



Our impact in brief



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The inaugural Impact Report from the Centre for Homelessness Impact serves as a summary of our first two years of work and an assessment of the impact of our achievements to date.

Overview

The Centre for Homelessness Impact (CHI) launched in 2018 to act as a catalyst for evidence-led change. We believe not just that homelessness can be reduced, but that it can be ended, on a sustainable basis, by building and using the evidence about what really works across complex systems. That's what we were set up to do, and this report covers what we've achieved so far.

While the UK has long been admired for the housing rights it gives people and its significant investment in solving homelessness over the years, we are not making rapid enough progress in addressing and preventing it. We lack proven, cost-effective, scalable strategies, and the Centre was founded to address this need.

Our first year was spent building a suite of tools that, for the first time ever, put reliable evidence at the fingertips of those working to end homelessness. Our evidence and gap maps, evidence finder, intervention tool and outcomes framework gave us strong foundations on which to build a comprehensive programme of work to end homelessness sustainably.

The scope and scale of work in our second year has been similarly ambitious and fast-paced. We have drawn on the findings revealed by our evidence tools and worked across three key areas to galvanise support for our movement and achieve step change in homelessness by focusing on what works to effectively find and fund solutions backed by evidence and data.

All of this has kept us incredibly busy, and as a new organisation we have had little time to publicly reflect on what we have accomplished, what we have yet to achieve, and how our work will need to evolve and adapt in order to achieve it. This inaugural Impact Report is our first opportunity to do just that, and future reports will serve as an annual process of learning and reflection from our experiences to ensure that we acknowledge our successes and learn from our mistakes to make the next year as successful and impactful as possible.



How CHI works:

CHI is a member of the What Works Network of 13 independent centres in the UK. Unlike medicine, the social sciences still have some way to go in their approach to the use of evidence to develop policy and practice, but we're already making substantial progress and changing attitudes towards the use of data and evaluations.

We work with universities, government, strategic partners (such as the Behavioural Insights Team and Nesta), local authorities and other What Works organisations (such as NICE and the Education Endowment Foundation).

Our work is guided by five key principles:



Start with the person: create a solution tailor-made to their needs



Focus on impact: focus on sustainable changes, set goals and follow through on them



Design for action: tools that are simple and easy to use

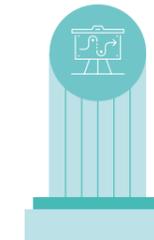


Lead with the evidence: work guided by evidence, not ideology



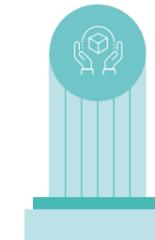
Work with and through others: collaborating with those in different fields

Our practice has three pillars:



01

Making evidence accessible – We have helped generate a wide range of evidence required to effectively address the complex systems that influence homelessness. We have translated that evidence to make it accessible to everyone.



02

Supporting implementation – We have provided resources and services that improve the skills of policymakers and practitioners to analyse data, evaluate interventions and use those processes for decision-making.



03

Mobilising change-makers – We have fostered a learning culture in which data and evidence helps policymakers, practitioners and commissioners to improve outcomes for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Highlights from our journey:

Making evidence accessible

- Our evidence and gap maps are the first of their kind in homelessness. To date, they have been used nearly 7,000 times. The latest edition of our effectiveness map now includes 394 studies – 173 more than the initial edition – while our implementation map contains 246 qualitative process evaluations. Although more than 85% of the studies included in the map are from North America and fewer than 5% from the UK, the trend is moving in the right direction with a rise of more than 50% in the UK since we created the map in 2018. This tells us that we are seeing a surge in rigorous evaluation and synthesis alongside a commitment to an evidence-informed end to homelessness.

- We have used our tools to co-create a long list of potential trials and systematic reviews. Rigorous synthesis is very rare in homelessness, so we were delighted to join forces with the Campbell Collaboration to design and release our first systematic reviews in areas as diverse as accommodation-based interventions, the effectiveness of discharge programmes and the accessibility of health and social care services for people experiencing homelessness.
- We have designed a series of groundbreaking randomised controlled trials (RCTs) to address pressing gaps in our knowledge from a policy and practice perspective on topics such as landlord behaviour, improving access to the private rental sector, curbing COVID-19 infection among people experiencing street homelessness, understanding the impact of out-of-borough mobility and testing the effectiveness of the individual placement and support model.

Supporting implementation

- We created SHARE – a simple, memorable framework that provides a comprehensive view of what it takes to prevent homelessness at population level, that will be used to track progress at local and national level towards ending homelessness for good. Working with the Office for National Statistics and users themselves, the original framework has evolved into a reporting platform for 37 different contributory indicators for homelessness. Working with the Government Statistical Service (GSS), we've developed a comprehensive user testing programme to inform the next iteration, which will be ready for launch in February 2021.
- We piloted a What Works Community programme with three local areas across the UK, to help them embed data and evidence, design thinking and behavioural insights methods into their work. This was designed to help them address a specific problem in their area and increase the number of successful tenancies in the private rented sector to people experiencing homelessness. Based on the success of this programme, we are scaling it up to 30 different local areas in 2021.

- We successfully trialled our evidence surgery service, which provides tailored in-depth and impartial advice to individuals and organisations working in and around homelessness to improve their use of data and evidence and foster a more experimental approach. These surgeries happen on an ad hoc basis and are designed around the challenges practitioners need help with in their day-to-day practice.

Mobilising change-makers

- We established a Research Network in 2020 to share new and ongoing work, discuss ideas, and create new collaborations among the leading homelessness scholars from across the global north, alongside policymakers and researchers working in the government and voluntary and community sectors. It was designed in the wake of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that we were learning as fast as possible across countries, and help address potential research wastage.
- In April 2020, we published our first book with Policy Press, *Using Evidence to End Homelessness*, in which contributors from a wide variety of organisations and with a unique breadth of experience, argue for a new approach to ending homelessness that embraces data and evidence. The book provides essential methods to underpin future policy, practice and funding decisions. It is intended to help grow the movement for evidence-led change in the field.
- In 2019, we took our Impact Forums to Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London, and launched our strategy in all four corners of the UK, bringing together the foremost leaders from homelessness policy and practice, as well as people with lived experiences of homelessness. While coronavirus has prevented us from holding events in person, our 2020 online Impact Festival saw 159 speakers across 53 live events explore what's happening in homelessness and related fields globally, and what needs to happen next to ensure we build better systems.

For more detailed information on the Centre's work, please see our complete impact report.

To discuss anything further contact hello@homelessnessimpact.org.





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