

Greater Manchester Population Health Board

21st April 2022

Overview

The GM Population Health Board undertook a deep dive inquiry into ***“the importance of good housing in improving health and reducing inequalities”***.

The session was led by Charlie Norman (Chief Executive of Mosscafe St Vincents Housing Group), supported by Noel Sharpe (Deputy Group Chief Executive of Bolton at Home), Helen Simpson (Strategic Relationship Manager – Housing, GM Health and Social Care Partnership) and Professor Brendan Nevin.

Summary of Scope

The session covered:

- The impact of poor housing on health and inequalities across the life course and across physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- The scale of poor housing in GM, with an estimated 280,00 homes in GM estimated to contain a Category 1 Health and safety hazard, which equates to 23% of all homes against a national average of 15
- The estimated cost of poor housing to the NHS in England which is £1.4billion a year, and the estimated cost to wider public services is £20billion a year.
- The nature of housing tenure in GM (62% owner occupied / 18% private rented sector / 20% social housing)
- The work that has taken to date including, but not exclusive to, the GM Tripartite Agreement between GM Housing Providers, GM Combined Authority and GM Health and Social Care Partnership and work focussed on homelessness, age-friendly homes, dementia, supported housing
- The link between housing and our response to inequalities in GM as amplified by Build Back Fairer and the GM Independent Inequalities Commission
- A summary of research undertaken by Professor Brendan Nevin which sets out the existing health vulnerabilities associating with housing in GM, the impact that these had on Covid 19 morbidity and mortality and morbidity in GM, and the risks and opportunities as we enter the Covid-19 repair, recovery and resilience phases.

Key Topics of Discussion

Initial feedback from board members included:

- There are good examples of action being taken around housing and health in GM, although these are often focussed on points of crisis or groups with the most acute needs.
- There are opportunities to look at how we collectively improve housing quality as a means of protecting the health of children, young people and working aged families. Build Back Fairer places the greatest emphasis on achieving the best start in life so it is important to reflect this when setting priorities so that we are aiming to make big improvements in long term outcomes, as well as doing things which aim to prevent demand and improve outcomes in the short-medium term.
- There was a recognition that most attention is focussed on the housing needs associated with private rented and social housing tenants at the expense of those who live in owner-occupied poor-quality housing whose issues may be exacerbated by the

- cost-of-living crisis, who may be asset rich but cash poor, and whose attachment to their place and home is powerful and prevents them moving to more suitable housing.
- There is a need to consider different interventions and approaches across different spatial levels and to recognise the heterogeneous nature of GM.
- There was a view that most people with a good income don't live in poor housing and that the demand for poor quality PRS accommodation will reduce as income inequality reduces. As such, there was a recognition that an inclusive economy is critical and that anchor institutions can play a key role in creating solutions.
- The VCSE sector are actively engaged on this agenda and are keen to explore how we can amplify tenant voices and radically expand community owned housing schemes and housing co-operatives.

Board members were asked to consider:

- What actions would the Board want to take forward or advocate?
- What is missing from what we have described?
- How does this connect with your sector or organisational priorities as a member of the Board?
- Who does the Board need to involve and/or influence in order to take this forward?

Key Actions

The Greater Manchester Population Health Board will:

1. Engage with and influence the ongoing national review of the Decent Home Standards with a particular focus on:
 - a) Shaping the national definition of 'decency' to ensure it is ambitious and will make a real difference to housing standards in GM.
 - b) Ensuring that the new standards are applicable to the private rented sector in addition to the social housing sector.
2. Encourage the emergent GM Integrated Care Board and Local Authorities to scale up joint action on meeting the preventative and reactive housing needs of groups who require supported or specialist housing arrangements including optimising investment in care and provision for groups with needs, preventative investment in home improvement measures to improve the health of vulnerable households and working with housing providers to strengthen discharge and admission avoidance pathways.
3. Build upon existing good practice, to support colleagues at the GM and East Cheshire Strategic Clinical Network to systematically include "good housing" as a feature of all clinical care pathways.
4. Explore the feasibility of a 'call to action' committing that no child in GM will spend their first 1000 days in a house that does not meet a decent standard.
5. Work with GM Reform Board colleagues to explore the feasibility of developing a 'neighbourhood housing quality and health standard'.

6. Work with GM Reform Board colleagues and wider system stakeholders to establish a collective response to the “cost of living” crisis through policy, strategy, and practical action.
7. Encourage GM Housing Providers, GMCA, Local Authorities and the GM ICS to collaborate on ensuring housing providers are integrated into neighbourhood teams and aligned to Primary Care Networks, and to support place-based interventions in neighbourhoods with high-risk private rented markets.
8. Request that the GM ICS establishes a defined and consistent approach to homelessness health intervention through Core20Plus5.
9. Contribute to ongoing devolution trailblazer negotiations, as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, to ensure the inclusion of proposals that are pertinent to housing and health.
10. Encourage data, insight and analyst colleagues to identify opportunities to strengthen our level of knowledge and understanding of housing in Greater Manchester to understand the nature of housing and it’s relationship with segments and cohorts within the GM population.