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# Homelessness Foundation

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## **Main Aims**

Homelessness has not classically been considered as a right of centre issue, yet in order to help resolve homelessness in all its forms, the issue needs to be embedded deeply in Conservative thinking.

Only when the issue is in the mainstream of a Party's thinking, will homelessness be front and centre of the political arena.

The Homelessness Foundation will act as a link between the voluntary sector and those with political influence, to build relationships with organisations that will help foster innovative and supportive policy solutions.

The role of the Foundation will be to produce research into homelessness; its causes, effects and the wider impact on society.

It will draw on the voices of those affected by homelessness, those working in the voluntary sector, as well as leading academics and thinkers in the field.

## **Research**

The Foundation will publish periodic high quality research into the real and current state of homelessness in Britain, the scale of the problem and the breadth and depth to which it extends.

Research will examine the causes and long-term impact of homelessness and how the cycle of living without a permanent dwelling is fostered and could be broken.

The aim will be to encourage debate about various aspects of homelessness and to encourage calls for change and the development of innovative new policy initiatives.

Whilst in opposition the Homelessness Foundation will provide a means from which to effectively ensure that the Government keeps homelessness high on its agenda. When in Government the Foundation will help shape the Conservative Party's agenda.

The research will be conducted and developed following advice and participation from experts in the voluntary sector.

We will set up an Advisory Panel using these and other leading homelessness experts to help shape the direction and tenure of our research. Individuals from the Advisory Panel will not however be explicitly or otherwise expected to either welcome or endorse the findings of the Homelessness Foundation.

The Advisory Panel is therefore an expert sounding board which will help to ensure that research is carried out in appropriate areas of study.

## **Research and Initiatives**

The Homelessness Foundation will publish reports which aim to review and challenge the status quo and provide innovative and sound alternatives.

Research will involve the analysis of current and past policy, measure the depth of its failure and the impact of the apparent breakdown in coherent and successful policy.

The Homelessness Foundation will seek to actively work with charities and those delivering services to formulate the case for change and advance supportive policy recommendations.

We will work closely with colleagues in other shadow portfolios such as the DWP, as well as outside organisations like the Centre for Social Justice and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, in order to bring about a joined up and comprehensive approach to what is a multi-faceted problem that impacts on almost all areas of public life.

## **Building relationships**

The Homelessness Foundation will help to build and develop relationships with the voluntary sector and will send an important message to those working in the field that homelessness is an issue moving back into mainstream politics and a matter being taken seriously.

The Homelessness Foundation will also help shape the debate over homelessness which in recent years has been characterised as being all about rough sleeping.

In reality what has happened is that ‘wet’ homelessness (those sleeping on the streets has declined), but ‘dry’ homelessness (those stuck in hostels and other temporary accommodation) has risen and the prospects for this very large group are not always good.

## **Advisory Panel**

The value that can be brought to the Homelessness Foundation from those working in the voluntary sector and the importance of their input cannot be underestimated and the greater their contribution the more robust and innovative our policy and work will be.

To this end the Homelessness Foundation will have an Advisory Panel consisting of people whose experience and knowledge of homelessness is second-to-none and will therefore ensure that the work of the Foundation is meaningful and effective.

- **John Bird**, Founder and Editor of the Big Issue
- **Jeremy Swain**, Chief Executive of Thames Reach
- **Jenny Edwards**, Chief Executive of Homeless Link
- **Adam Sampson**, Chief Executive of Shelter
- **Lesley Morphy**, Chief Executive of Crisis
- **Tim Nichols**, Chief Executive of the Simon Community
- **Charles Fraser**, Chief Executive of St Mungo's

There are also a variety of smaller and regional homelessness charities whose Directors have joined the Advisory Panel.