a more nuanced rapid response system within homelessness provision. Additionally, their personal experiences may bring an empathetic slant to the process and ensure more viable responses are found. *(Idea amalgamated at insight workshop)*

💡 **Advocacy role.** This idea argues that, for people facing mental health challenges, navigating the homelessness system can prove impossible. Adopting the Link Worker Model was identified as a viable solution for those in need of rapid response when facing mental health challenges. This model proposes that an individual acts as a Link Worker, helping a resident facing a threat to homelessness to identify appropriate support, and ensuring the resident receives it in a timely manner. *(Groundswell Newcastle)*

💡 **Mental health training for staff.** This idea cuts across each of the themes (prevention, rapid response, sustained support), acknowledging the overall importance of staff having adequate training in mental health issues, and an understanding of how to interact with people with different mental health needs. Important to this is increasing the number of staff and improving pay and conditions so that it is a more appealing occupation. Increased numbers of better trained staff  is important in terms of identifying mental health issues early; recognising the challenges an individual may face; the needs they have in a property; or the long-term support that might be required to prevent homelessness, respond to threatened homeless, or sustain tenancy over time. *(Crisis Coventry, Crisis Edinburgh)*

# 4. Overarching solutions

- **Walk-in mental health service with outreach councillors.** This idea advocates the development of a mobile mental health drop-in centre, which should be: available between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, but also offering a 24-hour helpline; based in the community around community activities; near to transport, but also providing outreach workers; available to the whole family; and providing alternative therapies, advice and guidance and a sense of safety and belonging. GPs would need awareness and training to do early referrals. This service would need to be funded by the government and involve the NHS, GPs, peers, families and the VCSE. *(Groundswell Glasgow)*

- **Tasking landlords and employers with a duty of care.** This draws on the fact that landlords or employers are likely to be among the first to recognise when something is not right for a member of their community. For example, employers could form part of a rapid response protocol if an individual is about to lose their job, recognising that they could be vulnerable after such a traumatic life experience. Similarly, landlords who notice that an individual is falling behind with their rent - or in instances where they have to ask a tenant to vacate a property - could form part of the communication between services. This would enable services to rapidly respond to people with increasing needs. *(Crisis Liverpool)*

- **Early access for mental health.** This idea revolves around a big advertising campaign raising awareness about mental health and available services, and a helpline manned by people with lived experiences and support networks. This would encourage people to access help and support early. *(Crisis South Wales, Groundswell Glasgow)*

- **Campaign to reduce stigma around mental health.** This is a campaign that focuses on encouraging people with mental health issues to come forward, as well as highlighting to the public - from the perspective of people going through the experience - the role mental health can play in subsequent homelessness. This cuts across prevention, rapid response, and sustained solutions. *(Groundswell Newport)*

# Annexes

# Crisis - Consultation & co-design with people with lived experiences / Workshop 1

**Wednesday 30th August | 11:30**
**Crisis, 66 Commercial Street, London, E1 6LT**
**Duration: 4 Hours**

**Uscreates:** Alan Boyles, Kevin Marshall, Cat Drew
**Crisis:** 12-15 Crisis members and some staff facilitators

## Aims

- Identify in-depth, root causes of homelessness
- Collect robust evidence in support of these causes
- Generate some initial ideas to improve homelessness

## Process
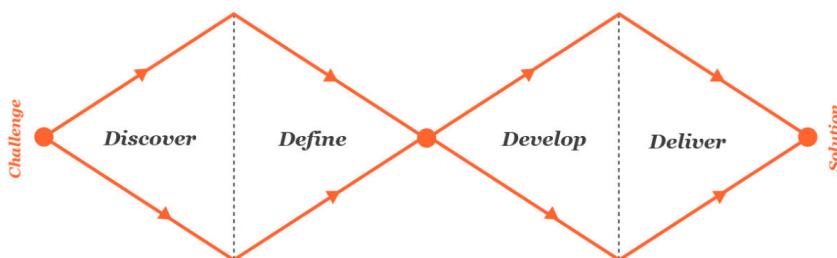


Our process will follow the Design Council's Double Diamond approach. This first workshop encompasses the first three stages of the Double Diamond, working through Discover, Define, and Develop. This approach will be mirrored in the workshops at Crisis Skylight centres across the country. We will complete the Double Diamond during the synthesis workshop with Crisis facilitators, delivering more developed solutions that synthesise what has been learned through the process.

## Materials

1. Personal Journey Maps
2. Personas
3. Sketching Eights Sheets
4. Lived Experience Cards

# Annexes

| Time | Activity / Aim |
|------|----------------|
| **11.30**<br>10 min | **Welcome**<br>Aim: Welcome, introductions<br><br>**5 mins: Introduce** Uscreates, the overall aim, purpose of session, and what we'll do (consent for photos).<br>**5 mins:** Icebreaker speed dating: Name and a little-known skill that you have |
| **11.40**<br>40 mins | **Discover the lived experience of homelessness**<br>Aim: To understand what led to someone becoming homeless<br>**Activity:** Individual and group work<br><br>**15 min: Working** individually, ask participants to create a user journey map that shows their journey, including the low points in terms of becoming homeless, the biggest difficulties they faced, and the high points during recovery. This can either be based on their own experience or use personas provided (each table given two personas and asked to choose one).<br><br>**25 min:** In small groups, ask the participants to share and map the most significant issues/problems they faced, based on their own journey. Team members to write issues on post-it notes. |
| **12.20**<br>40 mins | **Define the most significant issues leading to homelessness (Challenge briefs)**<br>Aim: To identify the main challenges to be tackled when dealing with homelessness<br>**Activity:** Group and individual work.<br><br>**20 minutes:** In the same small groups, ask participants to discuss the problems identified in the Discover phase, working together to choose what they feel to be the main problem from this that needs to be addressed - i.e. what is the most significant problem based on their own experiences, and why?<br><br>**20 minutes:** Get the groups to write down the specific problem they have chosen and describe it completely. Complete the 5 Whys process to identify the root cause of the problem. Create some 'how can we challenge...' questions. |

# Annexes

**13.00**
45 mins

**Lunch**

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**13.45**
60 mins
(+/- 1 min)

**Develop a range of possible solutions**
Aim: To develop a wide range of divergent possible solutions
**Activity: Individual work shared in small groups — Sketching Eights**

The participants will be working in the same small groups throughout this activity.

**8 minutes:** Each person given a sheet of paper with 8 boxes on it. Set a timer for 8 minutes, and ask the group to each sketch 8 quick ideas in 8 minutes.

**2 minutes:** Each group member picks their three favourite ideas from their own sketching.

**6 minutes:** Ask the participants to further develop their 3 favourite ideas in 6 minutes. Who will be doing it, how, when?

**15 minutes:** Each participant presents their developed sketches to their small group, with ideas either spread out on the table or stuck up on a wall. Each group is then asked to use two sticky dots each to vote for their favourite ideas out of their own group.

**30 minutes:** Each small group works together to develop their favourite 2-3 ideas from their own group through prototyping.

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**14.45**
30 mins

**Evidence the ideas based on their own lived experience**
Aim: To robustly evidence potential solutions based on the members' lived experiences
**Activity: Individual and group work**

**20 minutes:** Each person is provided with lived experience cards, which are sentence completion tasks, asking them to complete "I think [idea name] is important because….". The participants complete as many of these as they want, based on their own lived experience, to evidence the solutions.

**10 mins:** Ask each group to present their solutions to the main group, including some of the evidence backing them up.

# Annexes

**15.15**
15 mins

**Feedback and wrap up**
What is one thing you learned today, what is one thing you're taking away, what could we improve or do differently?

# Annexes

# Crisis - Consultation & co-design with people with lived experiences / Workshop 2

**Training Workshop**
**Duration: 2 Hours**

At each table, we will ask one person to facilitate each segment of the workshop and rotate throughout to give each staff member some facilitation experience.

## Aims

- Train Crisis staff to facilitate the workshop comfortably
- Role play some of the challenges they might face during facilitation

## Introduction

This workshop aims to provide training and equip Crisis staff with the necessary tools to facilitate 'Lived Experience' Skylight workshops around the country. An initial workshop with some Crisis members explored their lived experiences of homelessness. The members identified what they felt were the most significant challenges and developed some ideas to address these issues. The Skylight workshops will build on what we did and what we found from these workshops.

This workshop will follow the same agenda as you will use in the Skylight workshops but we will mix in some role-playing and training activities. This means that, hopefully, by the end of today's session, you will be comfortable with the agenda for the Skylight workshops and feel confident and excited about facilitating the workshops. So, in each section of this workshop, we will ask one of you to be facilitator within your own table here and rotate it at each section. We will also ask other people to try out some different roles that can arise with your participants. We have also left some time at the end of the session to answer any questions, rehearse any aspects people may not be comfortable with, or offer any support that might be needed.

## Materials

1. Challenge sheets from initial workshop
2. Capture sheets
3. Sketching eights sheets
4. Copies of solutions from initial workshop

# Annexes

| Time | Activity / Aim |
|------|----------------|
| 10 min | **Welcome**<br>Aim: Welcome, introductions<br>**5 mins: Staff role play activity** - ask one staff member to facilitate the introduction of the session<br><br>**5 mins: Introduce** facilitators, the overall aim, purpose of session, and what the session will cover.<br>**5 mins: Icebreaker:** Go around the room and ask each person to say their name and a little-known skill that they have |
| 30 mins | **"How to…" challenges**<br>Aim: To identify the main challenges to be tackled when dealing with homelessness in the local context<br>**Activity:  Group and individual work.**<br>One person at table to be facilitator, one person to be quiet person to be drawn out, and one to be dominant voice.<br><br>**Place participants into small groups and provide each group with two challenges from the last workshop. Ask them to choose one to work on.**<br><br>**20 minutes:** In small groups (4-5 people per group), ask participants to discuss the problems identified in the challenge and to identify the most significant issues faced.<br><br>**10 minutes:** Ask facilitator at each small group to support them to complete capture sheet 1 for their problem. |
| 45 mins | **Develop a range of possible solutions**<br>Aim: To develop a wide range of divergent possible solutions (within scope)<br>**Activity: Individual work shared in small groups — Sketching Eights**<br>Rotate facilitator at table and roleplay an argument and how to handle it.<br><br>The participants will be working in the same small groups throughout this activity. |

**8 minutes:** Each group given a sketching eights template sheet. Ask each group to work together to come up with up to 8 ideas in 8 minutes - either sketching or writing.

**2 minutes:** Using sticky dots, each group member has two votes to select their two favourite ideas.

**20 minutes:** Ask the participants to further develop their 2 favourite ideas in 20 minutes.

**10 minutes:** Each group then completes two capture sheets (one for each idea).

**5 mins:** Each group shares their two ideas with the whole room.

| | |
|---|---|
| 30 mins | **Review/Feedback on existing solutions** |

**Review/Feedback on existing solutions**
Aim: To review the existing ideas that have been created in other workshops.
Rotate facilitator at table and ask that person to introduce the brief history (in step-by-step guide) of how we got to these ideas.
**Activity: Individual and group work**

**20 mins:** In small group, ask people to work together to explore the solutions from the last workshop. reviewing them and providing feedback on them within their own local context.

**10 mins:** Facilitator at each table to support group to complete capture sheet 3.

5 mins    **Feedback and wrap up**
Introducing the next steps

# Annexes

## Crisis - Synthesis Session for Crisis' "Have Your Say" Workshops / Workshop 3

**Tuesday 7 November 2017 | 10:00-14:00**
**4, Triton Square Mall, Triton Square, London, NW1 3HF**
**Duration: 4 Hours**

**Uscreates:** Kevin Marshall, Cat Drew, Ashley Evans
**Crisis:** Crisis and Groundswell workshop facilitation team

### Aims

- Identify patterns in the **causes** of homelessness from the perspective of people with lived experiences
- Identify patterns and **themes** in potential ways to address homelessness from the perspective of people with lived experiences
- Develop Crisis and Groundswell staff's **capability** to conduct, analyse, and synthesise design workshops with service users.

### Process

We will adopt a deductive approach to coding and will be guided by the three themes that have guided analysis from Crisis' policy events:

1. Prevention of homelessness
2. Rapid response for homeless people with low-level needs (early response)
3. Sustained support for homeless people with more complex needs.

The room will be divided into three tables and each table will be assigned one of these themes within which to code the data gathered from the 'Have Your Say' workshops.

The workshop has four phases. Phase 1 and Phase 2 are both analysis sprints. Phase 1 will be an analysis sprint of the issues identified during the workshops as causing homelessness, and Phase 2 will analyse the potential solutions to homelessness, with each table focusing on their assigned theme. Phase 3 is a synthesis approach, where each table draws together an account of the evidence from the HYS workshops reflecting their theme. Phase 4 involves each table sharing back their synthesis of the HYS workshops under their specific theme.

# Annexes

**Materials**

1. Data from the workshops
2. Flipchart
3. Sharpies

| Time | Activity / Aim |
| --- | --- |

**10.05**
10 min

**Welcome**
Aim: Welcome, introductions

**5 mins: Introduce** the overall purpose of the session and what we will do (consent for photos).

**5 mins: Our approach** to analysis and synthesis in this workshop and assigning each table to one of three policy event themes.

**10.15**
45 mins

**Phase 1: Analysis sprint of the issues**
Aim: Analyse the identified issues, highlighting potential issues impacting homelessness under each theme.
**Activity: Individual and group work**

**25 mins: Individual work** where participants move through the room, reading the data provided, asking each other questions, and noting down their own reflections, recollections, or interesting responses from the workshops that come to mind (guided by the one of the three Crisis policy themes). Tables reminded to keep in mind their own theme when looking at all the data.

**20 mins: Each table** comes back together to reflect on which parts of the data fits within their theme and why. Discuss together to identify the key points from the data that highlight significant issues within their theme. Identify key points for their theme.

**11.00**
45 mins

**Phase 2: Analysis sprint of the potential solutions**
Aim: Analyse the identified solutions, highlighting patterns and commonalities within each theme.
**Activity:  Group work**

# Annexes

**25 mins:** Working within their assigned policy theme, each table works together to draw together the data that represents their theme. One member on each table collects supporting quotes and the team builds an account of people with lived experiences of homelessness (i.e. from the perspective of people with lived experiences of homelessness, how can homelessness be prevented?). Pull together the data that evidences this.

**20 mins: Each table** comes back together to reflect on which parts of the data fits within their theme and why. Discuss together to identify the key points from the data that highlight significant issues within their theme. Identify key points for their theme.

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**11.45**
45 mins

**Phase 3: Synthesis Sprint**
Aim: To surface the key insights and issues causing homelessness from the perspective of people with lived experiences
**Activity: Group work**

**45 mins:** Each table works to synthesise their key points from both the issues and solutions, creating 3-4 core sub-themes that tell the story of their theme from the perspective of people with lived experiences of homelessness. One team member gathers any supporting quotes and pieces of evidence from the data to back up their synthesis.

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**12.30**

**Break**

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**13.00**
45 mins

**Phase 4: Sharing back their synthesis**
Aim: To present back the key insights under each theme and supporting evidence.

**45 mins:** Each team has 10 minutes to share their synthesis and supporting evidence with the wider group, with 5 mins each for questions at the end.

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**13.45**

**Feedback and wrap-up**

Reflecting on the process, something we learned from it, and improvements we could make.

# Issues Identified in the Initial Workshop

### Issue 1: How can we change perceptions of homelessness

There are several reasons why people can become homeless: a lack of affordable housing; poverty and unemployment; and major life events. People can become homeless when they leave prison, care, or the army with no home to go to. Many homeless women have escaped a violent relationship.

However, homeless people often have a bad reputation, with practices of defensive architecture or the "Your Kindness Can Kill" campaign further hampering this reputation. The issue here is that people's perceptions of homeless people are influenced by these elements, and that makes them less likely to help. If we can change their perceptions, it may be possible to inspire more people to help, which in turn will help to resolve homelessness.

### Issue 2: How can we support people through a major life crisis

The breakdown of a relationship, losing a job, significant health problems, or the death of a loved one can result in people becoming homeless. In addition, being homeless can make many of these problems even harder to resolve.

This raises the question of how we can support people through difficult life events (such as a relationship ending or domestic violence). If we can support people adequately, we may be able to prevent them from becoming homeless.

### Issue 3: How can we support people to have stable homes

A lack of stability can increase the likelihood of people becoming homeless, particularly if they are facing other difficulties at the same time. Many people who should be in social housing are actually in private rented accommodation. Research shows that there are more than 1.8 million households waiting for a social home.

Households waiting for a social home are instead forced into private rented accommodation, which is very unstable, with short-term tenancies and high rent. Such households can include people who face a significant life crisis or who are vulnerable and may not be able to manage their tenancy in private rented accommodation. If we can help people have more stability in their homes, we may be able to prevent them from becoming homeless.

# Annexes

### Issue 4: How can we help people with complex needs remain in their homes

People with complex needs can often end up being homeless. The term 'complex needs' refers to a person who has difficulty with more than one issue - such as mental illness, substance misuse, and physical disability.  Services, however, tend to deal only with a single issue, meaning that people with complex needs may not be able to get the support that they need.

Many people don't get the help they need and eventually lose their home. If we can find ways to help people with complex needs, we might be able to help them remain in their homes (and avoid becoming homeless).

### Issue 5: How can we help people dealing with loss to develop healthy coping strategies

Losing a loved one can have a significant impact on homelessness. Indeed, bereavement is one of the top 10 causes of homelessness in the UK. People who are homeless can experience repeated bereavements and often do not cope in ways that are healthy. They are also more at risk of isolation, loneliness, and depression.

People often shy away from speaking out when they are not coping well, particularly if they experience depression. As such, they might not ask for help if they are in danger of losing their home.If we can help people deal with bereavement in a healthier way, however, we can increase the chances of them remaining in their home.

### Issue 6: How can we prevent relationships from ending

The end of a relationship can lead to someone becoming homeless. While in some cases, a relationship breakdown is the best outcome (if the relationship has had negative impacts on the parties involved, for example), in others a relationship may end prematurely. 1 in 6 people become homeless because of a relationship ending.

When a relationship ends, one partner may not be able to afford somewhere to rent, meaning they are in danger of becoming homeless. It may be too expensive to live in their current residence on their own, and family may no longer be able to offer a place for them to live. If we can help people work on their relationships and prevent them from ending, we may be able to stop some people from becoming homeless.

# Annexes

# Ideas Identified in the Initial Workshop

### Idea 1: Changing the behaviour of statutory services towards homeless people

*Issue being addressed:* How can we change perceptions of homelessness?

To change perceptions of homelessness, we will need statutory services to change how they think about, talk about, and treat homeless people. Recent approaches that stop rough sleepers sleeping in bus shelters or doorways can cause members of the public to think that homeless people are bad or are trouble. This includes adverts discouraging people from giving money to homeless people, which make people think there is something wrong with people who are homeless.

This can only be changed if people see that others who lose their homes are not bad people and do not deserve to be stigmatised. We need new adverts and campaigns that do not scare people, and which encourage them to see homeless people as fellow human beings who are going through a bad time. Raising awareness in this way will help create a more community-led, multiple-focus approach to ending homelessness, where people are happy to work together.

### Idea 2: Changing how services are commissioned to promote co-operation rather than competition between services

*Issue being addressed:* How can we support people through a major life crisis?

A major life crisis can cause someone to end up on the street or trying to live in temporary accommodation. Often, people who are not identified as a priority need will not get the support they require and could end up living on the street. A more joined-up, cooperative approach is needed so that services come together and offer a stronger support network to people who may be in danger of homelessness.

This idea will involve local government, charities (such as Crisis, Groundswell and Shelter), service providers, and people who have been homeless. We would begin with research to understand the kind of support homeless people might need and communicate this to commissioners. This has the potential to work because it will help services work together, allowing them to see how their work complements the input of their partners.

## Idea 3: Use empty properties better

*Issue being addressed:* How can we support people to have stable homes?

There is less social housing now, meaning that people are pushed into temporary, unsuitable, unstable private rented accommodation which offers little security. One way to address this is to make better use of empty properties. This will require local councils, housing associations, private landlords, national and regional government, property developers, and homelessness and housing charities to work together to make use of the existing properties.

First steps will involve creating a crowdsourced register of empty properties, enforcing a law on the taxation of empty homes.  It will also involve regulating and incentivising the use of long-term empty homes for the housing of homeless people. It will be important to work with charities and schemes to renovate unfit properties, and to remove the barriers that keep social homes empty by incentivising social landlords. This idea is likely to work because it uses the existing supply, meaning that new houses don't need to be built.

## Idea 4: Helping people with complex needs get help more quickly and effectively through better communication

*Issue being addressed:* How can we help people with complex needs to remain in their home?

People with complex needs are often not well supported by statutory services. This is because an individual need alone (such as a mental health issue) may not be severe enough to trigger support services. Having complex needs means they may not be able to maintain their home, while they also miss out on support from services.  Better communication within and between services may help people with complex needs get more effective and efficient support.

This would involve the NHS, social care providers, housing providers, schools and colleges, and homelessness charities.  This would be a single gateway/point of contact/key worker, allowing the person with complex needs to build relationships of trust.  Through this, the key worker could support them and focus on the information that is necessary to meet their needs. This may work because - in current services - people with complex needs are often missed out.

### Idea 5: Pets as companions

*Issue being addressed:* How can we help people dealing with loss develop healthy coping strategies?

Pets are incredibly important companions for many people, becoming part of the family.  Many shelters offering temporary accommodation do not allow people to bring their pets into their new homes, which means that people stay on the street.  This idea would involve Battersea Dogs Home, animal stables and charities (including the Dog's Trust and the RSPCA), doctors and GPs, counsellors, and different charities.

We will begin by marketing the idea, conducting research on why pets aren't wanted and on the benefits pets can bring to people.  We will also look at some of the policies around banning pets and talk to landlords about making homes more pet friendly. This will involve reviewing tenancy agreements to understand how they can be altered to be more pet friendly.  It will also be important to lobby government for support for pet food, veterinary bills, and different kinds of care (e.g. £10 per week).  Many people end up on the streets because they do not want to lose their pets. We believe this will offer another incentive for people to stay in their home.

### Idea 6: Providing bereavement allowance to prevent people losing their home

*Issue being addressed:* How can we help people cope with loss?

Bereavement is often a significant cause of homelessness. In many cases, if a parent or partner dies, the person living with them can no longer afford their home. A bereavement allowance is one way that may allow people to overcome bereavement and remain in their home. This will involve the government (particularly the Department for Work and Pensions),  doctors and the NHS, charities, schools, and employers.

We will begin with some research to make the case for why it is important and then establish time limits and parameters for how long support would continue.

The idea would instigate a campaign, including a talk for employers regarding how to incorporate this (which would look at ways to build it in to PAYE for self-employed people). This idea may work because bereavement, for many, represents a significant trauma. Becoming homeless can add to this overarching sense of emotion distress, leading people into a downward spiral.

# Annexes

## List of Workshops Conducted

Thirty workshops were conducted by either Crisis or Groundswell across the UK, with Uscreates conducting an initial workshop in London with Crisis members. These engaged people with lived experience to share their experiences of homelessness and potential solutions to improve the homelessness crisis in the UK.

**Crisis Have Your Say Workshops**
Birmingham
Brent
Coventry
Croydon
Edinburgh
South Wales
Liverpool
London
Newcastle
Nottingham
Oxford
South Yorkshire

**Groundswell Roadshow Workshops**
Bournemouth
Canterbury
Cardiff
Chelmsford
Dundee
Glasgow
Hertfordshire
Leicester Clients
Leicester Staff
Llandringdod
London
Manchester
Newcastle Clients
Newcastle Asylum Seekers
Newtown (Wales)
Nottingham
POBL Wales
Plymouth Clients
Plymouth Staff
Southampton (two workshops)