

## DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2018

### Homelessness and Health: improving the health and wellbeing of those without safe and stable housing in Milton Keynes

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#### **Purpose of Report:**

- To present the evidence around Homelessness and Health to the Health and Wellbeing Board prior to formal publication of the Public Health Report
- To encourage a system-wide approach to addressing the issues that impact homelessness and health

## 1. Background

The Director of Public Health report is an independent report focused on improving the health of the people of Milton Keynes. This year my report is on the important topic of homelessness and health. It aims to highlight issues, present evidence and make recommendations to address the key public health challenge of homelessness, in order to better prevent homelessness and improve the health of homeless people.

Ill health can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness and being homeless is associated with extremely poor health outcomes relative to those of the general population, with average life expectancy of rough sleepers being 48 years for men and 43 years for women. Homeless people are more likely to have poor physical and mental health, and people with physical and mental health problems are more vulnerable to becoming homeless. As with other risks to public health, prevention and early intervention can keep people housed appropriately, stopping the escalation of issues that can lead to losing stable accommodation and worsening health.

## 2. Recommendations

1. That the Board increases system awareness of the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) and its implications for partner organisations, especially around the duty to refer.
2. That consideration on how individuals and organisations in Milton Keynes can strengthen how they work together to reduce the risk of homelessness and improve the health of homeless people through implementing the recommendations in the Director of Public Health Report.

### 3. Key Issues

The Director of Public Health report highlights the causes and costs of homelessness, homelessness levels in Milton Keynes over the last 10 years and the complex relationship between homelessness and health. We draw on national and local evidence to describe key challenges for homeless people, focusing on the health impacts of homelessness for a number of vulnerable groups. The report highlights several key areas of vulnerability including:

- Homelessness in children, young people and their families
- Hidden homeless
- Homelessness and complex health needs including the relationship between homelessness and mental health, substance misuse, offending and in veterans

The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) and the new duty to refer (01 October 2018) represent a unique opportunity to strengthen collaboration between local government, healthcare and voluntary sector partners, around preventing homelessness and reducing health impact.

The Director of Public Health report can be found [here](#) and an Executive summary is provided in the Annex.

#### **Background Papers:**

***Executive Summary Homelessness and Health: improving the health and wellbeing of those without safe and stable housing in Milton Keynes.*** Annual Public Health Report by the Director of Public Health 2017/18 (Annex)