

All Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness



AGM Meeting Minutes

21 October 2019, 16.00-16.45, Committee Room 5, House of Commons

Attendees:

Neil Coyle MP (Chair)
Mike Amesbury MP
Lord Beecham
Lord Best
Sir Peter Bottomley
David Drew MP
Rosie Duffield
Nick Herbert MP
Mike Wood MP
Lord Young of Cookham
Bishop of Salisbury
Robin Tyne, Office of Neil Coyle MP

Secretariat:

Hannah Gousy, Crisis
Leah Miller, Crisis
Jasmine Basran, Crisis

Welcome and apologies	
Update on All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness (APPGEH)	
Welcome	Co-Chair Neil Coyle welcomed all attendees and thanked them for joining the meeting.
Election of Chair & Co-Chair	
Overview	<p>Mike Wood MP nominated Neil Coyle for re-election as Chair of the APPG. All parliamentary members present agreed that Neil Coyle should be re-elected as Chair.</p> <p>Neil Coyle MP noted that the APPG was a cross-party group and had previously always had a Conservative Co-Chair. He invited Conservative members present to nominate themselves for election as Co-Chair.</p>

	Nick Herbert MP nominated Lord Young of Cookham as election to the position of Co-Chair. Lord Young was unanimously elected as Co-Chair.
Action points	Secretariat to note election of Lord Young as Co-Chair
Election of Vice-Chairs	
Overview	<p>Neil Coyle noted that MPs seeking re-election as Vice-Chairs of the Group included: Bob Blackman MP, Tonia Antoniazzi MP, Lord Bird, Ivan Lewis MP, Rachael Maskell MP, Emma Reynolds MP, Stephen Timms MP and Mike Wood MP.</p> <p>It was agreed that all should be re-elected as Vice-Chairs. Nick Herbert was also nominated and elected as a Vice-Chair of the Group.</p>
Action points	Secretariat to note election result
Election of Officers	
Overview	<p>Seeking re-election as Officers of the Group were Emma Hardy MP, Colleen Flechter MP, Justin Madders MP, Christian Matheson MP, Lord Shipley and Chris Stephens MP.</p> <p>Rosie Duffield MP and Mike Amesbury MP were also elected as Officers of the Group.</p> <p>Neil Coyle then thanked the Secretariat, Crisis, for their work supporting the APPG, as well as other organisations who are members of the group.</p>
Action points	Secretariat to note election result
Update on the A Safe Home campaign	
Overview	<p>Hannah Gousy, Crisis, gave an update on the A Safe Home campaign.</p> <p>She noted that the Domestic Abuse Bill would enter Committee Stage on 29th October. The APPG was leading a campaign, supported by organisations across the homelessness and domestic abuse sectors, calling for automatic priority need for all survivors of domestic abuse, she explained.</p> <p>Setting out the problem, she said that currently, survivors were forced to prove that they are more vulnerable than another person facing homelessness would be to be eligible for settled housing. They were asked to provide evidence of the extent of the abuse they've suffered and risk of harm, which could be</p>

traumatic or impossible to do. This could include being asked to return to a dangerous situation to retrieve evidence and in some circumstances, survivors had been asked to provide a letter from the perpetrator admitting to the abuse.

Survivors of domestic abuse in Wales already had priority need for accommodation, following changes introduced in the Homeless Persons (Priority Need) (Wales) Order (2001).

The APPG is calling for survivors in England to have the same protections through an amendment to the DA Bill. Whilst people would still need to provide an appropriate level of evidence that their homelessness has been caused by domestic abuse, such as a letter from a domestic abuse service they have been in contact with (similar to the level of evidence needed to claim legal aid), they would no longer have to suffer the trauma of proving their level of vulnerability is greater than that of others facing homelessness.

Providing for this in the Bill would help prevent homelessness among this group, supporting the Government's wider strategies on preventing both homelessness and domestic abuse. Without this, the Domestic Abuse Bill would fall short of tackling the link between homelessness and domestic abuse and achieving the Government's key aim of protecting people from experiencing domestic abuse.

Carolyn Harris is planning on bringing a package of housing amendments to the Bill, which may include an amendment on priority need. However, if this fails, the APPG will look at coordinating a cross-party amendment at Report Stage.

Adding to this, Neil Coyle noted that the issue had been debated in a Westminster Hall debate back in June. Research by the APPG for Ending Homelessness had found that nearly 2,000 households fleeing domestic abuse in England each year are not being provided with this assistance because they are not considered in 'priority need' for housing.

The amendment has cross-party support and the APPG would prefer that it was brought at Report Stage when it would have more chance of being voted through, so we would be seeing to put something down at that time. This is dependent on the Opposition withdrawing their amendment or the amendment falling at Committee Stage.

Discussion on other potential meetings and activities for 2019-20

Overview	<p>Neil Coyle MP highlighted ideas for public meetings that had been discussed at the APPG's Steering Group meeting. These included a meeting on what homelessness ended looks like.</p> <p>It was agreed that a meeting on this should be held towards the end of November/early December. Hannah Gousy suggested that Crisis could present at this meeting on the Plan to End Homelessness. It could also include a look at international examples of where homelessness has been ended.</p> <p>Other meeting ideas included a meeting on how best to end homelessness among people with complex needs. It was suggested that this could be narrowed-down to look at mental health and homelessness, especially given the review of the Mental Health Act. It could also extend into looking at how to challenge the rise in the numbers of people entering and exiting prison who are experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>The Group had also suggested a meeting on the funding of sustainable homelessness services. This could be timed around a March Spending. Ahead of the Budget on 6 November, it was agreed that the APPG should input a budget ask. It was agreed that this could focus on LHA.</p> <p>Nick Herbert suggested that the APPG should put together a set of headline calls on what MPs could do to help end homelessness ahead of a General Election.</p> <p>Noting that the homelessness sector had agreed a set of asks for a General Election, Hannah Gousy said that these could be sent round the Officers who could agree on the key asks the Group should put forward.</p> <p>Other meeting ideas included a meeting on housing affordability, looking at social housing and welfare; a review of the implementation of the HRA to time with the completion of the consultation on this in March 2020; a meeting on preventing homelessness among prison leavers to build on previous work of the APPG and time with the MoJ sentencing review; an annual lecture where a high profile figure is invited to discuss significant developments in homelessness policy and a meeting on the rough sleeping strategy.</p> <p>Neil Coyle MP suggested that instead of having a separate meeting on the RSS, this should be an ongoing item to update on in every meeting agenda.</p>
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	<p>Lord Best said the APPG should look at international examples, such as Finland and Toronto and could invite international speakers to present to the group. Neil Coyle said that this could be suitable for an annual lecture.</p> <p>Lord Beecham suggested looking at the experience of ethnic minorities, to which Hannah noted that BAME households tend to be overrepresented in homelessness statistics. She suggested that the Group could look at overrepresented groups such as BAME households and LGBT individuals.</p> <p>Nick Herbert also suggested a meeting should be held on Universal Credit.</p>
AOB	
Overview	Closing the session, Neil Coyle all attendees. He suggested that he and the Group's new Co-Chair organise a meeting with the Secretariat soon to discuss the workplan for the next year
Actions and deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat to note the outcome of the AGM and re-register group • Secretariat to write up and share the minutes of the meeting.