

Housing Quality Working Group - Terms of Reference

September 2016

Context

Health issues related to poor quality housing is estimated to cost the NHS and wider society billions each year. Locally, the impact of poor quality housing is less quantifiable but it is acknowledged there is opportunity to improve health and wellbeing outcomes of Hertfordshire residents by addressing housing quality. Following stakeholder engagement, the Public Health Board recommended the creation of the Housing Quality Working Group so that housing quality issues can be investigated and tackled in partnership.

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Housing Quality Working Group (HQWG) is to develop in partnership a series of actions aimed at understanding and tackling housing quality, particularly in the private housing sector and in relation to excess cold, that will result in positive health outcomes for Hertfordshire residents.

2. Duties of the Group

2.1 Key responsibilities:

- Developing understanding of the relationship between health and housing quality in Hertfordshire, including what are the key issues, their impact and their associated health outcomes.
- Sharing knowledge, data and ideas across HQWG member organisations to:
 - Develop detail behind key housing quality issues in Hertfordshire, enhancing the ability to identify and locate affected groups
 - Create shared priorities related to housing quality issues with linked actions for improved health outcomes
 - Review and bolster data and evidence regarding Hertfordshire's housing quality, so that the extent and cost of issues can be quantified across the county
 - Take account of and incorporate where relevant services and organisational strategies related to housing quality and health outcomes
 - Identify and apply for or promote national or local funding opportunities that could be used to address poor quality housing
 - Develop best practice for addressing housing quality issues, and getting an idea of what works
- Implementing actions that may involve:
 - Improving the targeting of interventions through, for example, enhanced use of data or tailored communications

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- Supporting signposting and referral processes to the most relevant services including HertsHelp and district services for members of the public and professionals
- Improving links in the system by making system connections and actively engaging and working with other housing partners and groups
- Promoting awareness of the importance and impact of housing quality issues across a variety of stakeholders
- Acting as the central reference point for housing quality and health outcomes, informing, engaging and influencing other housing groups at both the strategic level (e.g. Health & Wellbeing Board, Public Sector Chief Exec Officer Group) and operational (e.g. Heads of Housing Group, Heads of Environmental Health, voluntary sector)
- Measuring and evaluating outcomes of group actions related to housing quality and health outcomes

2.2 Outcomes:

1. A greater **understanding and awareness** of both professionals and the public of the health impact of housing quality
2. Increased **sharing of knowledge**, resources and expertise related to health and housing quality across relevant organisations
3. Enhanced use of **data and evidence** for efficient targeting of housing quality issues, accurate calculation of scale and costs, and a strengthened case for additional funding and support
4. **Improving system connections** regarding housing quality, including signposting and referrals, enabling professional and public access to the most appropriate support

Achievement of these outcomes could have a positive impact on the wider health and social care system, including reducing preventable use of services and improving transfers of care (e.g. from hospital to home).

2.3 Not in scope

- With no allocated funding, the HQWG will support existing working related to housing quality and health outcomes rather than leading the development of new projects or services.
- The HQWG will not focus on, except where it relates to housing quality, housing supply (the planning and supply of new housing), housing accessibility (home adaptations, specialist housing) and housing availability (homelessness) as this is largely being addressed elsewhere.
- With Supported Housing addressed by other groups (e.g. Supported Housing Strategic Group), the HQWG will focus on private housing, both private rented and owner occupiers.

3 Membership

3.1 The HQWG has representatives from the following organisations:

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- District & Borough Councils – Housing, Environmental Health & Sustainability leads (as nominated by the district/borough councils)
 - East & North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust
 - Hertfordshire County Council, including Public Health, Community Wellbeing and Community Protection
 - HertsHelp
 - Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Trading Standards
 - Police (TBC)
 - Voluntary Sector, including links to the voluntary providers via HCC's Community Wellbeing Team
- 3.2 Any member may suggest additional representation subject to group approval. Members may also invite other officers from their organisations to attend on their behalf or to present items. In order for the meeting to be quorate one third of the total core membership is required to attend.
- 3.3 Meetings will be chaired and managed by the Health & Housing Coordinator or Health Improvement Lead, Public Health.

4 Strategies and National Guidance

- 4.1 The HQWG operates in the context of local and national strategies, including:
- Hertfordshire's Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-19
 - Local district housing strategies and/or Local Plans
 - Local and national research on housing quality issues – for example, NICE guidelines on Early Winter Deaths (EWD), and the 2015 EWD report in Watford, Hertsmere and Broxbourne.
 - Those related to wider system developments – for example, Hertfordshire's Sustainability Transformation Plan.

5 Frequency of Meetings

- 5.1 The Group will meet quarterly.
- 5.2 The Group agenda and papers will be circulated at least 3 working days prior to the meetings.

6 Minutes of Meetings

- 6.1 Minutes of all actions and recommendations will be recorded and maintained. Minutes will be circulated to the Group membership in a timely manner (no more than 10 working days following the meeting).
- 6.2 Conflicts of interest must be minuted at each meeting.

7 Governance Structure & Accountability

- 7.1 The HQWG operates within a broader strategic context and has links to existing housing groups, strategies and partnerships. As a sub-set of the Public Health Board, HQWG is accountable to this group. It will report to the Public Health Board on at least a quarterly basis and, on request, to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

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- 7.2 Updates will be taken to other related groups on request, including the Supported Housing Strategic Board, Heads of Housing Group and Herts / Beds Housing Group. These will be delivered by the Health & Housing Coordinator or Health Improvement Lead, Public Health, who will also report back any feedback, as well as relevant information from other groups, to the HQWG.
- 7.3 Group members shall share at HQWG meetings any strategic or operational decisions within their organisations that may have implications for housing quality. In turn, group members shall pass back any relevant updates from the HQWG to their own organisations.

8 Review

- 8.1 The Group will review the Terms of Reference in Jan 2017 and at least annually thereafter.