



Everyone Home Collective's response  
to the Scottish Government's new

**Mental Health and  
Wellbeing Strategy - consultation**

## Our interest

**Everyone Home is a collective of 36 third sector and academic organisations who came together in 2020 to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the scale and experience of homelessness in Scotland. We span frontline services, accommodation, legal services and include intermediary, knowledge-based and campaigning organisations.**

There are strong links between homelessness and mental ill-health. We know that people with mental health problems are at greater risk of experiencing homelessness and homelessness, in turn, amplifies poor mental health. The stress of experiencing homelessness may exacerbate previous mental illness and lead to anxiety, fear, depression, sleeplessness and substance use.

Treating the symptoms of mental ill-health is not enough, particularly as we are face multiple challenges of recovering from the pandemic, increases to our energy and food bills, and lack of affordable housing in our communities. We therefore warmly welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to create a new mental health and wellbeing strategy that aims to address the underlying reasons underlying poor mental health, challenge stigma and provide the support and help people need.

The Scottish Government is currently considering recommendations for new homelessness prevention legislation which proposes requirements on the public sector to ask about people's housing situations and act on the information. The timing and focus of this homelessness prevention work, alongside the development of the mental health and suicide prevention strategies, presents national and local government and the wider public sector with a brilliant opportunity to focus on delivering better outcomes for people, by joining together and ensuring that there is no wrong door.



We have focused our response on a number of key areas where our knowledge and experience is greatest, where we believe there are strong links with the homelessness prevention agenda and where we believe significant positive outcomes can be achieved.

### *These are*

- no wrong door
- involving people with experience of using services
- the importance of nurture in workforce planning
- placed-based approaches
- and the importance of tackling stigma.

## The key points we want to highlight are:

- The service and support system should ensure there is no wrong door, with points of access and clear referral pathways that people and the workforce understand and can use. We believe that this should also be an outcome for people, not just services.
- Design and implementation of the strategy should take full account of all age groups, from children to older people, who have very different needs.
- People should access services through clear and accessible pathways, they should know where to go for support and advice and be guided to access the right support for all areas of their lives.
- People should be involved in decisions affecting them and that they should have opportunities to take part in designing the services they use. Lived experience should be meaningfully integrated and valued in all parts of mental health care. Particular efforts should be made to involve people with experience of homelessness who contend with additional barriers to accessing support.
- We welcome 'nurture' as one of the five pillars of workforce planning. The workforce can be impacted by trauma and experiences of mental ill-health, including their own mental ill-health, and must be valued and supported.
- Implementation of the strategy will place additional reliance on third sector services. The third sector workforce also needs to be valued and supported, and the sector sufficiently resourced to meet need. Where there are demands for evidence to be collected by the third sector, separate resource will be needed.
- All service provision needs to be trauma informed, so that services do not retraumatise people they are supporting. Commissioning of services should be values-based.
- We strongly agree that communities are a significant source of support and that a place-based approach to mental wellbeing can ensure the right support is provided in the right places. The expertise of local communities needs to be integrated to the development of local approaches.
- We agree that the strategy should aim to tackle the significant stigma that still exists around mental ill-health. Sensitive and accessible language must be used in developing and delivering policy and practice. Involving people with experience of mental ill-health will help avoid reinforcing existing stigma and stereotypes.

These points mirror much of the work being delivered across the homelessness sector. Working together on these can strengthen our approaches, ensure we learn from each other and keep the best outcomes for people at the heart of all the decisions we make.





## About The Collective

Everyone Home is a collective of 36 third and academic sector organisations that have come together during the COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on homelessness in Scotland. Read our framework at [www.everyonehome.scot](http://www.everyonehome.scot) and join us on social media at #EveryoneHome

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