

# Addressing health inequalities in homeless children, young people and families

Health at the Margins Conference 2018

5 July 2018



Young People's  
Health Partnership



# Health and Wellbeing Alliance - overview

- Facilitating **integrated working** between the voluntary and statutory sectors
- **Connecting communities**, the VCSE sector and policy leads. Supporting a two way flow of information
- Amplifying the **voice** of people with lived experience to inform national policy
- Sharing experience of **delivering health services** in the VCSE
- Facilitating **co-production** to promote equality and reduce health inequalities

# Homeless children, young people and families

Homeless Link and the Young People's Health Partnership were commissioned through the Health and Wellbeing Alliance by Public Health England to develop a learning resource and toolkit for public health nurses working with homeless families and young people.

We are working in partnership with the Queen's Nursing Institute and the following HWalliance members:

- Citizen's Advice
- Maternity Action
- The National LGB&T Partnership
- Mental Health Consortium
- Race Equality Foundation
- Win Win Alliance

The project involved a call for evidence, and consultations with professionals, young people and families.

# What is Homelessness?

## More than rough sleeping....

Homelessness can be defined as:

- Rooflessness (without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough)
- Houselessness (with a place to sleep but temporary in institutions or shelter)
- Living in insecure housing (threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, violence)
- Living in inadequate housing (in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding)

Homelessness is often a culmination of several problems – not just a housing problem!

Public Health England - *There's no place like home – tackling the health and wellbeing of homeless families.*  
[http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Homelessness%20QNI%202017\\_0.pp](http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Homelessness%20QNI%202017_0.pp)

## Takes its toll on families and children...



# The impact of homelessness on children, young people and families

## **Some of the many impacts...**

- Loss, separation
- Insecurity, emotional burden
- Stress, anxiety
- Poor mental health
- Poor quality sleep
- Unhealthy diet
- Susceptibility to infections

## **Did you know...?**

- Parental homelessness and insecure housing have significant impacts on foetal development
- Homelessness during pregnancy is associated with higher risk of premature birth, low birth weight and delay in development

# Barriers to accessing health and support

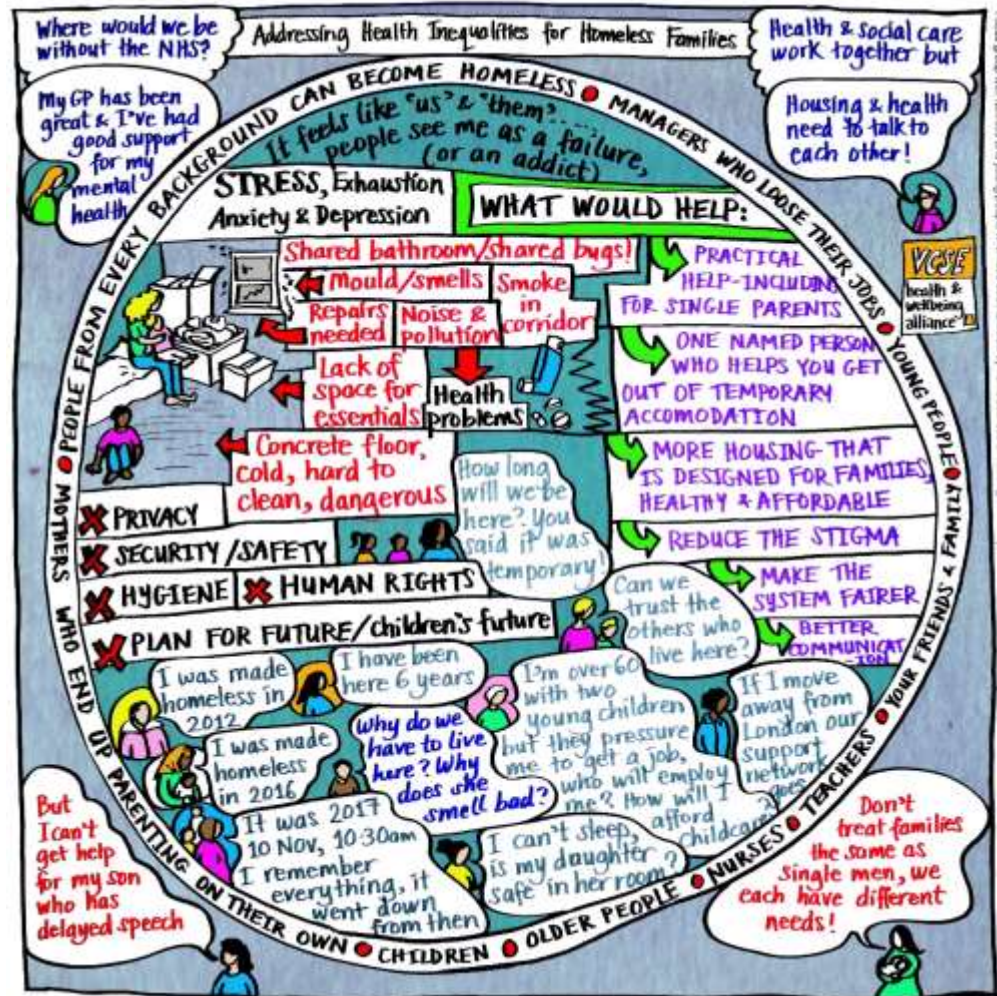
## **Barriers include:**

- No permanent address
- Frequent moves
- Language and literacy barriers
- Limited access to internet
- Over-reliance on A&E
- Limited access to sexual health services
- Lack of knowledge about rights and entitlements

## **Did you know...?**

- Without a fixed address, families and individuals have every right to access healthcare from a GP or other NHS service, regardless of immigration status

# We talked to families and young people...



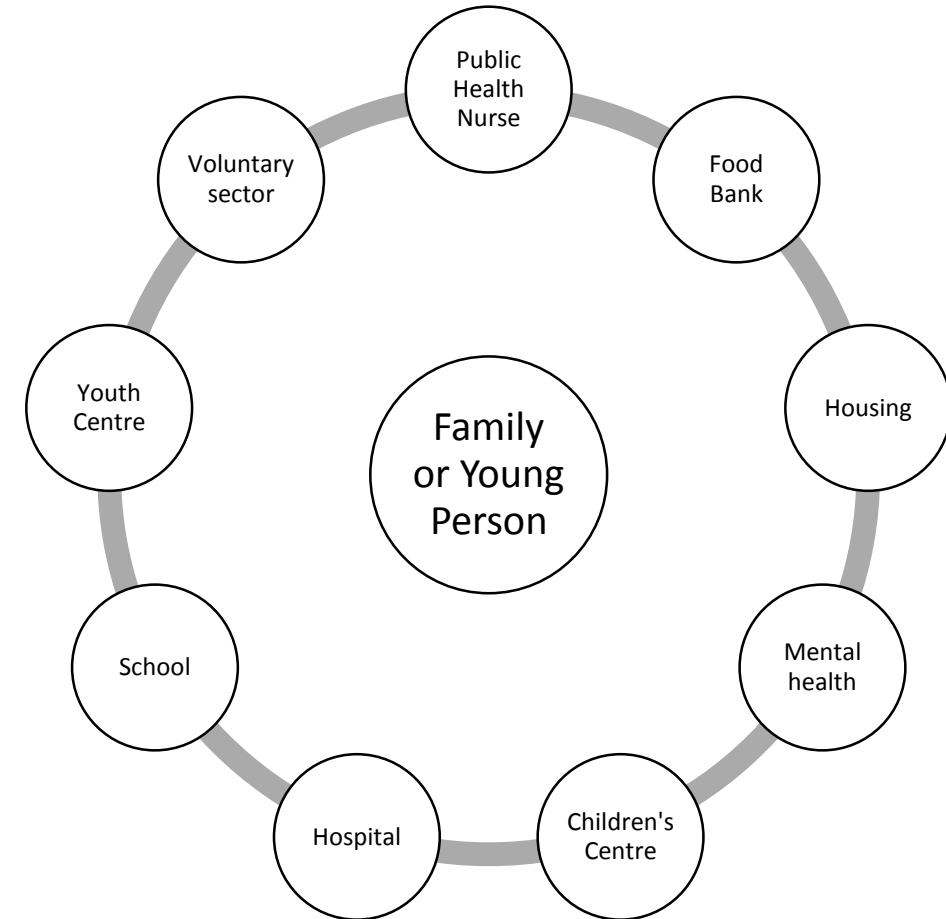
“Health workers need to know where to refer us to get help. There’s a lot of obstacles in the way... we need effective advice agencies” (young person with experience of homelessness)

“Your life is on hold when you are a family living in temporary accommodation and it is draining. You cannot see your family and friends because you are ashamed” (parent with experience of temporary accommodation)

# What can professionals do?

## What's most important

- Clear protocols for identifying, assessing and working with children, young people and families at risk
- Clear process for reporting concerns
- Understand appeal options
- Clear safeguarding protocols





And Finally....

**VCSE**

health &  
wellbeing  
alliance ■

**It's a special day!**

**Happy Birthday NHS!**

**Thanks for all that  
you do....**

**70**  
**YEARS**  
**OF THE NHS**  
**1948 - 2018**



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