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Delivering on Homelessness 2006

Knowledge, Understanding and Views of Practitioners

Why did we commission this research?

- To take forward HTF recommendation 33 :
“All service providers, statutory and voluntary, should ensure that they are promoting values, attitudes and behaviour which deliver responsive and personalised services.
- To understand views and their impact upon delivery

What was the purpose of the research?

To measure:

- The knowledge, understanding and views of homelessness held by front line staff and managers working with homeless people
- The influences on these individuals that impact on/shape the views that they hold
- Any impact that the knowledge, understanding and views held by these individuals has on the quality of the services they provide
- And to consider any future work that may be required to change attitudes towards homeless people which currently negatively impact on service provision

Methodology

- Postal and web-based survey of 250 practitioners in LAs, RSLs and vol orgs
- Follow-on groups of practitioners to discuss results in more detail

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Results of research:

Understanding of policy

- Views on fairness of policy – such as abolition of PN, changes to intentionality and suspension of local connection
- Views on organisation's ability to provide adequate resources to meet homeless needs
- Impact of other people's views; such as elected members or senior management on ability to carry out duties and deliver effectively

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Results of research:

Understanding of policy

- 90% of respondents indicate a good understanding of SE objectives
- 96% of respondents indicate their organisation is committed to Scottish Executive's objectives on homelessness

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Results of research:

Views on fairness of policy

- “Abolition of PN is fair” – 49% of LAs, 31% of RSLs and 49% of vol orgs agreed
- “Suspension of local connection is fair”– 29% of LAs, 56% of RSLs and 67% of vol orgs agreed
- “Homeless people should have the same choice on where they live as non-homeless people”– 74% of LAs, 56% of RSLs and 94% of vol orgs agreed
- “Homeless people who could have avoided becoming homeless should not expect the same degree of choice as others in need of housing.”– 65% of LAs, 84% of RSLs and 33% of vol orgs agreed

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Results of research:

Views on organisation's ability to provide adequate resources to meet homeless needs

- Joint working - 80% of respondents indicated that they felt their organisation had sufficient agreements and processes in place to enable joint working with local partners
- Staffing resources - “My organisation has sufficient staffing resources to enable me to deliver suitable services for people experiencing homelessness.” - 40% of LAs, 50% of RSLs and 57% of Vol orgs agreed
- Financial resources - “My organisation has sufficient financial resources to enable me to deliver suitable services for people experiencing homelessness” - 32% of LAs, 41% of RSLs and 41% of Vol orgs agreed

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Results of research:

Impact of people's views

- 89% of respondents considered that the public were generally not interested in homelessness unless they were directly affected
- 72% felt that their jobs would be easier if the public knew better the extent of homelessness and how people can find themselves affected by it
- Respondents were asked if they felt that their job was respected by other groups of people. Of Local authority staff: 20.3% said that they are not respected by other clients and 15.4% of them not feeling respected by elected members

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Results of research:

Impact of people's views (cont)

- “We have estates/neighbourhoods where the current tenants would react badly to a homeless person or family moving in.”- 61% of respondents agreed with this statement.
- “Ensuring balanced communities is becoming more difficult as the number of homeless cases increases.” – 74% of respondents agreed with this statement

Recommendations:

- Measure awareness of general public
- Raise awareness of elected members to help improve joint working across LA boundaries
- Make Code of Guidance more accessible and more responsive to practitioners' experience
- Develop local practice exchange networks to help practitioners in different disciplines exchange good practice