

## **2018 Transatlantic Practice Exchange: Topic and Application Guide For US Applicants**

This guide outlines the topics that you can apply to study during a placement in the 2018 Exchange.

Applicants must work for a homelessness services organization in a senior support worker/junior manager or equivalent role, and have the support of their organization, both to take part in the Exchange and to participate in subsequent networks and dissemination activity.

Please note that your proposal must include considerations to disseminate your learnings, and, where possible, plans for practical implementation alongside the research element.

Academic or research background are not required for applicants, as we will support participants to finalize questions and to structure and edit reports. A commitment to improving homelessness services, however, is required.

To apply you will need to:

- Outline the hypothesis/research questions that you want to explore during the placement. Please be realistic about what you can achieve in two weeks.
- Include details of a potential host organization if you are proposing your own topic.
- Confirm the support that your organization is offering – you must have management support to participate in both the placement and subsequent dissemination.
- Explain how you will share/implement learning on your return.
- Explain how your learning could change responses to homelessness locally and nationally.

You'll also be asked to tell us about your career in homelessness and the client group(s) you work with.

Applications will be assessed in late December/early January. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted in January for the final assessment stage, with visits taking place between March and June 2018.

Applications must be submitted on or before Tuesday, December 19. You are advised to download the application questions and prepare/proof your application in Word before submitting online, as you cannot export from the online survey. If you have any questions on the Exchange or application process, contact Jared Thompson at [jthompson@naeh.org](mailto:jthompson@naeh.org).

**For additional Information, [visit our page](#).**

**To access the online application, [click here](#).**

## 1. Co-production: design and delivery of homelessness services with experts by experience

### Overview

There is an increasing focus in the UK on co-production: ensuring that experts by experience play an integrated role in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services, and that systems change conversations include people who have been affected by those systems.

Co-production moves beyond sector standards of 'involvement' and 'representation', strengthening and extending the role of experts to play an active role in service providers, funders, statutory bodies, and public-facing work. This is accompanied by a focus on skills development and progression so that co-production creates reciprocal opportunities and benefits for the expert participants.

Examples of organizations or networks that use and promote co-production principles include:

- [Expert Link](#)
- [Expert Citizens](#)
- [Experts by Experience Newcastle and Gateshead](#)

### Further reading:

- WY-FI Project case study [Embedding patient voice in the West Yorkshire Prison Procurement Project](#)
- Expert Link blog: [Is co-production an outdated phase?](#)
- Shelter's "Inspiring Change Manchester" blog: [Co-production at a glance](#)

### Research questions could include:

- What are the principles of co-production and how does it differ from traditional forms of client involvement?
- What impact have experts by experience had on individual providers and on the homelessness sector in England?
- What are the views of experts by experience on current/emerging approaches to homelessness response and prevention?
- How have funders and commissioners included expert voices in their work?

## 2. Challenges and solutions in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

### Overview

With the supply of council (public) housing unable to meet demand in many areas of England, especially London and the South-East, people will often move on from homelessness services into tenancies in the private rented sector. People under the age of 35 are only entitled to Housing Benefit (the state housing subsidy) for one room in a shared house.

This requirement to share creates a number of risks and issues, for example: how to develop tenancy skills among peers who are also new to independent living; how to know if you are meeting your tenant obligations, and when to exercise your tenant rights; and how to create safe sharing for people who have been through the trauma of homelessness, including those who want their children to visit.

Charities and funders have developed different models to try and address some of these issues, including:

- Commonweal's [Peer Landlord London schemes](#)
- Crisis [Sharing Solutions Programme](#)
- Crisis [Help to Rent Programme](#)

### Further reading:

- Homeless Link: [“Nowhere to Move – is renting on the shared accommodation rate in London affordable?”](#)
- Homeless Link: [“Sharing experiences on shared accommodation”](#)

### Research questions could include:

- How can charities prepare people to live in independent shared accommodation?
- What difference does a 'lead tenant' or 'peer landlord' model make to tenancy sustainment?
- What differences do support providers need to take into account for housing over-25s in the PRS, compared to young people?

### 3. Homelessness and the Arts

#### Overview

There has long been an interest in the power of the arts both on a personal level – increasing the skills, confidence and voice of homeless people – and to challenge public perception about homelessness and its causes. There are a number of national homelessness arts charities in England, as well as local arts programs at the community and project level.

Work with on homelessness and the arts touches on a range of issues, such as access to public spaces for marginalized groups, representation of homelessness in popular culture, and the power of the Arts to transform lives.

Groups such as Cardboard Citizens, Choir With No Name, and Streetwise Opera engage with homeless people as performers. They help people to find the skills and confidence to perform, and have shown the impact of their work on wider outcomes for individuals, including employability, social networks, and mental health. At the same time, they seek audiences from the general public in order to showcase the talents and contribution of people in homelessness services, and to challenge audiences on topics relating to homelessness. For example, Cardboard Citizens have put on performances and live streaming of *Cathy Come Home*. This play, based on the 1966 TV drama of the same name, changed public attitudes to homelessness and led to the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons Act) which created statutory duties to house families.

#### Further reading:

- Homeless Link [‘Get Creative influencing paper’](#)
- [Cardboard Citizens](#)
- [Streetwise Opera](#)
- [Choir With No Name](#)
- [Café Art](#)
- [Open Cinema](#)
- [‘Cathy Come Home at 50’ www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2016/nov/16/children-homeless-christmas-50-years-cathy-come-home](#)

#### Research questions could include:

- How does the approach to Homelessness and the Arts compare between the US and UK?
- What impact can participation in Arts programs have on people who are homeless?
- To what extent can Arts projects change public perceptions of homelessness?

#### 4. Supporting women involved in sex work

##### Overview

Services for homeless people in England were not often designed with gender in mind and are mostly accessed by men. Women-only services are rare despite homeless women being incredibly vulnerable, facing multiple disadvantages, and having previous or current experiences of trauma and abuse. The St Mungos [Rebuilding Shattered Lives](#) work describes how homelessness and sex working are closely linked, and that women who were street homeless were more likely to be involved in sex work than those who had not been.

Support to women involved in sex work is made even more complex due to the incidence of co-occurring substance misuse needs. [Research](#) into drug use and prostitution found that not only are this group overlooked in national policy, but mainstream services rarely understand or meet their needs.

Charities have attempted to address these issues through specialist services for women involved in sex-working. These include:

- The Foxtan Centre's [Streetlink](#) outreach services and [Project 360](#) shared-living Housing First scheme
- [Basis Yorkshire](#) that provide Housing First for women involved in sex work
- St Mungo's [Chrysalis project](#); a psychologically informed accommodation based exiting service

##### Further reading:

- St Mungo's [Rebuilding Shattered Lives](#) final report
- Good practice [briefing](#) on prostitution and multiple disadvantage
- AVA's [The Stella Project](#)

##### Research questions could include:

- How are services for women involved in sex-work different to mainstream homelessness and health services?
- How are women supported to reduce risk and harm?
- What is good practice around providing housing and support to women involved in sex work?

## 5. Youth homelessness

### Overview

In the UK, children who don't live in a family or guardian's household are known as 'looked after children'. Social Services (part of the Local Authority) is responsible for looked after children, who are placed with foster parents or in children's homes, and are said to be 'in care'.

Care leavers are at higher risk of homelessness when they leave care at 18, and they have higher priority for social housing as a result. However, risks remain for this group as they age out of Social Services systems. Youth homelessness charity Centrepoin has recently published research highlighting the experience of care leavers and these risks.

### Further reading:

- Centrepoin research report 'From Care to Where?' <https://centrepoin.org.uk/what-we-do/influencing-policy-and-campaigning/centrepoin-research/care-leavers/>
- Young and Homeless research: [www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/young-and-homeless-research](http://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/young-and-homeless-research)

### Research questions could include:

- How do UK and US approaches to care leavers compare?
- How do UK services work to reduce the risk of homelessness for looked after children as they age out of Social Services support?
- What models of housing are available to young people