

## About Crisis

Crisis is the national charity for people facing homelessness across Wales, Scotland and England. We know homelessness is not inevitable, and we know that together, we can end it.

We provide services directly to people experiencing homelessness, carry out research into the causes and consequences of homelessness, and campaign for the changes needed to end it.

## Homelessness and neurodivergence

Recent research from End Youth Homelessness Cymru has shown that neurodivergent people are at heightened risk of youth homelessness and are additionally disadvantaged by the inaccessibility of the services which are predominantly built with the neurotypical person in mind.<sup>1</sup>

As part of our recent work with the Expert Review Panel considering how legislative reform could help end homelessness, we considered the particular barriers that neurodivergent people face in relation to housing and homelessness. This included a complex homelessness system that is difficult to navigate, a lack of awareness of neurodivergence among housing staff and poor communication between housing services and applicants.

The panel also discussed how actions that are characteristic of neurodivergence can be misconstrued as anti-social behaviour and how inaccessible services can result in neurodivergent applicants being deemed to be failing to co-operate with services.<sup>2</sup> This, in turn, can impact an individual's access to housing and housing support.

## Neurodivergence Code of Practice

The current code of practice for the delivery of autism services lists "supporting autistic adults with involving housing services" as a preventative service that a local authority is required to provide.<sup>3</sup> However, this document lacks any detail to help staff understand when a person may be at risk of homelessness or how to connect with housing services. We urge that the new code addresses this.

Introducing a section in the new code on homelessness would also assist services in meeting proposed future legislative duties. Indeed, the Welsh Government's White Paper on Ending Homelessness sets out new legal duties on public bodies to identify when a person is at risk of homelessness, act within their remit to support the individual, refer them to housing services (with their consent) as well co-operate with housing services.

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<sup>1</sup> Conti, M. and Rowlands, B. (2024) [Impossible to navigate: youth homelessness through the lens of neurodiversity](#). End Youth Homelessness Cymru.

<sup>2</sup> Expert Review Panel (2023) [Ending Homelessness in Wales: A Legislative Review](#)

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2021) [Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services](#)

In developing the new code, Crisis would advise consulting the Expert Review Panel report<sup>4</sup> and End Youth Homelessness Cymru's seminal research in this area<sup>5</sup>. We would also be happy to assist with developing areas of the code relevant to homelessness.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact [Jasmine.Harris@crisis.org.uk](mailto:Jasmine.Harris@crisis.org.uk).

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<sup>4</sup> Expert Review Panel (2023) [Ending Homelessness in Wales: A Legislative Review](#)

<sup>5</sup> Conti, M. and Rowlands, B. (2024) [Impossible to navigate: youth homelessness through the lens of neurodiversity](#). End Youth Homelessness Cymru.