**METHODIST HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING GATHERING**

**10 JUNE 2020**

**THIS IS WHAT I SEE…….**

aimlessness. emptiness. limited ability to connect due to a closed down building.

commonality in looking beyond housing and food to encouraging people to become part of society.

most of our homeless people temporarily housed but a hard core have migrated back to streets

fear when eviction suspensions are removed, and the link between poor quality housing and covid-19 effects

most people in hotels and hostels with a few struggling

a breakdown in some placements for rough sleepers in hotels/temporary accommodation leaving people in very exposed situations

once it was Clear that people like "us" might need Universal Credit it was improved rapidly. We may be annoyed by this but it could be built on for the future

the importance of co-ordination with other agencies - that a place/room is not a whole solution, that food provision is not a whole solution

all accommodated. But big issue with capacity when new normal arrives as supported accommodation was already full

individuals thriving in accommodation

contrasting responses from local authorities. some discouraging food provision, some co-ordinating well

quality of housing, and particularly overcrowding, is really exacerbating this crisis - in both infection and quality of life in lockdown

increased co-operation between charities, and between charities and local council. Also increased opportunity to work with those experiencing homelessness as ‘all in one place’ through CV19 accommodation scheme. Charities are picking up brunt of food programmes however

the need for bringing people food is making apparent a need for conversation as well as support for people coping with difficult neighbours, isolation with partners, loneliness.

majority of street homeless have been placed in temporary accommodation. Still new people presenting as homeless, often linked to relationship breakdown

current provision working for some but not for others, worried about end of June

that when there is a will, local governments can step in and provide (not ideal) accommodation. Frustration around short-term solution thinking only

people more open to faith conversations and spiritual exploration

the number of street homeless dropped at the beginning but now seems to be rising again

the foodbank seeing great demand.

that homelessness only became a priority when it threatened the health of the general population. Housing those experiencing homelessness was a pragmatic solution to protect us, not them, as with the changes to UC.

agencies working better together in more joined up way

people moved into hotels, good engagement, now lobbying not to go back to night shelter model

issues of digital inclusion for those who are experiencing homelessness, struggling to afford smart phones and tablets. UC online can penalise things.

a micro experiment in Housing First

all homeless people in the town are in a hotel with greater engagement with most of them.

sofa surfers and victims of domestic abuse coming on to the street whereas before they were in accommodation

the opportunity for those who are motivated to ‘get out of the pit’. There is a lot of support for those experiencing homelessness in my area however, the idea that we need to support those who are willing to take responsibility for their lives is not so big. Most of the individuals we work with are happy for everyone to do everything for them. However, identifying and supporting those who want to change is (in my opinion) the key

identifying people who want to change.

concern over what the government had planned after the crisis.

A question around the temporary end to evictions? We have seen guests evicted from accommodation still - down to behaviour both in hotel and private accommodation

limited homelessness, issues with housing, supporting through foodbank, agencies joining up and involving the churches, hostels full, Council very proactive.

welfare calls to our regular customers. It is concerning how many people in poor housing or in overcrowded housing or housing without appropriate support are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing.

sending out ideas and packs for wellbeing

a phone buddy scheme for those who have been housed to encourage/build relationships

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**THIS IS WHAT I WANT TO SEE……**

**Lobbying priorities**

a small group (perhaps made up from this group) that does face to face lobbying with key politicians.

use the resources of JPIT

mobilise church members more on lobbying front

an article from us all that highlights what we have learnt about housing and homelessness through the Covid situation. This could be used for lobby / education in churches etc

a clear lobby about the humanity and dignity of all from the Methodist Church.

a stronger network of people concerned about housing and homelessness within Methodism, both for sharing ideas and experience but also as a resource for support etc - and of course alongside liaison with JPIT for example

lobbying national government via JPIT, and seeking partnerships between circuits and local authorities

Lobbying: We have made choices about priorities in lockdown, we can continue to make choices that make housing a priority. But these choices need popular support - churches can give voice to local feeling.

Using the energy and enthusiasm of night shelter volunteers (where these are not currently able to run) for campaigning on the causes of homelessness.

for church umbrella organisations (eg. JPIT) to liaise/lobby other national umbrella organisations currently producing guidance on post lockdown transition planning for homelessness services (eg Homeless Link; Making Every Adult Matter) on the role that churches can play in the future

further research and support for the hidden homeless

Clear precise Notice of Motion to Conference that states as a church we value those who suffer homelessness and not keep them vulnerable and a call for provision post covid

for funding so that the projects aimed at reducing homelessness, addiction, crime, incarceration long term are able to provide the correct staffing

good networking across the connexion (thank you for this example) and using the knowledge that we have to work together to bring change

money found for homelessness during Covid to continue to be provided so that temporary solutions (hotels) can be replaced by something permanent, plus churches coming alongside the homeless to teach life skills/help to to re-engage with community. Conference Notice of Motion calling for this

We do not all have the same government. Those who live in Wales have to deal with a government which is resistant to change.

Policy ask - treatment of debt, many will have not paid rent or bills, when suspension of evictions ends there will be huge problems

**Key immediate actions**

Re-configuration of Night shelters because as they were will no longer work.

Distribution of wellbeing packs

Hold onto the optimistic perspective that says that rough sleeping is unacceptable and CAN be resolved (having seen the Government say to LAs that 'everyone needs to be off the streets by this weekend') if suitable resource is made available.

church members not colluding with going back to what are now old and broken models of night shelters. They are not best option for ending rough sleeping and are not run for the feel-good factor for the volunteers.

support for life skills

local churches and circuits to become local support for those who are housed - phone buddies - pastoral visits (aware of safeguarding issues etc)

Viable move-on options (with an appropriate level of support) for those currently in hotels and other emergency temporary accommodation

good wrap around care for those currently in temporary accommodation

invest in further independent housing options for single people, that also encompasses true wrap around options and transitions

Critical to get people into housing, with full support, as quickly as possible. This will need collaboration with Local Govt, landlords, etc

as an organisation to remember we are to feed individuals spiritually as well as physically

an empathy for local government, who are being pushed to achieve many things off falling income. How to come alongside them and create creative partnerships?

increasing opportunities for volunteering and breaking down the divide between providers and guests. Enabling 'guests' to become 'hosts' to support spiritual growth

Establishing statistical base especially in relation to BAME disparity

People who would not have otherwise had to rely on welfare (before the pandemic) using their new experience to support those for whom this has been a lived reality for years.

develop a knowledge base of experts and those who are working with these issues in order that we can share resources, knowledge and a sharing of what we are all doing

**Long term solutions**

campaign to take over empty properties

voluntary organisations needed more than ever. funding going to be limited in future.

funding to enable development of recovery housing to provide accommodation and treatment to address those suffering from substance abuse

Housing: encouraged by the Connexional property group’s strategic focus on affordable housing. It would be good to see that widely publicised so that circuits take it into account when planning property development.

importance of small-scale volunteer-run provision - helping these to use the skills of their volunteers and develop their own next steps in what they can offer. Awareness that grant funding for staff will be difficult

working together to build a comprehensive economic case for housing first long term.

the Methodist Church, as a key property owner, changing its policies relating to market rate and market value when renting, selling and using its property. Then it could be a major contributor to the homelessness situation in our country. Property management is about capital, social and spiritual value

Churches moving to a preventative approach generally, using the difficulties of night shelters to move to a night shelter last approach

See the whole situation in the context of a market led housing system that is not working

That we have faiths working together. Emphasizing spirituality.

an easier way for churches to use their premises on housing - eg when buildings are sold, or become involved in things like community land trusts

an increase in affordable housing

Recognising that this is a spiritual as well as social matter and we can be Kingdom builders. We need to be political in order to be prophetic

need clarity from TMCP about 'market rents' requirements - can spare manses be used in partnerships with other agencies for rehousing people

Greater push for Real housing first

Help homeless people to tackle the root causes of their problems and stand alongside them and provide them with a safe base from which to change.

provide for those who are able to get to the root of the issue in order that our guests may fulfil the Lord’s plan for their lives

Treating everyone with dignity. Recognised as successful in working across a range of agencies that collectively can help. Not to fall into trap of language - affordable housing isn't affordable. New normal cannot go back to what was pre Covid19. Priority is to make Circuit resource of church building to be a 'homeless/housing centre'

a national recovery plan on housing with new programme of good quality social housing construction, and it also benefits the wider economy

Methodist Housing Association proposals to be ventilated. The need to impress upon TCMP that a building has three ways of being valued, namely capital, social and spiritual and our buildings should express all three.

engage society with passionate compassion

continue to build on the co-operation between agencies.

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**THIS IS WHAT I WILL DO….**

make homelessness/housing a priority of the Circuit Strategy

invite my MP and MSP to visit us at Open Table where we cook for homeless and vulnerable people.

find out more about asset-based coaching

look to lobby/get Methodist Church and/or others to lobby Government over issue of permanent solutions

pray more for the resources we need.

contact our local Circuit to see if they want to offer any accommodation to help with homelessness and also contact the District and ask the same question.

look at how best to communicate the causes of homelessness

try and be more alert to opportunities to forge connections/network.

feedback to circuit, district and our Homelessness Forum

report back to project volunteers and church leadership about what we discussed and remain enthusiastic

write something for our circuit about housing and homelessness

see how we can get housing and homelessness more of a District priority/identify next steps and ideas for our circuits and churches

find a way of getting best advice & expertise to those of our churches who do/ could respond to a call

continue to develop our existing relationship with a local asylum seeker/refugee charity, and ensure the circuit is fully aware of their work and our involvement

support the challenge to build back better, to raise voice at Conference and lobby our MP.

make lobbying more of a priority

set up a meeting with the lead of Church of England in the town to have a united front, especially when dealing with local government

talk to the homeless people on the street and reflect their views to those in positions of power

pray!

continue pushing local conversations about church involvement in the solution but also support any lobbying actions taken forward.

consider others` points of view and then decide what I need to focus upon

continue to support the work JPIT do, and make others aware of it - as they can really help us with some of these issues

attempt to set up a 16 bed recovery house for those individuals experiencing homelessness, addiction, crime, prison, etc.,to get to the root of the problem so that each individual may become a positive member of society, contributing to it and ultimately fulfilling the Lord’s plan for their life.

encourage the night shelter volunteers to get involved in lobbying and seeing how we as a church community can help with longer term measures as well as preventative causes

work towards getting more decent, affordable accommodation for the Charity in order to support additional homes being needed, that people can thrive in.

keep watching for where the need is on the ground

talk with others about a possible Notice of Motion on the grants moratorium

seek out a surgery that deals with more street people and see if they can avail themselves of my chaplaincy.

look at what needs changing

continue to learn and educate myself about the intersection of issues talked about today and use my platforms to help others see those issues