

Homes for Cathy

2017/19 Strategy

Introduction

In the Spring of 2016, a small group of housing associations that were formed in the Cathy Come Home era came together to mark the 50th anniversary of “Cathy Come Home” and to highlight the continuing needs of homeless people, as well as the challenges created by changes in the welfare system over recent years. The Group grew to include 22 housing associations from across the country – each of which made plans to mark the November 2016 anniversary in their local community and collectively on a national platform. We organised screenings of the BBC’s seminal Wednesday drama “Cathy come home”; performances by the Cardboard Citizens of “Cathy”; local and national debates, as well as an event with Parliamentarians at the House of Lords. In addition, we produced an education pack about homelessness that could be used by schools, youth groups and uniformed organisations working with young people aged between 11 and 19.

Almost a year after the first meeting to discuss the formation of “Homes for Cathy”, the group met to review its achievements and to explore whether it had now served its purpose. We expressed frustration that 50 years after the first television screening of “Cathy come home”, the problem of homelessness was still very present and indeed, growing. The Group decided that we would continue for at least another 2 years and this document outlines what we intend to do over that period.

Whilst the original membership of the Homes for Cathy group was focussed on housing associations established in the 1960s and early 1970s, we now invite all housing associations, that share our concerns, who can subscribe to our principles and pledge, and who are willing to help achieve our aims, to join with us

Homes for Cathy Principles

We came together as housing associations concerned about growing homelessness in the UK and, in moving forward over the next few years, we are committed to: -

- continue lobbying for solutions that make a difference in the lives of homeless people and people at risk of homelessness

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- sharing good practice between ourselves that help prevent homelessness and find secure homes for people who are homeless.

We now invite our current members, and housing associations that wish to join us in our work, to sign up to the following statements: -

- We will strive to keep the issue of homelessness in the hearts and minds of housing association boards and employees, as well as our local communities and stakeholders
- We will seek to work with partners in our local areas to find long term solutions that reduce homelessness
- We will be honest with each other in sharing our successes and failures in preventing homelessness through tenancy failures
- We will publicise our commitment to ending homelessness, for example by identifying with the Homes for Cathy group through our social media platforms, including our web sites, and on development scheme boards

Our priorities

Over the next few years, we will; -

Lobbying

- Lobby parliamentarians and appropriate Government Ministers and civil servants within DWP, DCLG and The Treasury to deliver changes in legislation that reduce homelessness and the likelihood of people becoming homeless
- Lobby for a more significant focus on homelessness within the work of National Housing Federation
- Promote the inclusion of homelessness prevention within training developed and delivered by the Chartered Institute of Housing
- Support and encourage Inside Housing and other sympathetic media outlets to help them profile homelessness in the UK and the need for a changed approach

Working with young people

- Promote the Homes for Cathy Education Pack to schools, youth groups, and uniformed organisations working with young people

Working with Partners

- Work with the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors by supporting their campaigns on homelessness prevention

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- Work with Landaid by supporting their campaign to engage with the real estate industry and encourage property companies to help reduce youth homelessness
- Support the work of Crisis in the development of their plans to end homelessness
- Support Homeless Link and Shelter nationally and in our local communities to help them achieve their aims and impact

Sharing good practice

- Supporting H4C members in the development of their homelessness strategies including their consideration and potential implementation of Housing First
- Create a strategic annual homelessness forum for housing associations to share good practice and develop ideas that will reduce homelessness and the likelihood of families being made homeless
- Identify and critically review appropriate policy initiatives from across the United Kingdom and from other countries that reduce homelessness and lobby for their consideration by policy makers if we believe them to be effective

Promotion

- Maintain a web site that promotes homelessness initiatives undertaken by the Group's member housing associations, as well as providing links to homelessness organisations and charities, in addition to relevant homelessness research and policy documents
- Use social media, including Twitter and Facebook, to promote the work of members in addressing homelessness
- Create and maintain a brand image that members can use on development signage and organisational media to publicise their involvement in Homes for Cathy

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