

Expert Review Panel: Meeting 1

Minutes of meeting

Date: Wednesday 31 August 2022

Present:

Chair: Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick (Heriot-Watt University).

Members: Matt Downie (Crisis), Liz Davies QC (Garden Court Chambers), Professor Peter Mackie (Cardiff University), Jennie Bibbings (Shelter Cymru), Katie Dalton (Cymorth Cymru), Jim McKirdle (Welsh Local Government Association), Angela Bowen (Carmarthenshire Council), Clarissa Corbisiero (Community Housing Cymru), Nazia Azad (Tai Pawb), Huw Charles (Welsh Government), Hannah Fisher (Welsh Government).

In attendance: Jordan Brewer (Crisis), Abi Renshaw (Crisis).

Apologies: Sam Parry (Conwy Council), Sarah Rhodes (Welsh Government).

1. Welcome, introductions and overview of the panel

The Chair welcomed the members of the panel to the inaugural meeting of the Expert Review Panel.

Each member of the panel introduced themselves giving their name and occupation, stating their specialism if relevant to the work of the panel.

An overview was given to the panel, describing how the upcoming body of work is both important and exciting. Future meetings all have a clear theme and agenda as described in the workplan, to avoid any drift of conversation into other themes away from the discussion planned.

The outcome of the panel is to develop recommendations in the form of a report to Welsh Ministers for reform of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and all relevant areas of law in which the Welsh Government has scope for powers. The intent is for Welsh Government to make use of the Expert Review Panel's report of recommendations alongside the results of the Green Paper process. Welsh Government informed the panel that the Green Paper is a commitment for 2022, bringing forward legislation to 2025.

Panel member(s)	Action	Timeframe
Hannah Fisher / Huw Charles	An update from Welsh Government at every panel meeting.	Ongoing

Throughout the course of the year, the panel is committed to answering these two overarching questions:

- What changes in law are required to maximise the prevention of homelessness?
- What changes in law are necessary to help ensure everyone can rapidly access the help they need to resolve their homelessness?

2. Introduction to terms of reference

Jordan introduced the terms of reference to the panel, highlighting key points for discussion. Confirming that as a panel at each themed meeting, recommendations will be discussed to provide answers to the two overarching questions; what changes in law are required to maximise the prevention of homelessness, and what changes in law are necessary to help ensure everyone can rapidly access the help they need to resolve their homelessness. A description was given on how the next 12 months would run, including input from Experts by Experience, stakeholder engagement and sub-panel meetings to be held outside of the monthly panel meetings.

3. Discussion and agreeing terms of reference

After the introduction, the panel had an opportunity to discuss the ToR in detail. The discussion included:

- Adjustments encouraged as we go along.
- To be as aspirational as possible.
- Although briefly discussed, further discussion is needed to decide on the route to show transparency in what the panel are doing. An example of transparency was communicating through a short video or blog from the Chair to link on task, explaining how we would tackle the two overarching questions.
- It was suggested that recommendations are key when legislation may not be the answer.
- Legal reform has the potential to carve out for future generations, as law drives real decision making as it outlines policy intent.
- Policy intention and principles to be clear.
- Detail is needed around stakeholder consultation events and the plan for this.
- Listening to testimonies and engagement is important to help educate and inform, consulting those with lived experience of homelessness to have a voice in this process. A conversation was had about inviting experts or experience-led speakers to inform the recommendations, specifically in relation to attending future panel meetings. There are both pros and cons of this discussed, mainly about who to invite. The panel were in agreement that although it may not be pursued to invite specific individuals to themed panel meetings, groups with particular specialisms would be consulted throughout and separately to be as balanced as possible.
- Clarity is needed on what Welsh legislation is withing scope for the panel to consider.
- Clarity on what is within the devolved competence of the Welsh Parliament.
- It was suggested that the legal department within Welsh Parliament may raise questions on 'why' new law is being considered. Therefore, the terms of reference need to clearly state what the current issues are and why new law needs to be considered.
- The terms of reference will be amended to align with the comments of the panel.

Panel member(s)	Action	Timeframe
Jordan Brewer / Abi Renshaw	Work with Chair on promoting the work of the panel e.g. record a short video or blog to link on task, asking how we discuss the two overarching questions.	Ongoing

Jordan Brewer	Crisis to take action on reflecting panel members feedback into terms of reference.	02.09.22 Panel members to respond with feedback by 16.09.22
Jordan Brewer / Abi Renshaw	Crisis to give details on stakeholder engagement by producing a strategy paper.	W/C 19.09.22
Jordan Brewer / Abi Renshaw	Crisis to add supporting documents to website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-depth policy papers, • consultation plan, • principles paper outlining how the panel will conduct itself regarding what intend to do, • Experts by Experience paper. 	Appropriate papers uploaded after each meeting

4. Introduction to workplan

Jordan introduced the workplan to the panel, highlighting the proposed running order of key themes per meeting for discussion.

5. Discussion and agreeing on workplan

The panel entered a discussion on the workplan and the following points were raised:

- The order of themes per meeting were discussed, including why the themes appeared in the sequence proposed and if any should be reordered.
- Discussion on placement of Health & Social Care within the workplan, if it was being discussed at the most suitable meeting. The consensus agreed to keep in the workplan in the order intended.
- If eligibility tests required a more lengthy discussion without any other themes as could be considered too bulky to discuss with other subjects. It was suggested it definitely needs exploring post-Covid as it is hugely complicated legally.
- The panel raised specific questions within certain themes, asking the Chair which meetings these would be discussed. An answer was provided to all queries and it was agreed that the current ordering of themed meetings was suitable. It was confirmed which themed meetings specific subjects would fall within, to soothe panel members that no topics would be missed.
- It was re-iterated that in order to discuss the themes meaningfully at each meeting, a lot of work is to be done outside of these panel meetings to give topics justice, additional sessions are needed.
- The question was asked of the panel what they would like to get out of the role Experts by Experience will play throughout the course of the 12mths. Asking the panel for clear direction on expectations. The panel's expectations were it would inform later work. To give the topics justice, work would need to be carried out outside of meetings.
- Suggested regroup after first three meetings, to check and reflect on what has been said so far.

- The panel now have a firm grasp on its purpose of being put together and collectively submit proposed changes to the workplan ahead of the next meeting for the next 12 months, including officially agreeing on the upcoming themes and order per meeting.
- It was discussed that at each meeting there could be a thematic lead from within the panel which is to be discussed and addressed in more detail at the next meeting.
- The workplan will be amended and circulated with the recommendations of the panel ahead of the next meeting.

Panel member(s)	Action	Timeframe
Jordan Brewer	Crisis to share with the panel a paper from Welsh Women's Aid on no recourse to public funds.	With papers for next meeting
Abi Renshaw	Arrange a regroup before Christmas, after the third meeting, for an opportunity to check and reflect on what's been said so far.	Ongoing
ALL	Agree on the thematic leads from within the panel for each meeting.	30.09.22, to be discussed at the next panel meeting
Jordan Brewer	Crisis to take action on reflecting panel members feedback into the workplan.	02.09.22 Panel members to respond with feedback by 16.09.22

6. Experts by Experience opportunities and engagement

Katie presented to the panel about the [Cymorth Cymru Experts by Experience project](#). Katie explained what the work will look like specifically for the work of the panel and what types of engagement opportunities will be on offer for the year ahead. The opportunities planned for until the end of 2022 will include in-person events and an online survey.

The Experts by Experience Project has been established to empower people with experience of homelessness and housing support services to influence policy and practice across Wales. This project is coordinated by Cymorth Cymru, the representative body for providers of homelessness, housing a support services in Wales. The project is part funded by the Oak Foundation and Welsh Government.

The Homelessness Action Group recommended that the Welsh Government should continue to provide opportunities for people with lived experience to influence policy, with the support of Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change.

Plan for engagement:

- Three opportunities in September. Two in-person events, one in the North and one in the South and an online survey. All feedback is to be gathered anonymously and used to compile a report for the panel for it's next meeting on 30 September.
- Reflective period at end of the year, to make sure hearing from all voices.
- Opportunities designed to engage those will lived experience of homelessness, lived experience of housing support services and frontline workers.
- End of year broader session in December, engaging North and South Wales.

After the presentation, the panel had an opportunity to discuss Experts by Experience in more detail. The discussion included:

- Making sure to reflect views from those with protected characteristics, recognising marginalised groups, agreeing equality and diversity important and to be considered and reviewed at every meeting.
- Remuneration options for those sharing their experiences and giving their time. In-person events will be buffet lunch, online survey would be a prize draw. Keen to find a solution with Department for Work and Pensions, as not to affect those claiming benefits.
- On how to structure the survey questions. The panel agreed to keep the questions open and broad.
- Crisis will also convene consultation meetings before panel meetings, to explore themes in greater detail and feed into core panel discussions. These meetings will take in perspectives from a broader group of stakeholders beyond the core panel membership.
- Welsh Government confirmed that they want Experts by Experience to feed into the Green Paper by the end of the year.

The panel will consider and incorporate the results of consultation work with people with lived experience of homelessness and people working professionally to end homelessness. It was discussed that the panel would support the work of Experts by Experience, by offering feedback around proposed engagement and by sharing details of events with their networks. A request was made to share data to back up true statements during future meetings.

Panel member(s)	Action	Timeframe
Katie Dalton	Share with panel members the survey questions being posed to Experts by Experience before circulating.	Ahead of next meeting
Jennie Bibbings	To offer support to Katie Dalton at Cymorth Cmyru with reach and engagement for their body of work.	Ongoing
Jordan Brewer	Engage with South Wales Skylight regarding input from volunteers and members, discussing latest on remuneration.	Ahead of next meeting
Hannah Fisher / Huw Charles	Share latest guidance from Welsh Government with Katie Dalton about remuneration.	Ahead of next meeting
Katie Dalton	Create a short paper on Experts by Experience for panel members.	Ongoing
ALL	Sharing data and relevant resources on prevention which may inform discussion ahead of next meeting on 30/09/22.	Ahead of next meeting

7. Agreeing on actions for the next month

To keep the meeting to running on time, the agreed actions were not reiterated. The actions were established during the course of the meeting and revised directly after the meeting by Jordan and Abi the following day. A bullet point list of actions was circulated to all panel members Friday 2 September 2022, the bullet point list is now split out across these minutes into tables per section in the agenda.

The panel will consider and sign off the revised terms of reference and workplan at the next meeting, with the amended documents being circulated beforehand for further consideration.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending in-person.

The next meeting will be held on Zoom on Friday 30 September 2022.