

‘Homelessness: Moving from ‘temporary’ to ‘permanent accommodation’ in social work education, training, practice and governance’.

A presentation by Joint Chairs of
The Homelessness Prevention Forum:
Declan Morris (Extern) and Paul Fleming (NIACRO)
Monday 2nd December 2024

Homelessness Prevention Forum – A brief history

- ❑ Formed in 2013 to raise awareness of housing related support services to prevent homelessness
- ❑ Develop a means for those who could benefit from earlier intervention to gain easier access
- ❑ Create a strong collective response to consultations
- ❑ Create a means of sharing, reflecting and learning from each other
- ❑ Ensure the voice of service users are listened to, heard, and responded to appropriately.
- ❑ 10 years of HPF recognised in December 2024





Where does Homelessness Prevention and social work coalesce?

IMPROVING AND SAFEGUARDING SOCIAL WELLBEING

A Strategy for Social Work in Northern Ireland 2012 – 2022

- Promoting the rights and independence of the **most exposed to vulnerable situations and marginalised** in society.
- Working to **improve life chances** and outcomes and **prevent** the onset or escalation of problems at all ages and stages.
- Working to **protect children and adults who are at risk** of harm from neglect, abuse or exploitation.
- Working with people in need and supporting their right to autonomy and **self-management of their lives** and/or care.
- A Strategy for Change – Strengthening the capacity of the workforce

Where does Homelessness Prevention and social work coalesce?

- Young People leaving care
- People with a Physical or Sensory Disability
- People with Mental Ill Health
- People with Learning Disabilities
- Families with Support Needs
- People with convictions or People at risk of Offending
- People with Alcohol difficulties
- People with Drug difficulties
- Single Homeless with Support Needs
- Travellers
- Older people with support needs
- Older People with Mental Health Problems / Dementia

Moving from temporary to permanent 'accommodation' in social work/care:

- 'Prevention is better than cure' – earlier intervention/awareness and appreciation of the issue.
- Eradicate stereotypes in our thinking, our language and our visual perception.
- 'Join the dots' (Gerry Skelton) - collaboration and partnership. No one expects one single organisation/institution to tackle this alone.
- 'Build' upon the acknowledgement of homelessness as a standalone area of teaching within social work – insist on it.



‘Moving from a temporary to a permanent approach to Homelessness Prevention’

“There is nothing permanent except change.” -Heraclitus



Lunchtime Seminar - Homelessness Prevention: Changing the Conversation



A unique new online training tool has been developed to help educate landlords in how to prevent their tenants from sliding into homelessness.

belfast met *Homelessness Prevention Forum*
Decade Anniversary Event for 2023 HAW

Keynote speaker:
Gerry Skelton MBE

An ecological approach to addressing homelessness and related concepts, principles, and considerations.

7th December, 2023.
Hosted by Ark Housing.

HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK NI
4-10 DECEMBER 2023
#TURN THE TIDE

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7 Dec 2023
'Gerry Skelton's keynote address for the Homelessness Prevention Forum's 10 year celebration event!'
[homelessnesspreventionforum.com](#)
By Homelessness Prevention Forum

21 Dec 2022
NISCC Lunchtime Seminar Series - Homelessness Prevention Forum presentation
[youtube.com](#)
By Homelessness Prevention Forum

26 Jan 2019
Gerry Skelton's 2019 Homelessness event presented at the NI Social Care Council
[niscc.info](#)
By Homelessness Prevention Forum



Homelessness Prevention Forum – supporters



Housing Rights – Housing Adviser Training Programme



Wider PRS – Rea Estates & AMPM – SUS:TEN pilot



Chartered Institute of Housing – Apprenticeships training/CIH Masterclass – Pre-tenancy engagement/All Ireland Summit Nov 2023/CIH Futures



Social Care Council – Lunchtime Seminar 2022/e-learning portal launch Dec 2023



Patient Client Council – Passporting Initiative & Community Support Service partner



Gerry Skelton MBE, Treadagh House Training, Consultancy & Counselling

New Vision 4 P's

‘PREVENTING homelessness through the PROMOTION and use of housing related support services. Working in PARTNERSHIP to ensure PROFESSIONAL services are delivered to those at risk of homelessness.’

Our vision (temporary) v Our Mission (permanent)

- Promotion
 - Promote HRS, its approach and its value in preventing homelessness
- Partnership
 - Work collectively on agreed areas of change (early intervention, protecting our services, resourcing)
 - Building and sustaining strong connections across the sector
 - Agreed set of values and principles
- Professionalism:
 - Training – what's needed/what is our agreed standard?
 - Improve how are we treated as housing practitioners

Legislation

- ‘A legal duty should be placed on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to prevent homelessness’
- *‘Our statutory obligation is to provide solutions for homelessness, when it has occurred. However, demands for services have meant that too often we are in ‘emergency’ or ‘response’ mode. A holistic approach to homelessness requires a strategic shift towards prevention. Widening NIHE’s statutory obligations to ‘prevention’ of homelessness would enable us to focus and invest more in preventative measures.’ (Grainia Long, NIHE, CEO)*

Homelessness Prevention (Permanent) vs Homelessness Reduction (Temporary)

Being defeated is often a temporary condition.
Giving up is what makes it permanent.

Marilyn vos Savant

Additional Resources

- <https://homelessnesspreventionforum.com/housing-support-services>
- <https://homelessnesspreventionforum.com/news>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enGaSXe6BwU>
- <https://www.homelessnesspreventionforum.com/assets/Gerry-Skelton's-DEC-2023-Keynote-address-for-HPForum.pdf>
- <https://homelessnesspreventionforum.com/news/news-type/article>

Thank you!



Housing
Executive