

Memo

28 June 2018

To: Disability Advisory Panel
From: Debbie Edwards, Senior Policy Manager – Social Policy and Bylaws, Community and Social Policy

Subject: Kia Whai Whare Tātou Kātoa: Regional, cross-sectoral homelessness plan for Auckland

Purpose

This memo provides background information for the meeting with the panel during July 2018. This meeting will include discussion on the experience of homelessness in the disabled community, and how the development of a regional, cross-sectoral plan can address these needs.

Background

The 2013 census counted 20,296¹ homeless people² in Auckland - an increase of 26 percent since 2006. Conservative projections estimate current homelessness at about 24,000, reaching 26,522 by 2021. It is an Auckland-wide issue, and is affecting working households. Nationally, 52 percent of homeless adults nationally were working, studying or both.

Homelessness is broader than rough sleeping. The Statistics New Zealand definition (adopted by Auckland Council) includes people living without shelter (e.g. rough sleeping and in vehicles), in temporary accommodation (e.g. emergency accommodation, shelters, and motels), sharing temporarily³ and living in uninhabitable dwellings (e.g. garages and sheds).

The rapid growth of Auckland's population is out stripping growth in housing supply. Housing affordability (for rent and purchase) is declining and there is significant unmet demand for social, affordable and emergency housing. There are other personal, social and system level factors that also contribute. It is clear that homelessness has a complex set of determinants, and requires a coordinated cross-sectoral solution.

There is no New Zealand data on homelessness among people with a physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disability⁴. There is anecdotal evidence however that people with disabilities face additional housing barriers. Recent media has suggested that they may experience prejudice and discrimination in the rental market⁵. Demand for private rental accommodation is high. Landlords can be selective about who they rent to and may be unwilling to make modifications to dwellings to enable tenancies.

¹ Analysis conducted by the University of Otago

² University of Otago uses the term severe housing deprivation to define homelessness and aligns with the Statistics New Zealand definition

³ Not including those in long-term, overcrowded households

⁴ The United Nations Convention on rights of persons with disabilities says disabled people include: 'those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with other' <http://www.odi.govt.nz/home/about-disability/what-do-we-mean-by-disability-2/>

⁵ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/nelson-mail/101786422/homeless-family-turned-down-for-over-50-properties-in-two-months>

Mental health issues are a known contributor to homelessness, and being precariously housed can contribute towards mental health issues.

In 2017 Auckland Council sought advice on its position and role in relation to homelessness. It was resolved that homelessness in Auckland should be “rare, brief and non-recurring” and that the council should strengthen the established levers available to “improve, end and prevent homelessness” (ENV/2017/118). The decision included a mandate to provide strategic leadership and inter-sectoral coordination to develop a regional, cross-sectoral homelessness plan (the plan).

The committee report and accompanying research paper can be accessed at:

http://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2017/08/ENV_20170808_AGN_6831_AT.PDF

Developing a regional, cross-sectoral homelessness plan

Auckland Council has commenced work to lead and facilitate development of this plan, acting as the backbone agency in a collective impact approach. It is envisaged that the plan will be collectively owned and implemented by key government agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders. The key deliverables from this policy project will be:

- regional, cross-sectoral plan - this will set out a shared vision, objectives, priorities and principles for collaboration over the medium-long term
- annual action plan – this will identify collaborative, regional actions that aim to prevent, end and reduce the harm from homelessness
- monitoring and reporting framework – this will provide a framework for tracking progress against outcomes and implementation of the action plan.

The process for developing the plan includes the following:

1. **Research with people at risk and with lived experience of homelessness, and frontline service providers:** this project will map the pathways into and out of the different forms of homelessness, focusing on single mothers with children as a priority group. It will help to identify opportunities for intervention, placing those directly affected at the centre of this project.
2. **Sector system mapping:** the council is working with the key stakeholders to compile an inventory of initiatives that contribute to addressing homelessness. This system model includes:
 - policies, legislation, regulation, and targets
 - coordination, collaboration and engagement mechanisms
 - funding, accountability and governance mechanisms
 - the evidence base, and ongoing planning processes
 - interventions (or services) delivered across the continuum of homelessness to prevent, end and minimise harm from homelessness.

Analysis of this system mapping data will help to identify strengths and synergies, gaps, opportunities for collaboration and potential solutions.

3. **Establishing a cross-sectoral leadership group:** this group will include representatives of central government and non-government agencies, Māori (mana whenua and mataawaka), and leaders in the sector. This group will be key partners in the development and implementation of the plan. Sector leaders attended their first workshop on 31 May 2018.
4. **Engagement events with stakeholders:** three workshops with a broader group of stakeholders are planned for August 2018. These workshops will focus on building consensus around the plan

and developing the annual action plan. Further engagement will also be undertaken with a range of forums and networks, including Auckland Council advisory panels.

5. **Authorisation and implementation:** it is envisaged that partners will seek approval through their respective channels. For Auckland Council, this will require reporting back to Environment and Community Committee later this year. An Auckland Council implementation plan, setting out how council will align with, and contribute to the regional, cross-sectoral plan, will be developed early in 2019. This will include agreed local board initiatives.
6. **Identification of opportunities for seed projects:** during the development of the plan, Auckland Council will work with partners to identify immediate opportunities to progress initiatives.

The key steps and indicative timeframe are summarised below:

Indicative timeframe	Action
May – June 2018	Research with people at risk and with lived experience
	System mapping with key stakeholders
	Workshops with local boards
31 May 2018	Sector leaders' group workshop to develop plan (first draft)
July 2018	Engagement with council advisory panels
August 2018	Stakeholder workshops
November 2018	Plan and action plan presented to Environment and Community Committee (and partner governance) for approval
March - April 2019	Auckland Council implementation plan presented (1) to local boards with actions and then (2) to the Environment and Community Committee

Engagement with council advisory panels

Meetings with council advisory panels are a key part of the process for developing the regional, cross-sectoral plan. This is an opportunity to provide feedback on homelessness for the disabled community:

- What changes have you noticed?
- Who is most affected, and why?
- What are the main triggers for homelessness?
- What initiatives are you aware of?
- What more needs to be done to:
 - Prevent homelessness
 - To help people to move out of homelessness?

A representative from the each of the advisory panel's will also be invited to participate in the August stakeholder engagement workshops.