



No Homelessness in Norfolk

A summary of support from the People
Powered Results Team at Nesta

This report consolidates the People Powered Results (PPR) team's support to the No Homelessness in Norfolk programme, as follows:

Contents	Page:
Context and nature of PPR Support <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Structure of work- Underpinning principles	3
Engaging Experts <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expert Working Group- Listening Exercise	9
Leadership Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Emerging principles	35
Working Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Individual group recommendations	38
Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Making It Real	56
Expert Summary	65

Context and nature of PPR support

The journey to ending homelessness



Over the past eighteen months Norfolk has seen a period of rapid change. Through the covid pandemic, the homeless population in Norfolk was supported in a joined-up and collaborative way by the County & District Councils and their many partner organisations & communities. This achieved positive impact, with over 650 people housed through 'Everybody-In' and led to a renewed system wide commitment to **end homelessness in Norfolk**.

There is a strong desire to continue to work with this initial cohort of individuals supported through the pandemic, as well as those who may have become at-risk or homeless in the future, particularly as a result of the social and economic impact from the pandemic. There are strong foundations for ongoing partnership working to grow over time, which include:

- Developing a new **No Homelessness in Norfolk** (NHIN) strategy, which consolidates the learning through Covid-19 & sets out a vision for long-lasting systemic change, with an increased focus on prevention & approaches to test new models for addressing homelessness where it does occur
- Establishing enabling structures to bring the vision to life, through the Chief Executives Group and the newly formed **Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership**, involving a wide range of partners including County & District Councils, Health, Police, Justice and the Voluntary Sector
- Mobilising of a number of diverse **working groups as part of the NHIN programme**, with a focus on: Experts by experience; Homelessness prevention; Complex & multiple needs; Young people; Education, training and employment; Norfolk homelessness charter

People Powered Results support

The People Powered Results (PPR) team provided support to Norfolk through the LGA's Housing Advisor Programme. Our support focussed on three key areas of support:



Engaging experts: people who have experienced homelessness and practitioners in front-facing roles, to better understand their experiences, explore their relationship with co-production & consider how to support them to be meaningfully involved going forward.



Adaptive support for working group leads to mobilise their groups, gather and consolidate insights, consider actionable learnings, and prioritise prototypes emerging from their efforts.



Capacity Building for Transformation: A focus on 'creating the conditions for systemic change' to support collaborative and inclusive change at pace across Norfolk.

This culminated in the **No Homelessness in Norfolk Conference** which PPR supported, along with other system partners, bringing together experts, practitioners, managers and leaders from across the system to consider the learning to date and plan next steps for the efforts.

Guiding Principles



A set of guiding principles underpinned our approach throughout, demonstrating how we work collaboratively with experts, partners and stakeholders to build mutually beneficial relationships and an environment for co-production:

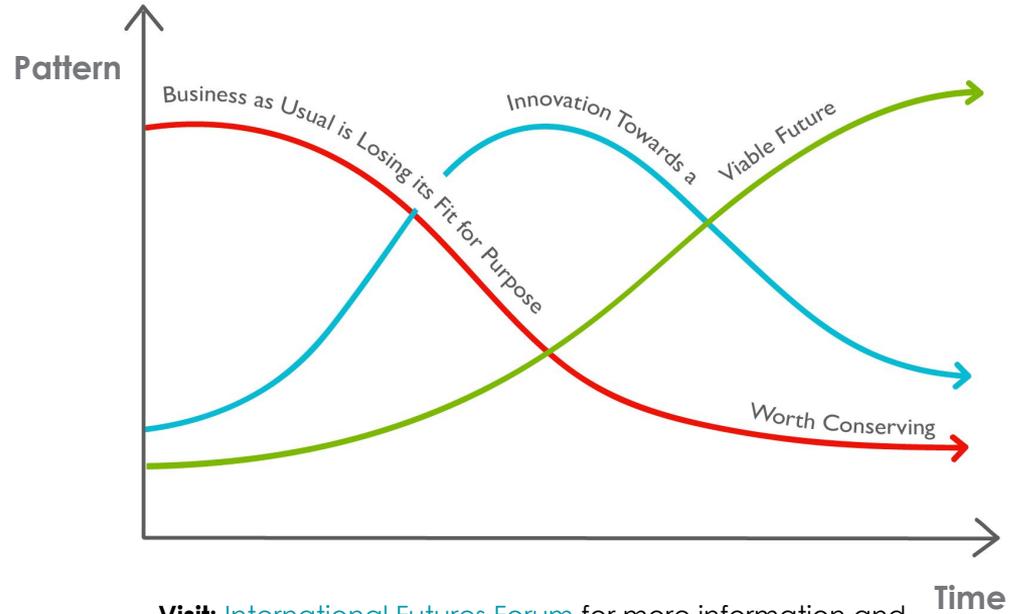
- **Collaboration and co-production leads to more robust solutions** and increased impact that sticks. Front-line practitioners and people who rely on services have unrivalled expertise in how the system operates, but often have little influence or ownership over change. Nurturing this potential requires creating safe spaces to support collaboration between experts by experience, partners and stakeholders. Facilitation and adaptive coaching help to create these environments, paying close attention to power dynamics and using creativity to help build empathy, cut through complexity and ensure everyone is able to participate.
- **Change is most effective when the people that do the work are supported to do the change.** We work in partnership, alongside partners, not doing work on behalf of others. We believe this is the best way to encourage sustainable learning and equip partnerships to lead transformational change going forward.
- **Sustainable change requires top-down & bottom-up action, and at all levels of the system.** Neglecting the links between these actions means efforts often fall short of their potential impact. We will always look to establish structures for rapid feedback & learning loops, including between people with lived experience, working groups, the Strategic Housing Partnership & Exec Group. This helps ensure obstacles can be addressed and insights can inform future strategy and action.

Systems Change:

The three horizons

We used the 3 horizons model to structure the nature of our support. The model is helpful to provide structured thinking around the transitions required for transformational change. It helps to frame the position of the Homelessness sector in Norfolk - creating space to consider the different patterns and trends which are present - including:

- What is the future we are working towards?
- Where are we seeing ways of working or innovations that are helping to move us towards that future?
- What's holding us back or creating a barrier?



Visit: [International Futures Forum](#) for more information and resources on the three horizon model

Timeline of PPR support



Engaging experts

“Co-production is a radical culture of trust, respect and valuing everyone to bring about a positive thriving change in a community”

Homeless Link

Co-designing engagement with experts

Through March, April and May, we worked with the Experts Working Group and broader representatives to create a plan for engaging experts.

Given the lack of an existing systematic approach to coproduction, we worked to design a far reaching listening exercise to better understand people's stories and thoughts about change within the system to help inform this.

We helped to design a listening exercise, building on early work completed by the Experts working group. This included:

- Agreeing key themes to understand more
- Dissemination plan to reach out across the whole of Norfolk to bring in voices from both people with experience of homelessness and the front-facing workforce
- A mixed-methods approach to create a range of opportunities to participate



May press release for No Homelessness in Norfolk:
www.hopestead.org/norfolk-strategic-housing-partnership/

Co-design of the listening exercise

In partnership with the Experts group, we co-designed a number of themes which underpinned the listening exercise. The listening exercise sought to understand people's stories, experiences and thoughts in relation to:

Asking for help: Making the decision and finding support	Experience of services: What this looks and feels like	Good Help: What this looks like & what it isn't	Feeling heard: Giving feedback & making change	Looking to the future Hopes and dreams
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The listening exercise was communicated via flyers (illustrated), a broad range of partner organisations across Norfolk and hosted online on the Hopestead webpage.

Hello!

We are a group of people who are working together to end homelessness in Norfolk. Some of us have experienced homelessness, some of us work for housing providers, and some of us work for other agencies.

WE NEED YOU!

Have you **experienced homelessness** or do you work in a **front-facing role** in homelessness services?

Your knowledge and experience would be really valuable in guiding us to improve services for people who are at risk or currently experiencing homelessness in Norfolk. We will collect information in a number of ways, including a survey which you can access here: www.hopestead.org (The survey is open throughout May 2021).

To make changes to homelessness services that will work for as many people as possible, we would like to hear from people with all different backgrounds, abilities and experiences so please get in touch!

We can work together to make change happen. We will let you know what changes are made as a result of sharing your knowledge and ideas.

Our work focuses on five key areas:

1. **Asking for help:** Making the decision and finding support
2. **Experience of services:** How does it feel? What is the journey? Who do you meet?
3. **What does 'good help' look like?** What choices do you have? How does it feel?
4. **Feeling heard:** Experiences of giving feedback and making change
5. **Looking into the future:** What would you like to see/believe?

Produced by the Housing Policy Team at Flagship Group for Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership

A mixed methods approach



We adopted a mixed-methods approach for the listening exercises to maximise the potential for involvement. The methods used to gain insights focussed on:

- **An online survey** for people with experience of homelessness and employees to help to cover a large, diverse geography. This was hosted by Hopstead, on behalf of 'No Homelessness of Norfolk', who supported with collation of data.
- **PPR led 1:1 interviews** to gain deeper understanding, examples and stories that illustrate what makes a difference in the experiences of homelessness, good support and what matters most in people's lives. A translation service was used for some interviews.
- **Practitioner led 1:1 conversations:** We offered an orientation session and a guidance sheet to support any practitioners who were going to carry out interviews.



Valuing time and engagement: The listening exercise was designed to recognise people's time and insight as valuable and important. Vouchers were offered as a 'thank you' to people who were interviewed, and there were funds to support expenses for conversations within services such as for refreshments.



Orientation: Practitioner-led conversations

A virtual orientation session was run for practitioners keen to support experts to share their experiences through conversations. This was an interactive session mixing theory and skills and focused on helping to build people's confidence and capability. The following areas were covered:

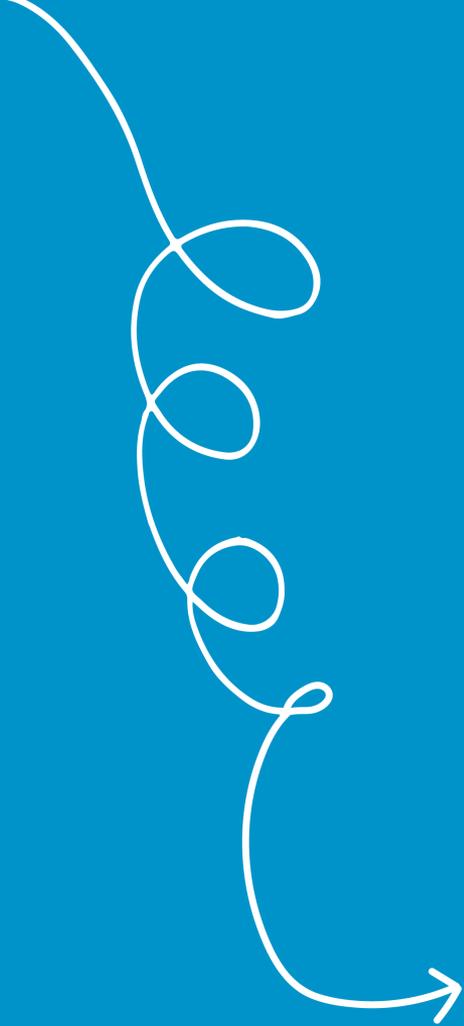
- Awareness of what makes interviews good, what puts interviewees at ease and makes them feel heard.
- Co-design of a set of principles to guide how practitioners approached the interviews - by considering how we would like to be approached and heard.
- Dealing with the unexpected.
- Practical considerations like preparing and testing questions, probing, and use of language.
- Blind Spots: Awareness of behaviours, mental models and bias.



Principles

- ★ Respect
- ★ Accuracy Impartiality
- ★ Fairness
- ★ Ethical
- ★ Permissions
- ★ Considering power Balance
- ★ Confidentiality
- ★ Care (duty of)
- ★ Openness (open mind)
- ★ Patience (making time)
- ★ Honouring bravery

Listening Exercise: Summary Findings



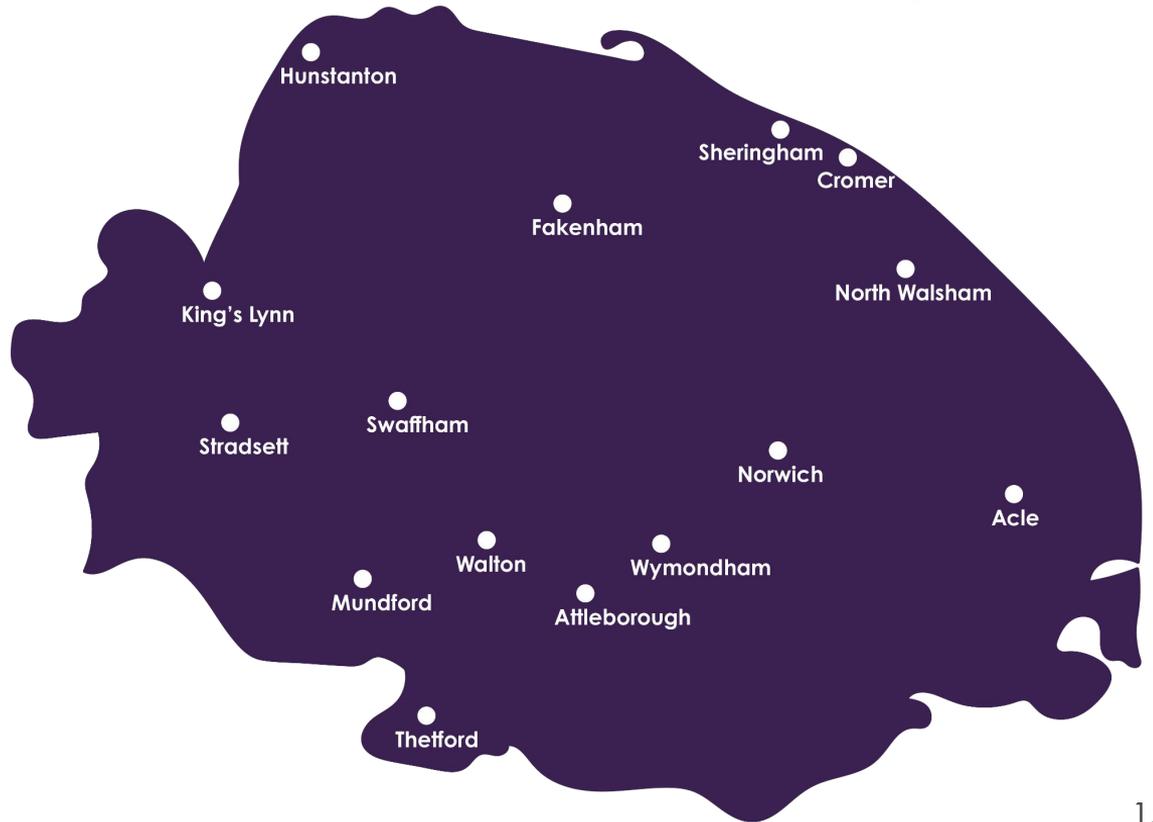
Who did we hear from?

We heard from 141 experts Norfolk through surveys, 1:1 interviews, and practitioner-led conversations.

62 respondents identified as people who have experienced homelessness & 77 as practitioners within the system.

Participants ages ranged from 25 to 64 and 30% identified as having a disability or long term health condition.

33% were based in Norwich, and the others were spread out across the rest of Norfolk.



What did we hear from people?



A wealth of insights emerged from the wide-ranging perspectives we heard through the listening exercise. These insights have been analysed and grouped into 6 themes. In practice, many of these interlink with each other. The following pages outline key findings and explore each theme in more detail.

Access

People's ability to access services

Collaboration

Collaboration between service providers across the sector

Voice of experts

The ability of people with lived experience of homelessness and people in front facing roles to influence change

Proactive support

The extent to which support is proactive, preventative, and structured/funded in a way which supports this

Experience

The nature of people's experiences within services

Person centred support

Person-centred, flexible, holistic approaches to care and support

Access

What is happening now?

"Services put you in a box, expect you to complete a load of tasks, jump through hoops to prove you are worthy"

Some people are able to access support speedily, however this isn't a universal experience and is often the result of practitioners working very hard to secure support 'in spite' of the barriers experienced by the system.

Understanding where the 'doors' are to support is difficult. Rigid systems can be particularly confusing or distressing for those in crisis or newly homeless.

The system can be experienced as inhumane, with pathways not seeming to value people's dignity. Sometimes people do not have their basic needs met e.g. a place to clean themselves or a place that feels safe. Value is placed on the individual's ability to change to meet a criteria in order to receive support. People reported feeling not needy, or not worthy enough.

The system is felt by some to demand a level of manipulation which can lead to people betraying their own truths in order to access the support they need.

21

people said it took too long to get help

15

people said they didn't know where to get help

Access

What could be done differently?

We heard about what needs to change...

System and service design needs to put people at the centre. Access to services is about meeting basic human needs, for each individual and in a timely way.

People should be treated with worth and value regardless of their situation. Access to support should not be conditional.

Barriers to access need to be removed. The system needs to be more realistic and humane about the expectations it places on people who need support.

So what?

What would it look like if every individual was guaranteed access to support? What might the right support at the right time mean for different people?

How can services become more accessible and impartial and do away with conditions or barriers to support? Could a simple, common referral form be explored?

What would it look like to redesign the system so it placed dignity and human worth at its core?

Access...In their own words

On what is missing:

“Access to dry/warm/clean places to sleep. Help with MH and life skills needed. Advise on exactly how and what they need to do to help themselves”

On what needs to change:

“Obstacles or hoops to jump through to gain access - when you are crisis point you have no capacity and it’s the wrong time to build.”

On what makes a good experience:

“Appropriate advice in a timely fashion accessed easily”

On what to avoid:

“No more hurdles to jump for those who are by definition not good at navigating hurdles let alone jumping over them”

Collaboration

What is happening now?

There are some great examples of multi disciplinary working and it is valued by practitioners and experts. However, it often relies on passionate individuals, and relationships, rather than being widespread or a part of the culture across the system.

Lack of joined up working leads to gaps in service provision. People slip through the cracks when they transition between services e.g. owing to age, moving area or being admitted to hospital. Holistic needs are not met e.g. housing is addressed, but not mental health needs.

Lack of coordination and communications means that people experience unmanageable demands from services. Services don't always appear to have a view of who else is supporting or interacting with people, leading to multiple demands on individuals.

For practitioners, new ways of working, including the use of more virtual spaces, have led people feeling like there is more partnership working than before Covid.

"Felt **pushed back and forwards** and not being told what was happening. **I felt in the dark** - like everyone else knew what was going on but me."

"I felt like I was getting **shoved from pillar to post** and my situation meant I was falling between the cracks of eligibility and so my problems escalated and I lost everything"

Collaboration

What could be done differently?

We heard about what needs to change...

There are huge amounts of ambition and motivation to create change but a wider mindset, and cultural and structural shifts are needed to enable collaborative working.

Assistance through housing transitions is critical to support people to stay in accommodation and continue moving forward. Individuals may need support beyond moving into new housing e.g. information about managing finances and paying bills.

Housing should be provided alongside other needs in a joined up way, e.g. housing transition should be recognised as a time of upheaval and health needs, such as mental health services or access to substitute prescriptions for people with addiction, should be considered alongside housing support.

So what?

How might support be reframed around an individual, regardless of their place on the 'pathway'?

How can services be more joined up and prioritise requests and support for people in a way that works **with** them and their motivations?

How might the system be designed to support people through transitions?

At a glance: collaboration

On what is missing:

“services being connected when someone is showing as vulnerable and being at risk of homelessness”

On what good collaboration might look like:

“multi agency working together especially for families”

On what to avoid:

“The first time I was homeless and I got my first flat i was given no support to help me prepare for managing bills or anything and I ended up being evicted after about 9 months”

“If people genuinely join together and change things this will be monumental. ... There is a small core of competent and consistent people involved but that's not enough, some are not in the room for right reasons”

Voice of Experts

What is happening now?

Where feedback is sought and given, people are often very positive about the experience, stating they were able to “get things off [their] chest” and shift their experiences.

People may be discouraged from giving feedback about their experiences for several reasons, including that they are not asked or they don't think their opinion will be taken seriously.

It is very rare for people to have knowingly contributed to or influenced strategic or systemic change.

Practitioners feel that feedback can seem too big or too systemic to address, relating to issues that are outside of their ability to effect.

Where people who are experiencing homelessness do give feedback related to individual care and support and it is acted on, it contributes to a more positive outcome.

On diversity, only 32% people responded to demographic questions, of those only 3 people reported as being 'black' and 5 as 'other than heterosexual' - these figures do not match national statistics.

Of the 42 who responded to the question:

- **60% had given feedback to services** (positive or negative)
- The majority (60%) of those who had feedback were either satisfied or very satisfied with how it was handled.

For those who had **never provided feedback** (16), approx:

- 60% had never been asked
- 20% didn't believe anything would change
- 15% didn't feel comfortable

Voices of Experts

What could be done differently?

We heard about what needs to change...

Feeling excluded is a huge part of the experience of being homeless and a lack of inclusion in decision making further exacerbates this. Some people point to it being a **positive experience when their voice has been the driving force for change**.

We have heard a desire from people to **use their own experience to improve both their own care, and to make things better for others** in the future.

We have also heard of the potential in enabling **more people with lived experience to step into employment and support roles**: *"I was homeless 30 years ago. I had a child, was placed in a B&B several miles from my support network. After 3 months I received a council flat. I now work with people who have been homeless & are addressing substance/alcohol issues."*

The low and inconsistent response to demographic questions in responses leaves questions about representation amongst demographic groups and protected characteristics, which could be an opportunity to **reach out to different demographic groups to better understand their needs**.

So what?

What if people with lived experience of homelessness were not simply seen as service users or subjects of research, but as having a perspective that is valuable?

What if efforts to end homelessness involved the insights and leadership from people with lived experience to achieve the transformative change that is needed?

At a glance: voices of experts

On what is missing:

"Designated key workers/mentors with a personal experience of relating issues"

"You don't speak to the decision makers"

On what makes a good experience:

"My voice was heard and I got an immediate response"

On what motivates people to provide feedback:

"Because I have been able to change policies and perspectives, different approaches"

On what to avoid:

"Not hearing the applicants voice we are homeless for a reason not out of choice"

Person-Centred Support

What is happening now?

Where people received personalised support, flexible to their situation they were keen to share their stories, and were clear of the difference this made to them.

"My support worker at the hostel helps me with lots of different areas of my life"

People described being treated in a way that didn't see them as a person: *"They [Children's Services] did not ask me my situation or my feelings, they just treated me as a runaway."*

There was a sense that the service priorities were not focussed around human connection: *"You're a number!! It's more important to have the services evaluation filled in than it is to actually have a conversation. People make judgements."*

Many people shared they were unable to access the support they felt they needed: *"More support with my ADHD would have stopped me from becoming homeless as my home life with my parents would have been so much better."*

Services were seen as inflexible and with little 'elastic tolerance' to the needs and behaviours of people experiencing homelessness.

Just under 1/3 of respondents said they have a disability or long term condition, including Tourettes, ADHD, dyslexia, cerebral palsy, depression, PTSD, & personality disorder.

Several people referenced trauma (directly & indirectly), and a lack of awareness from practitioners and services of how to work in trauma informed ways.

"You're a number!! It's more important to have the services evaluation filled in than it is to actually have a conversation. People make judgements"

Person-Centred Support

What could be done differently?

We heard about what needs to change...

People want to be recognised as individuals, with unique experiences, needs and desires for the support they receive.

There are no one-size-fits-all approaches. Experts feel that individualised and flexible support would have made a world of difference in their experience of engaging with services and in the success of interventions.

There is a desire for flexibility of approach to support services, instead of pre-determining what kind of housing or support is necessary or appropriate, and what timescales people should be expected to work towards

People have different priorities and visions of success. They want a say in setting their own priorities, needs and have support that is tailored to them.

People want to be seen for what they can do, not what has happened in the past. They want their context and experience to be understood.

So what?

What if individuals were assessed using asset-based and positive-risk approaches?

What if trauma-informed practices were used across the sector?

What if the system was designed from principles of flexibility and personalised care?

At a glance: person-centred support

On what is missing:

“effective, high level support - person centred approach”

“Someone to help and advise”

“Regular contact , follow up”

On what to avoid:

“Listen to what they think they need before describing a generic [solution]”

“Avoid 'us and them' attitude - like in prisons...open door policy and...have workers with passion to help people”

On what makes a good experience:

“People being understanding and realise that individuals need tailored support as everybody's needs are different and what works for one person doesn't work for the next person.”

On what is most important:

“Talking and listening to the person in the centre of it all”

Experience

What is happening now?

Respect and humanity are missing from the experience of some services. People report feeling judged and stereotyped, where they want to feel listened to and understood.

The system, and the way it operates, perpetuates some barriers and negatively impacts on people's resilience and trust of services, e.g. where a suitable living space is not provided or where services are not adequate.

New ways of working, including the use of more virtual spaces, have left people feeling like there is more partnership working than before Covid.

People struggle to make positive connections to others in a local community, as a result of multiple stages and moves to get help within the system or due to incidents such as evictions.

"It's absolutely abhorrent to put people in moldy accommodation, saying things like 'you should be grateful you have anywhere' so judgmental! I have also been told when I had nothing ... it was only stuff! Again, a complete lack of insight into how it feels to have nothing"

11

people said **listening** is the single most important thing when giving good help

"Whenever I need any support, someone is always there to help. They may not be able to solve everything, but they try their hardest."

Experience

What could be done differently?

We heard about what needs to change...

Move to a strengths based model over a deficit model, focussed on on people's problems and limitations.

Take a more person-centred approach, and focus on wellbeing rather than only fulfilling basic needs. Plan services so that they are creative and encourage people to engage. Train existing staff to understand and manage needs and behaviours associated with long term homelessness, be responsive to trauma, treat people with dignity, listen without judgement and to quickly identify individual care and support needs.

Enable people to build connections with others through peer support (e.g. recovery communities - supporting connection and positive action)

Ensure transparent communication to ensure people have information that is clear, easy to understand, and honest about the situation.

So what?

What would make a difference to the individual? What would foster connection and humanity?

What might change if the sector were to design a decade-long intervention, as opposed to a stop-gap intervention?

What if the system was built around the values of dignity and humanity for all? Focussing on strengths-based approaches across policy, legislation & guidance?

At a glance: experience

On what is missing:

"i hope we can listen and treat people as people/ humans (not judged by personal opinion & blanket policy) - alleviate a lot of homelessness and loss of life"

On what makes a good experience:

"i have received amazing support from my support worker.... but [previous] to this i felt invisible"

"Listening - not to respond or fix just a conversation, compassion and time"

"Non-judgmental, non- time limited, not conditional support... solution focused, strength-based, trauma informed and client led"

On what to avoid:

"Without support of my friends family I believe I would have been sent back to live a terrible life with my family. Children's services judged me before knowing me and stereotyped me into a typical teenager. early prevention PA was amazing and helped me feel like a human being."

On what to avoid:

"judging their background; something that happened years ago doesn't mean it is going to happen again, people do change"

Proactive Support

What is happening now?

People actively seek support earlier, but they said services have high thresholds to meet before support is offered. People discussed hitting a crisis point, hurting themselves or others, before being offered help.

Several people were able to clearly identify what support would have helped prevent them becoming homeless, mental health and support around addiction were common here.

Lack of support available around early trauma and a lack of knowledge about how to approach it, e.g. *"customers being asked...to prove rapes and assaults"*

People said asking too much, too soon can have unintended consequences and be overwhelming, e.g. *"I was homeless .. redundant .. [had a] relationship breakdown... with stress of universal credit office ringing me up to check im looking for work on top..."*

People said they know many services offer short term solutions and this creates stress/worry for them about where they will go if support is removed

Just over 50% of respondents spoke to a service or person before they became homeless, and 50% of these said they received help.

"The delay in getting script (2.5 yrs.) kept me on the streets and away from the chance to get other help."

"There was no drop in centre open with staff on hand able to listen and support with my issues before I hit crisis point."

Proactive Support

What could be done differently?

We heard about what needs to change...

A more holistic approach to proactive support particularly recognising the strong links between mental health, addiction, employment support and homelessness.

The experienced need for people to hit crisis in order to access help causes people additional and unnecessary trauma, which itself has an ongoing impact on their wellbeing.

Support through transitions, for example the transition into housing or employment, where people are often very vulnerable and navigating new realities whilst sometimes having lost support.

Several people talked about change at a national level around increased housing provision, and restrictions on private landlords.

So what?

What if services were designed to meet people where they're at, and provide individualised support over several years?

What if some funding was re-allocated more upstream to focus on preventing people becoming homeless?

How might the system use futures thinking and strategic foresight to design interventions now?

At a glance: proactive support

On what is missing:

"More support with my ADHD would have stopped me from becoming homeless as my home life with my parents would have been so much better"

On what makes a good experience:

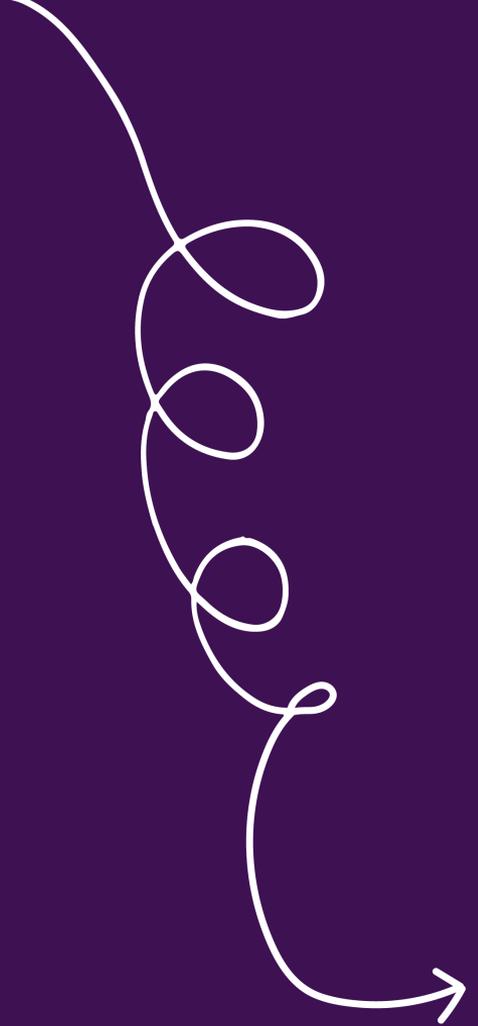
"early prevention PA [Personal Assistant] was amazing and helped me feel like a human being"

On what to avoid:

"I didn't see any support as a child. social services never worked with me as i was 16 when family split up and we went into refuge"

"...putting 'unstable' people into housing where they have a lot of demands on them ...and end up failing getting 'chucked out'"

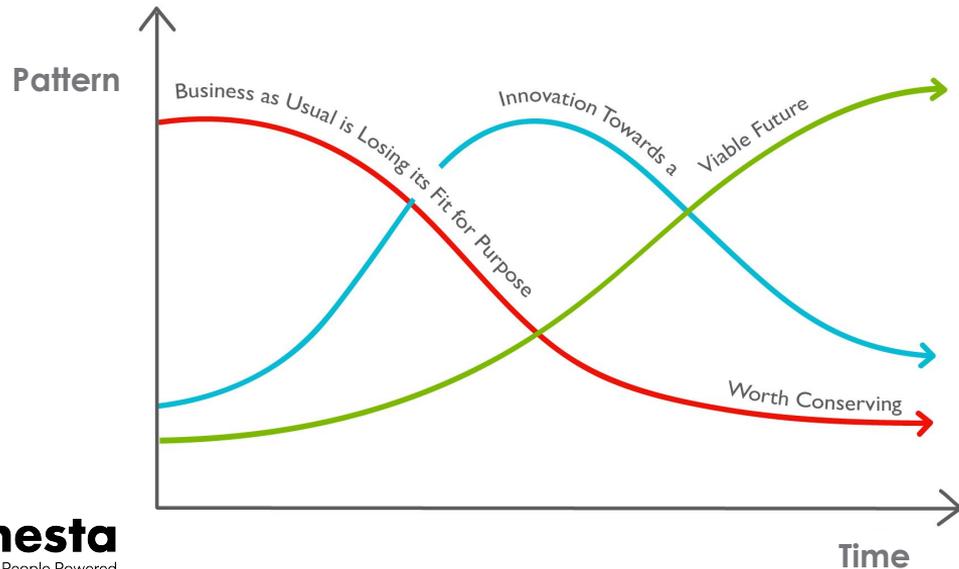
Leadership Work



The 3 horizons:

Considering transitions within the system

Building on a reflective & visioning session, anchored in the 3 horizons framework outlined below, system leaders across Norfolk have begun to define a set of principles for leaders to model and support across the county. This included contribution across county and district councils, housing associations, police and probation, health partners, DWP and more.



Reflecting on the last year:

- Where and how have we seen new ways of working emerge?
- What promising innovations could we build on?

Looking to the future:

- What's the future vision?
- What leadership behaviours might help reach this?

'Business as usual':

- What's important to conserve?
- What might we need to let go of?

Emerging principles for cross-system leaders to hold and help to bring to life across Norfolk



We have a **shared purpose** across the system and are able to name this, working as genuine & equal partners with a sense of **ownership and pride** for what we represent. We achieve more together.



We champion **everyday innovation**. We trust our people's skills & judgment and empower them to make decisions and step into action in a timely way.



Humanity and empathy are at the centre of what we do, we put **people first** across Norfolk.



Ending homelessness isn't simple! It's a complex problem, involving many, many partners and is about much more than just housing.



Norfolk is a **diverse place with diverse people**. We believe in equitable, and tailored, access to support across Norfolk, not a 'one size fits all' approach



We balance the **immediate and the longer-term need**. We ask ourselves, "What can we make better today?", as well as considering what is required over the longer term.

Working groups: Insights, asks & recommendations



The following constitutes a summary of the findings of each working group, as well as insights to come out of the breakout discussions at the NHIN conference, and is presented 'in their own voices' as much as possible. The insights, asks and recommendations represent the expertise of the system at this point in time.

Later in the report we offer some reflections, recommendations & frameworks from a People Powered Results perspective which may help to shape some of these insights into a programme of learning-focussed experiments moving forward.

Support to working groups

In February 2021 (prior to PPR involvement) a number of working groups were convened and launched through NHIN. These were formed of practitioners and experts across the Norfolk system. Groups were tasked with discovering their issue in greater depth and forming ideas, with a view to move towards testing. The thematic groups were:

Young
people

Education,
training &
employment

Multiple &
complex
needs

Prevention

Charter

Experts

PPR support provided **adaptive coaching** to support group leads & **structured group facilitation** support around:

Engaging with experts	Considering dissemination for the listening exercise and providing experts a direct chance to engage with the programme efforts.
Creating the conditions for collaboration	Focus on joined up approaches to change within and between working groups.
Systems thinking	Developing a systems perspective of the challenge of homelessness in Norfolk, the leverage points that exist in their contexts and the asks they have of leadership.
NHIN strategy & transition	Supporting the group to consider how their work and insights from across the working groups would feed into the Charter and strategy.
NHIN conference & communication	How they would present their work, engage in co-production with participants (including experts), and strategic asks and aims.

NHIN Conference

The NHIN conference was held virtually on July 13th, 2021. It was a moment to **share the insights and learning** generated by the partnership and solutions forum, as well as **recommendations for the NHIN strategy** for the next year and **asks of the system**.

The conference was intentionally designed to set a new tone to the challenge of ending homelessness by **involving the voices and poetry of experts**, and to make best use of the expertise in the room, by **including time and space for discussion, reflection and co-production**.

~ **88** people from different parts of the system - from **systems leaders to experts by experience** gathered to **hear and learn from one another**, and to **make pledges** for moving forward.

The following insights, asks and recommendations from each working group include the outputs of the discussions around each theme that happened at the conference.

Graphic recording at the NHIN conference



Artwork by Joel Millerchip

In participants' own words:

"Don't you think we deserve a seat at the table? You stick us in a box and then you add a label. Complex needs, hard to reach, go on, add another."

"We should be treated like individuals, none of us are the same, but the main focus of the system is always personal blame."

Excerpt from: ** the System,
Hannah Green
Expert & spoken word artist**

"I believe it is the system that is complex rather than the individuals"

System Leader

People are people, and with the right caring professionals human complexity can be easily handled. The system itself is deeply unequal and difficult to fathom

Expert

"You begin with people and their experience. And if you stick with that, you can't go too far wrong with engagement and building relationships with people... for us, as system players, we need to start organising around that principle...."

We can only do that if we bring professionals together and give them the freedom to operate differently."

System Leader

Insights: co-production with experts

Who are experts?

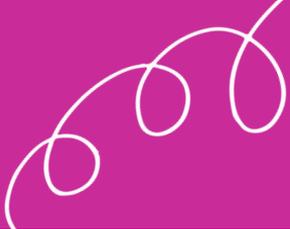
- Anyone interacting with services in any way is an 'expert' in that experience. Identifying people as experts rather than people with lived experience, service users, or staff highlights that their feedback on how services are delivered is valuable.
- Language can present and/or perpetuate barriers and judgements within services and policy discussions and should be interrogated.

Co-production is the idea that everyone has a vital role to play in ensuring quality of life for people and communities. It includes principles of: equality, diversity, access, everybody gains, making friends, and feeling good.

Good co-production looks like:

- Coming together for a reason, and having a focus (which can change)
- Seeing results (taking action and getting feedback)
- Sharing ideas and goals
- Giving everybody the opportunity to participate equally
- Intentional and continual co-production
- Honesty about what is and isn't possible

Asks & recommendations: co-production with experts



Firstly, keep going! Continue the dialogue and to build relationship and trust with those who have been involved to date. **Experts need to be involved in building the system** and should be involved with recruitment as standard at all levels across the system.

Recognise and address the power imbalance that exists between experts and 'the system'. **Make it easy and flexible** for experts to get involved, and resource their involvement properly. Create a range of different routes for people to feed back and get involved, and go to people - don't expect them to come to us in formal or rigid ways.

Work to amplify people's voices through specific programmes, and to share their stories, e.g. the Bridewell Museum is featuring a piece on Homeless people's experiences during the pandemic.

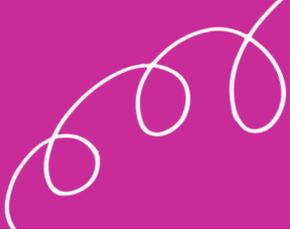
Using people's experiences to create change: with a focus on access to services, and pathways through the system. Take concrete action, not just conversation and discussion about problems and opportunities. New solutions and ideas can be very simple.

Respond in a timely, transparent way. If suggestions aren't actionable, be open and honest about why.

There is a **shift in culture happening** across the system, which needs to be present at all levels, including at the leadership level. There is an opportunity for improvement in communication between leadership and front-facing staff, and front-facing staff have real **insights and knowledge** that can **inform leadership decisions**.

The NHIN partnership has lots of great involvement, but we need **everyone with a stake in the homelessness system at the table**.

Insights: Education, training and employment



The Working Group identified key areas in the system to focus on:

Interplay between employment and rents: When a person **starts employment** and is housed **in supported accommodation** or a hostel, **they have to pay higher rents** due to the specifications of supported accommodation. While a proportion of rent cost is supported by housing benefit, people are often in a disadvantaged position, which leads to the person being **only marginally better off financially or in some cases worse off financially for securing employment**.

Support through the transition into employment: People need **continuity of support**, prior to finding employment as well as after starting work. They can experience a whole host of challenges within the workplace that they haven't experienced before or that make them anxious and unsure of how to deal with the situation. There isn't much specific or consistent support through this transition at the moment. Models such as mentorship, could provide both the employer and employee with someone to turn to if things are not going well, which could be the difference between the continuation or cessation of the employment.

A lack of meaningful employment opportunities leading to long term unemployment: A person who is homeless has **difficulty accessing meaningful work opportunities, volunteering apprenticeships and work experience** without support. This lack of meaningful work, training and volunteering opportunities means people are becoming increasingly distanced from the labour market, **putting them at risk of long-term unemployment**.

Asks & recommendations: Education, training and employment

Review of rents and benefits system for those in employment residing in supported accommodation.

This might include: Local authorities playing a role by testing a 'bridge the gap' scheme to pay a percentage of discretionary rent or by accelerating people in this position up the housing list, supported accommodation providers playing a role by adapting working practices or introducing rent subsidy schemes to incentivise individuals to be in employment. At a national level, this could also include lobbying to change the housing benefits system.

Identify a programme or system for countywide ongoing support and mentoring once a client has secured employment.

This might include: a central database of agencies who are able to offer mentoring support to clients identified as needing this additional support, or agencies working closely with employers to increase knowledge and capacity in offering support.

Create more real work, volunteering, apprenticeship, and work experience opportunities.

This might include: A commitment across partner organisation in NHIN to ring-fence jobs, mapping what is currently available through different agencies, collaboration between agencies to offer support with interviews, CV's and work experience, or something similar to the new 'Kickstart Scheme' but which is open to all ages.

There is a dire need to **'make work pay'** for people in supported accommodation.

We call on service providers to embed education, training and employment opportunities for experts within their organisations.

Insights: Young people



Housing supply issues are impacting young people experiencing homelessness. There aren't enough direct access beds, and no accommodation for young couples. Private landlords aren't viable and there **isn't enough accommodation** built/owned by registered social landlords. The lack of direct accommodation is **impacting the advice services offer to young people** seeking support, and sometimes **young people are being sent out of the area.**

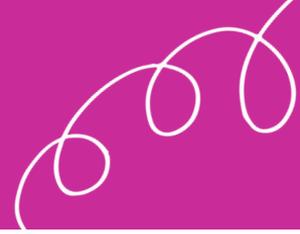
There is an increase in the referrals of and numbers of young people in the system, including those with complex needs. There is also an **increase in street homelessness among under 25s** across the county. **Multi-agency support is needed** to support young people with complex needs as they are currently being passed between providers without finding a route to accommodation.

Young people need access to a range of services besides housing, including **funded and low-cost mental health services.** Right now, thresholds are high for access to mental health services. Young people need access to substance misuse services, especially in rural and coastal areas. Young people involved in county lines is also a problem.

Young people face specific challenges around education, finances and employment. Young people were disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Universal credit isn't enough to live on and supported accommodation rents are too high when in work.

Young people are also impacted by systemic obstacles. The **relationships between agencies and authorities** is varied and challenging to navigate. The **lack of a joined up approach** to the protocol for 16/17 year olds and those over 18 means that people are subjected to wildly different solutions within the space of a few months. There is **no common approach for collection of information,** and young people are asked to share their story and details many times over.

Asks & recommendations: Young people



Increase the availability and diversity of housing supply. Incentivise private landlords to accommodate young people, offer different types of housing to meet individual need, provision for young couples, and increase emergency/direct access beds to allow other agencies to address immediate needs. Learn from past services that have worked well, such as floating support.

Increase the high support provision for the increasing numbers of young people with complex needs.

Improve access to services for young people. The Norfolk & Suffolk Foundation Trust young people's service constitutes a major hurdle to the progress of young people. Provide funded counselling on site (not telephone) in young people's accommodation and/or at local clinics. Address the increase in substance abuse (pills).

“Young people are maligned in the system - there is an assumption that they cause problems.”

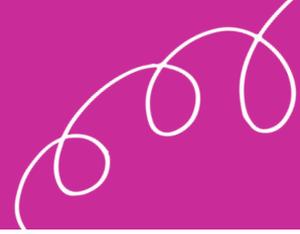
Change the benefits system for young people starting work or attending college. Young people's entry into the workforce should be incentivised and not penalised. Changing the college bursary system to be immediate, and not 6 weeks after beginning of term would prevent potential homelessness during that time.

Address some of the systemic obstacles in the system.

Develop a common referral form - that is framed in a positive and asset-based way. Better inter-agency sharing of information about young people (with their consent) to help identify the most appropriate next option.

Getting to children earlier (while still in school) and employing more mediation or preventative approaches would prevent the homelessness of young people.

Insights: Multiple & complex needs



Low funding has a detrimental impact on the support people receive. Short term funding, **cuts in funding**, the **decommissioning of floating support** and the **reduction of funding to supported housing** have all had a negative impact on our collective capacity to manage needs and have **resulted in fragmented services** which are hard for people to navigate.

There are gaps in the system that we need to fill: gaps in **support for older homeless people**, lack of **support for offenders** leaving prison with mental health problems, **access to mental health support**, and **access to substance abuse support**. Different manifestations of mental health challenges such as **hoarding** is a growing concern.

Problematic patterns in the homelessness sector: There is a trend in hospitals and prisons **discharging people with complex needs and mental health challenges to homelessness**. There is also a pattern of **hidden homelessness**, especially **amongst women, people with no recourse to public funds**, and in **rural areas**.

There is a lack of preventative ongoing support, including Money Matters, and consistent supportive relationships for people experiencing homelessness.

It is difficult to become positively linked to others in a local community. People experiencing homelessness (especially those with complex needs) may **experience multiple moves to get help** or get off the streets, and multiple evictions, making it hard to cultivate a sense of belonging.

Asks & recommendations: Multiple & complex needs

Build on the Pathways and Housing First approaches in Norwich (grow that service in Norwich).

Develop a local partnership approach which works well for each local area.

Develop a localised team of support workers. This might look like **local teams** which have **support workers** who are easy to contact, and who take the time to really listen and understand what is important to each person accessing support.

Draw on the learning in Norfolk and from elsewhere about what has worked (Making Every Adult Matter - MEAM, for example).

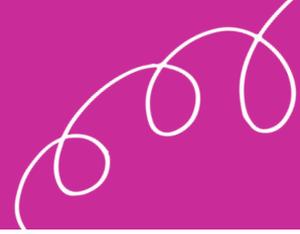
Provide sustained support, no matter what. Continue to be there when/if things start to go less well for someone.

Build in the skills and capacity in trauma engendered perspectives to be able to **engage homeless women in more sensitive ways.**

"The system desperately needs **joined-up commissioning** - we've got to get this right!"

Ensure that local teams working with people with multiple disadvantages have dedicated input from a multitude of different support services and perspectives, including **physical healthcare, mental health, drugs and alcohol, criminal justice, social care, housing** and **people who have experienced homelessness** as a minimum requirement.

Insights: Prevention



Early engagement leads to more sustainable outcomes. We need to move away from a reward model and **shift towards a housing-led, housing-first model**, because one size doesn't fit all, prescriptive models of support, advice or housing create barriers and people deserve choice. Furthermore, a **security of tenure will prevent further homelessness.**

Everybody In proved that we can take a more preventative approach. The barriers to preventing homelessness by providing housing as a first step are financial and resource-based.

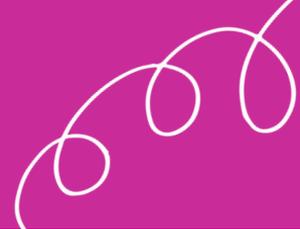
Homelessness is not just about housing: support and advice that encompasses education, training and employment, health, co-production and personal strengths empowers people who use services. However, **housing provision should be separated from identified support needs** and not be contingent on certain behaviours or performance.

Fully integrated commissioning would prevent some cases of homelessness, as homelessness is related to and impacts on all of our services. To achieve a multi-disciplinary approach to funding, commissioning, advice and support, **all stakeholders need to be involved in the NHIN partnership** - key partners can't be absent.

Provide flexible, non-judgemental support. A person may transition between **emergency, crisis and recovery** and then back again, in a very short period of time.

The language and phrasing we use can be a barrier to people accessing services or feeling safe if it is perceived to be judgmental.

Asks & recommendations: Prevention



Commissioning priorities should be separated from political motivators and move away from short term solutions onwards more long-term and sustainable solutions.

There needs to be more accommodation that can be offered on a housing led/first approach.

Housing and other support services centred around person-centred, holistic support. All housing services should be modeled to offer an **open, flexible and responsive approaches**. We need to **redesign our services** from the inside out, such that people who use those services **do not feel judged**. Similarly, we need to be prepared to be flexible, take positive risks and incorporate co-design into our service offers, so that people who use services **have more influence** over the decisions that affect their lives.

Incorporate strengths-based and trauma-informed approaches in the sector. The **training offered to front-facing staff** across the sector should be refreshed to incorporate **strength-based and trauma-informed approaches** to care and support. We desperately **need to move away from 'blame culture'**.

The safeguarding of people experiencing and at risk of homelessness is a collective responsibility. We need to reflect that in our **policies, processes and attitudes towards homelessness.**

Insights: Norfolk Homelessness Charter

The Charter should act to guide how the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership moves forward. The partnership has solid foundations to build on. There is good representation across the system, a strong commitment across partners, and a desire to take forward recommendations.

The partnership has had a positive impact already. Let's keep it going! We're referring to the group (made up of voluntary and statutory sector, along with communities and experts) **as a collective 'we' as opposed to a fragmented 'us' and 'them'**, which is how conversations may have happened before. It feels as though COVID helped to accelerate this change, but **how do we keep the momentum going in the future?**

Norfolk has a unique context which impacts the homelessness system. This includes lower than average education attainment, difficulty accessing employment and skills, exacerbated by low-skilled, low-pay economy and seaside economy for parts of the County. Pockets of entrenched deprivation, and associated issues such as prevalence of drug use, challenge the prospect of social mobility for many.

Getting a sense of where we might need help. There is a job to do around determining **what can we solve locally** and **what we need help with**. We need to look at the different indicators across the system and pull together evidence to make a coherent case when bidding for funding.

Norfolk Homelessness Charter

Collective Commitment: Through collaboration and partnership, we will work together for a longer-term, whole systems approach to alleviate rough sleeping and homelessness across the county.



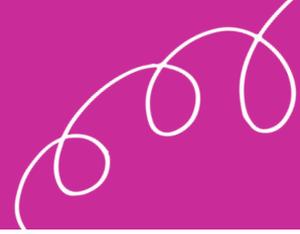
This charter forms a pledge concerning the rights of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We believe that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have a right to:

- Have their voice heard and to participate in decisions that affect them
- A safe and secure home with the appropriate level support they need to live a good life
- Respect at all times and a good standard of service from all partner agencies
- Equality of access to information and our services

Through the commitment to this Charter, we will ensure that:

- Partners are open to receiving and providing honest and constructive feedback on services, including their own, and contribute to supporting system change
- There is a universal approach to alleviating and preventing homelessness
- We devise innovative housing options building on the resources available in each part of the county
- We identify areas for action and work together to tackle these challenges

Asks & recommendations: Norfolk Homelessness Charter



Initial reactions to the Charter were that it felt **simple, clear, and concise**, however there are **further conversations needed** around:

- How to **bring the Charter to life** and make it real?
- Does the Charter need to talk about **wider support networks and early intervention**?
- What does the Charter **mean in practice**?
- How to take the Charter through **boards or governance structures** to ensure commitment?

The Charter needs to be based in experts' feedback, and any coming iterations of the Charter need to be worked on in the open and **co-produced by experts from all areas of the system**.

We need to include empathy and humanity in the system, empowering staff to **'do what is right'** rather than what the system is set up to perpetuate. A **deep listening exercise** with front-facing staff who are trying to make the changes to determine the constraints within the system will help us to learn what is getting in the way, and what might help and become part of new ways of working in Norfolk.

Identify the people who should be around the table that aren't - and how to bring them into the conversation moving forward.

Have key influencers across the system to help with messaging around and uptake of the Charter.

We need to be having the **brutally honest conversations** about multi agency working

What insights do **experts and front-facing staff have** about the blockages in the system and **what would really make a difference?**

Next Steps:

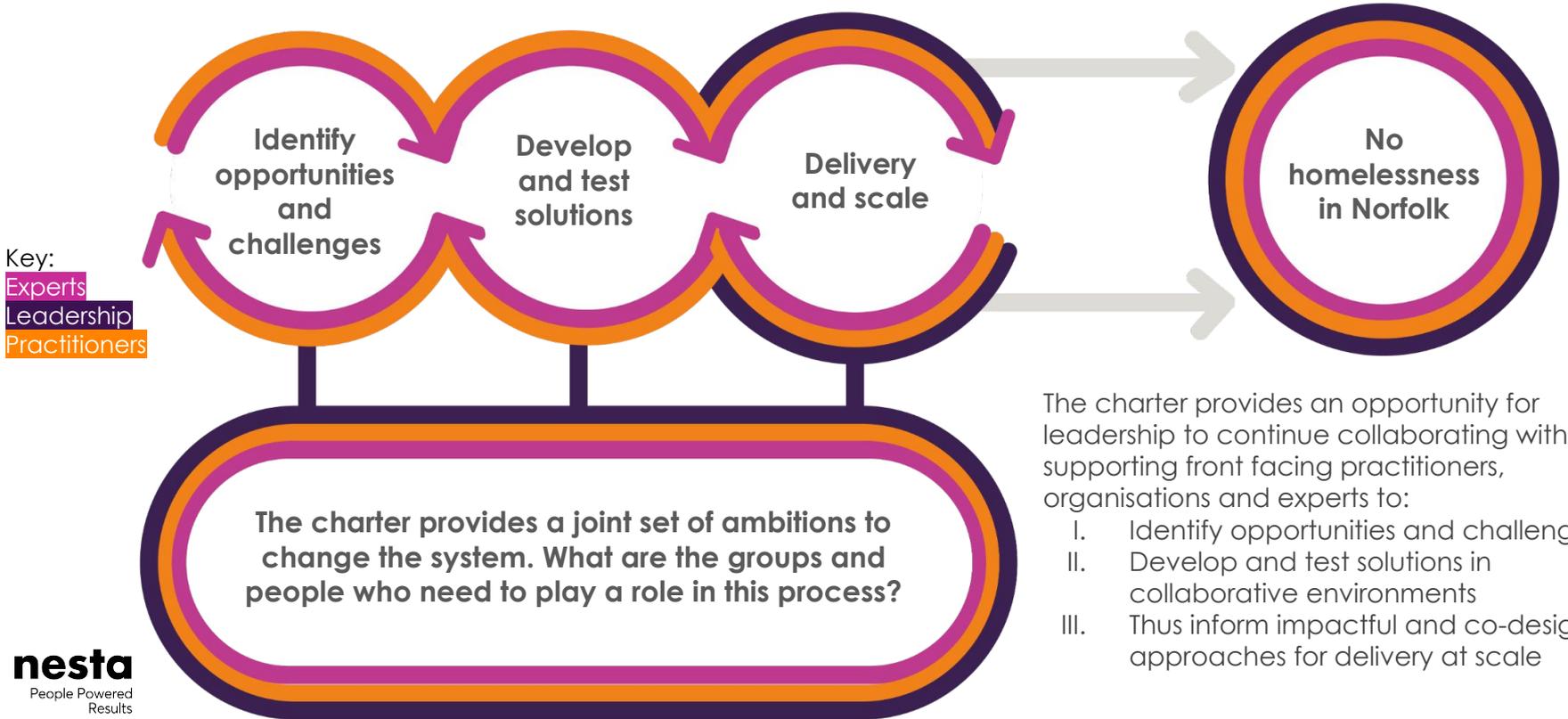
In the following section we share some thoughts and prompts from a People Powered Results perspective around the next stage of the journey for No Homelessness in Norfolk: Bringing the charter to life, and taking forward recommendations from working groups and the conference.

Broadly this focuses on:

- I. Continuing to deepen the relationship with experts, and create meaningful opportunities which place them at the heart of the efforts
- II. Creating an environment to test and learn
- III. Considering whole-systems change

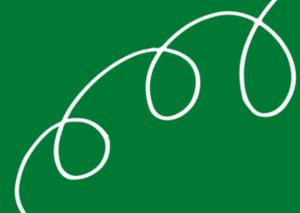
Expert Involvement:

Considering an ongoing approach to ensure everybody has a say in the way services for homelessness are developed and delivered



Identifying challenges and opportunities

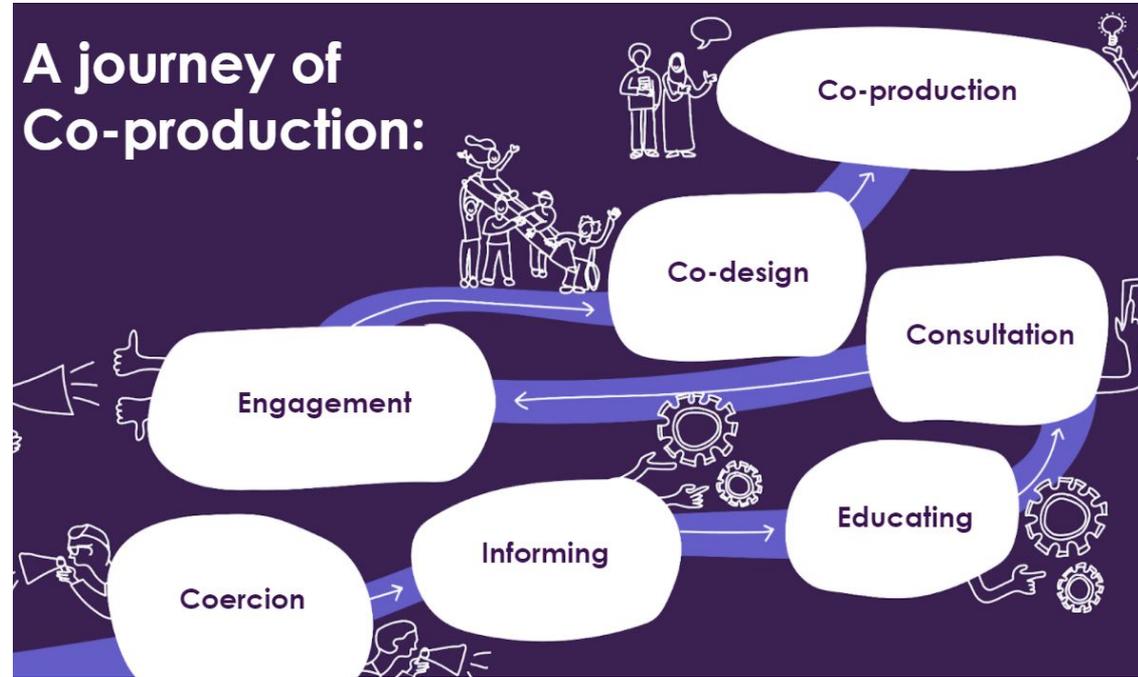
Continuing to build dialogue and trust with experts



The last few months have demonstrated the enthusiasm from experts to help inform and create change locally. This has paved the way for increased co-production, with people sharing their stories and surfacing key issues and themes for exploration. This creates an opportunity to build on the momentum to continue to build partnerships to work with experts to:

- Grow the co-design work from the working groups and conference to support active testing of new approaches
- Build on best practice and existing strong examples of co-production across Norfolk

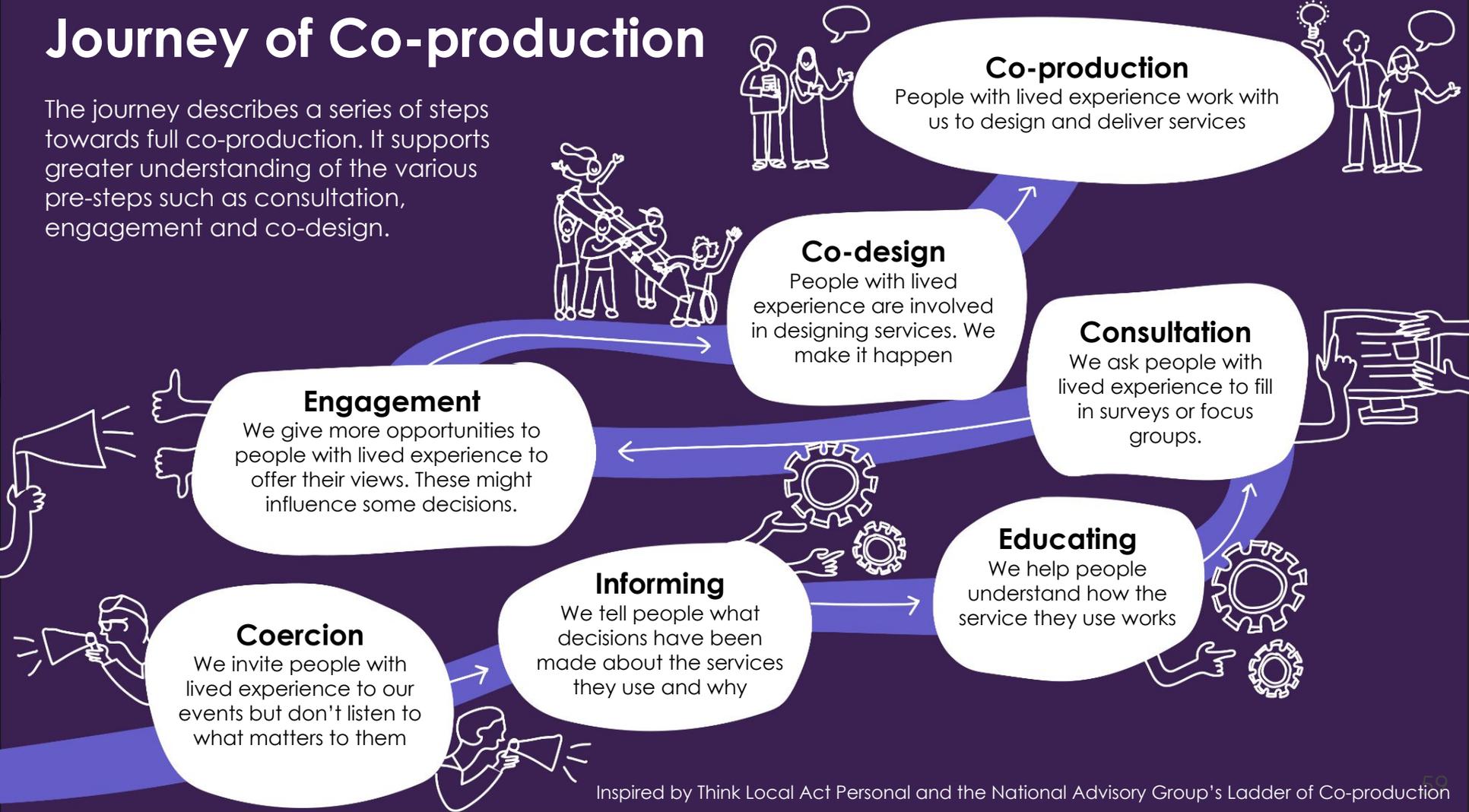
Your relationship with experts will look different in different situations. Reflect on which modes (on the right) you spend more time in and find opportunities to deepen and further this where you can. *Diagram in more detail on next page.*



Inspired by: Think Local Act Personal & the National Advisory Group's Ladder of Co-production

Journey of Co-production

The journey describes a series of steps towards full co-production. It supports greater understanding of the various pre-steps such as consultation, engagement and co-design.



Developing and testing solutions:

Creating an environment for testing & learning

The People Powered Results conditions wheel illustrates a number of elements important in creating environments for testing and learning, particularly around complex systemic issues. These could help provide a structure to rapidly mobilise some new ways of working following on from the last phase of NHIN. The conditions include a focus on:

- **Systems leadership** focussed on collaborating across organisational boundaries (e.g. commissioner/provider, statutory/voluntary) and distributed leadership to share power throughout organisations and communities, giving people the permission to work differently.
- **Supporting diverse groups/teams**, including experts, to co-create change and actively test how they might work differently. A coaching-role is helpful here to address inherent power differentials between team members.
- **A 'test and learn' approach rooted in impact:** Supporting teams to consider the change they want to see, and test new ways of working to achieve this. This could require active leadership support e.g. flexing contracts, shifting resources, covering small costs, etc. Establishing rapid feedback loops will help teams understand the impact of initiatives.
- **Building a sense of rhythm and urgency** to the work. Consider launching a number of experiments together to help build momentum and collaboration between teams.

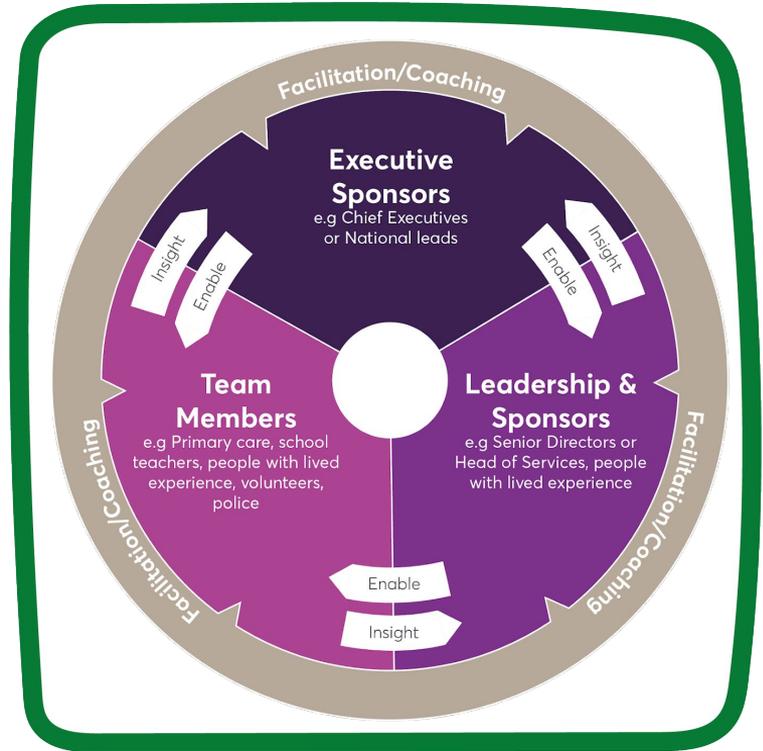


Testing solutions and moving to scale:

Blend 'bottom up' and 'top down' approaches

Transformational change requires action at all parts of the system, including experts, practitioners, managers and leaders. This is not about 'top down' or 'bottom up' change, but more how to create the links between different parts and functions within the system. This may include:

- **Agreeing and modeling certain types of leadership** consistently across the system. Consider revisiting the emerging principles from the NHIN work with Chief Execs or the Strategic Housing Partnership.
- **Building the spaces within existing meetings** for active reflection and learning, which can be challenging within action-packed agendas.
- **Creating feedback loops** for experts and practitioners to be able to share their insights, as well as a space to bring obstacles or challenges with the commitment to rapidly address these.
- **Visible and active sponsorship from within the system** is critical to communicate the commitment and to raise profile for the efforts.
- **Considering the neutral facilitation or coaching support** that could be required to support different groups in the system. This can either come from within or outside of the system.



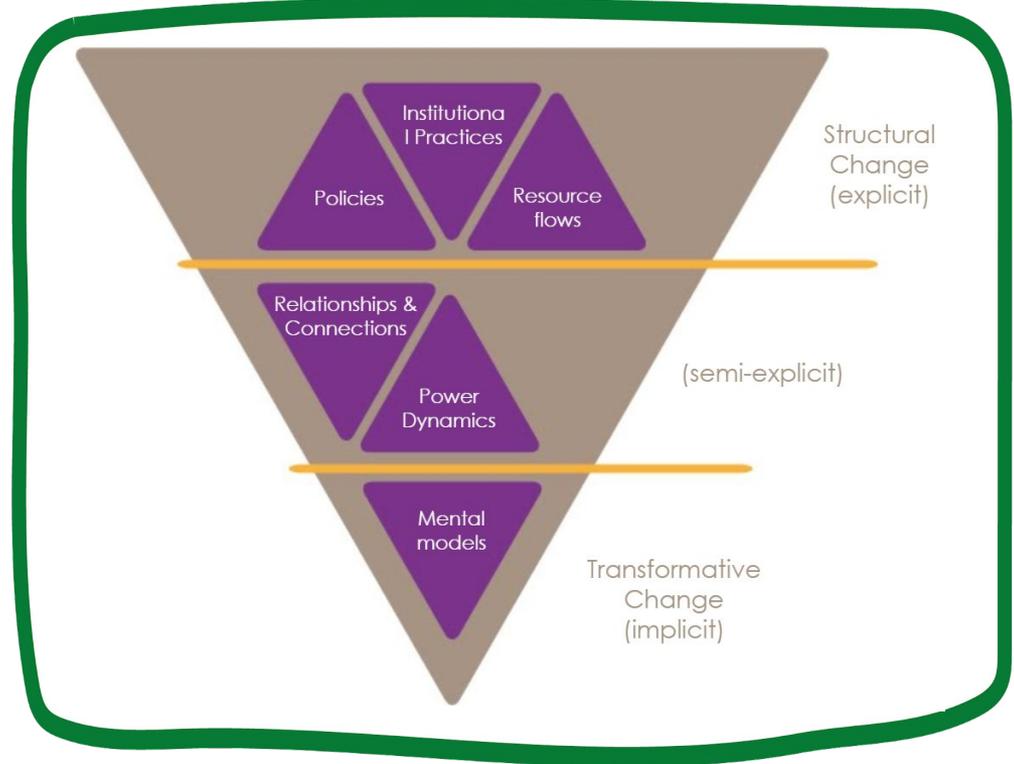
Components of change

The Water of Systems Change

When considering how to embed or scale change across systems, typically many different types of change may be required for success but too often we only pay attention to the structural ones. Models such as the Water of Systems Change helpfully break these down further.

- **Structural changes:** Explicit, e.g. new policies, new funding, new services, etc.
- **Semi-explicit changes**, such as how power is experienced, and the different relationships and connections within systems.
- **Implicit changes** speak largely to the 'hearts and minds' element of change. Often overlooked, but critical for changes to be accepted and adopted.

This could provide a framework to help develop some of the asks and recommendations from the NHIN strategy, considering the range of changes that might be required from attitudinal through to resourcing and how decisions are made.





Please get in touch if you'd like to speak about the programme.

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Catherine.Russell@nesta.org.uk: Deputy Director

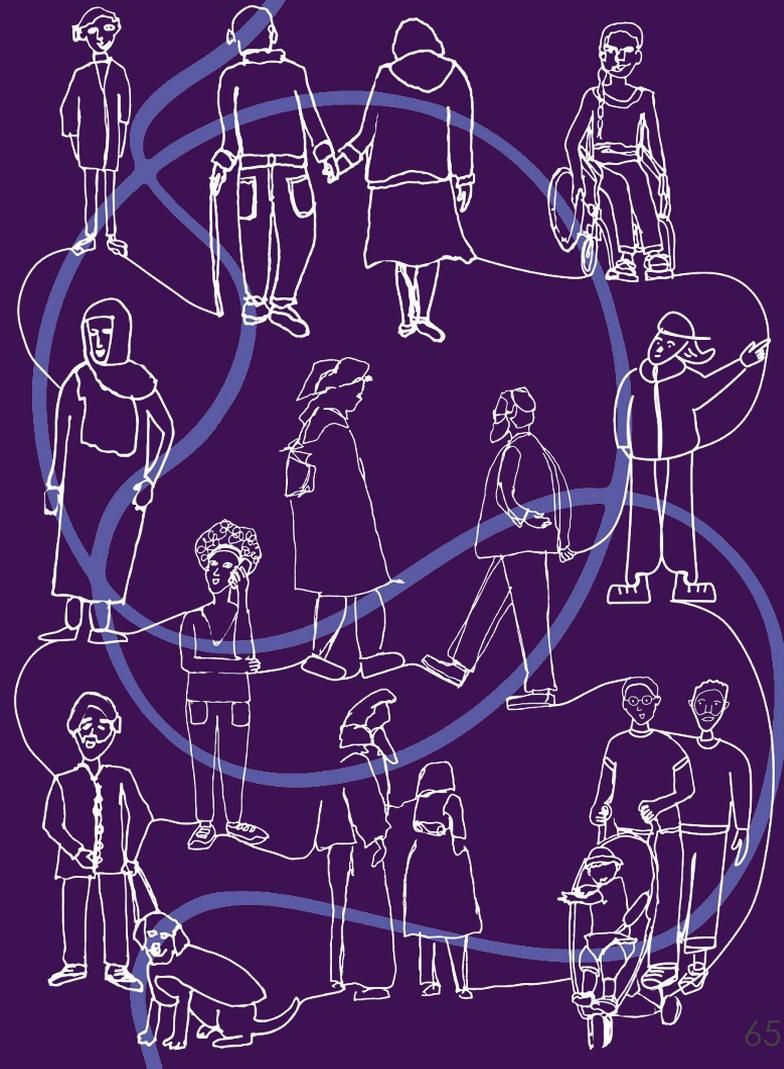
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People Powered
Results



The **Norfolk Strategic
Housing Partnership**

Expert summary: Listening exercise and next steps



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People Powered
Results

What did we do?

As a partnership of organisations across Norfolk, we wanted to better understand people's experiences of homelessness and support available. So in May 2021 we spent a month listening to experts - people who have direct contact with services. We wanted to learn more about what works and what needs to change.

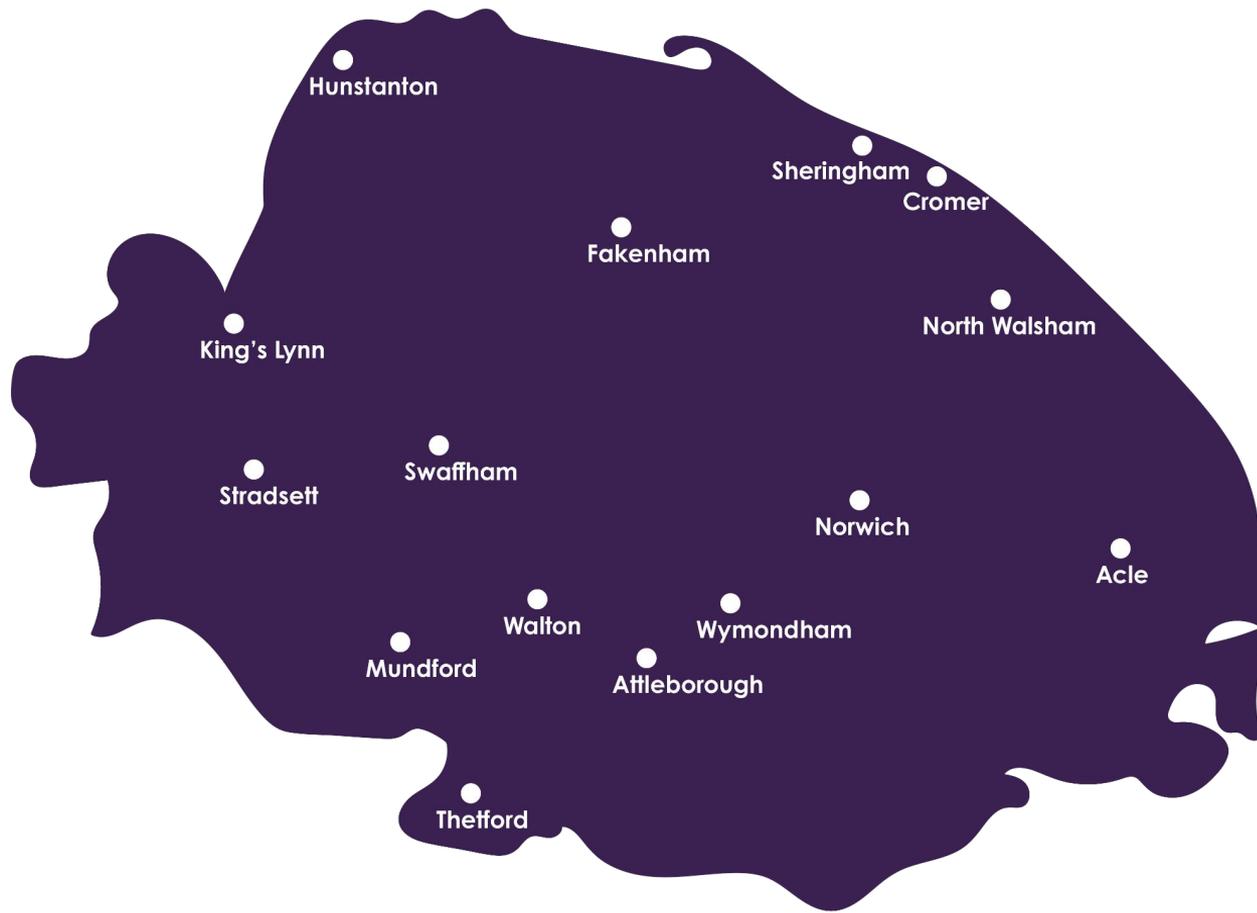
What did we do?

We heard from 141 people across Norfolk, through surveys 1:1 interviews, and practitioner-led conversations.

62 respondents identified as experts & 77 as practitioners within the system.

People ranged from their 20's to their 60's. Just under a third identified as having a disability or long term health condition.

A third were based in Norwich, and the others were spread out across the rest of Norfolk.



What did we hear?

We heard stories of people's lives: of hopes, of fears, successes and struggles, where support had been wonderful, and where it had fallen short. The following slides show some of what stood out to us.

What did we hear?

People want to be treated with empathy and humanity and have a voice.

People need to know how to get the support they need and feel heard and not judged.

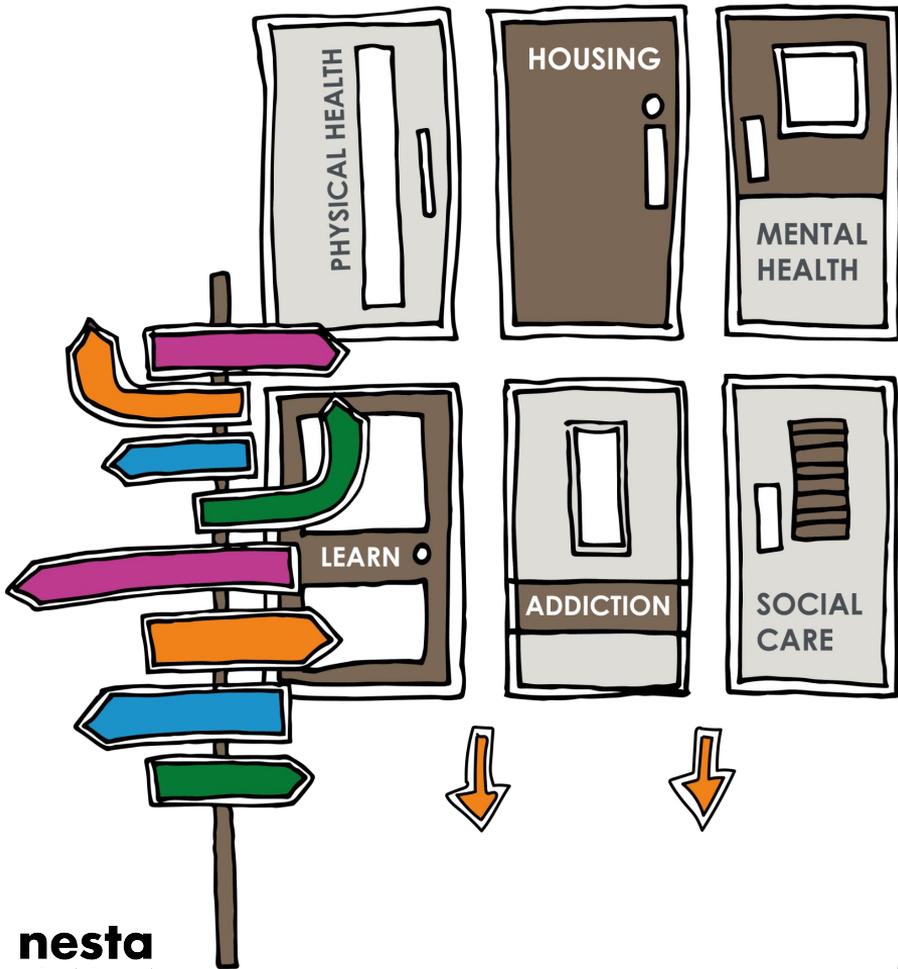
People need to tell their story once and have opportunities for help available when they need them, where they need them.

People require support that is more tailored to their needs, to their strengths, and to their ambitions.

People want to give feedback and offer ideas to the system.

'Providers need more of an elastic tolerance to people's needs and behaviours'





What did we hear?

Sometimes people are able to access support quickly and easily. However, often people are not able to.

Services offered are confusing to navigate. There are so many of them they can be overwhelming.

Sometimes services work together, but people regularly **fall through the cracks** between services or during transition.

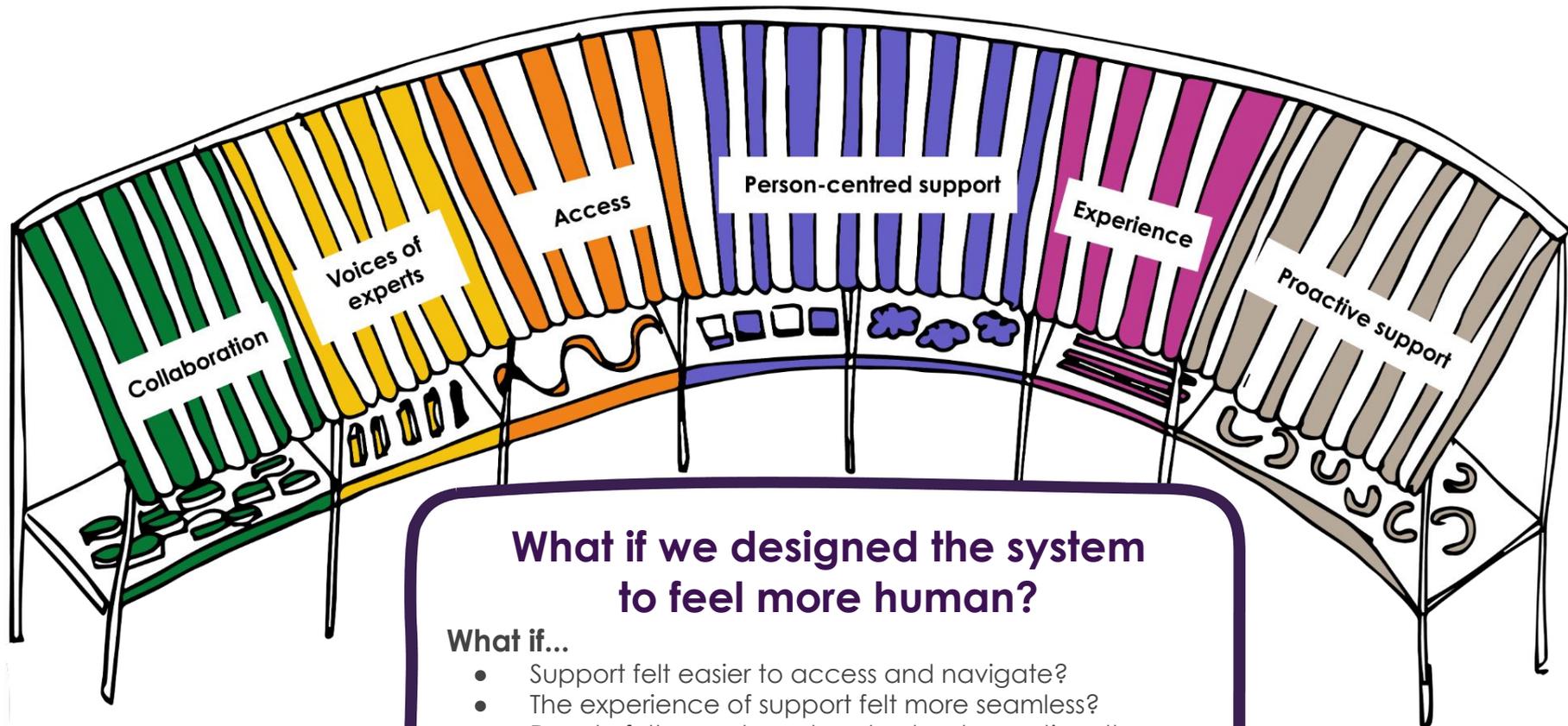
Support can feel like a 'one size fits all' model that does **not recognise everyone as unique, with their own story.**

Services can have strict criteria, meaning sometimes you have to **hit crisis point before help is offered.**

"Services put you in a box, expect you to complete a load of tasks, jump through hoops to prove you are worthy"

As it is, the system doesn't always work the way people need it to...





What if we designed the system to feel more human?

What if...

- Support felt easier to access and navigate?
- The experience of support felt more seamless?
- People felt seen, heard and valued everytime they accessed support?
- Services could work together to support people?
- Services were more open and able to respond to people's unique stories and situations?

What's next?

In July 2021, experts, staff and leaders across the system came together to talk about what we heard and make a plan for how to end homelessness in Norfolk.

An agreement was made across all of our organisations, called the 'Norfolk Homelessness Charter'. This is our commitment to you and to each other of what needs to change. Let us know what you think!

Norfolk Homelessness Charter

Collective Commitment: Through collaboration and partnership, we will work together for a longer-term, whole systems approach to alleviate rough sleeping and homelessness across the county.



This charter forms a pledge concerning the rights of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We believe that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have a right to:

- Have their voice heard and to participate in decisions that affect them
- A safe and secure home with the appropriate level support they need to live a good life
- Respect at all times and a good standard of service from all partner agencies
- Equality of access to information and our services

Through the commitment to this Charter, we will ensure that:

- Partners are open to receiving and providing honest and constructive feedback on services, including their own, and contribute to supporting system change
- There is a universal approach to alleviating and preventing homelessness
- We devise innovative housing options building on the resources available in each part of the county
- We identify areas for action and work together to tackle these challenges

We'd love to hear from you. Let us know what you think & if you'd like to get involved:

Trish@partnershipsolutions.co.uk

Check for updates here:

www.hopestead.org/norfolk-strategic-housing-partnership/



The Norfolk Strategic
Housing Partnership

