

Frontline Network's Frontline Worker Survey 2018: The Real Impact of the HRA on Single Homelessness in London

The Frontline Network was delighted to be a part of Homeless Link's Policy Forum on 'The Real Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 on Single Homelessness in London'.

This call to evidence session provided a great opportunity to share the expert Frontline Workers views expressed in our latest "Annual Frontline Worker Survey 2018" report.

The Frontline Network's [report](#) is the most extensive of its kind, receiving feedback from 833 frontline staff working with those experiencing homelessness across the UK.

In providing a snapshot of the working life of frontline workers today, the report aims to highlight the importance of listening to the frontline when considering policy responses to homelessness.

Key Findings

- Our Annual Frontline Worker survey found that most frontline workers (82%) think it is overwhelmingly difficult to prevent homelessness.
- We learnt that 80% of all frontline workers found it difficult or very difficult to access accommodation within the Local Housing Allowance rate.
- Our report also found that access to 'Mental Health support and Benefits support' has got harder for Frontline Workers across every region in the UK.
- While 98% of frontline workers felt 'Having enough time to do my job effectively' was extremely or very important, only 42% of frontline workers felt they had enough time to do their job effectively.

Key Findings in London

- 47% of frontline workers from London were supporting people who were homeless as a result of their immigration status.
- 17% of frontline workers based in London were previously users of homelessness services.
- 92% of frontline workers based in London had clients affected by the introduction of Universal Credit (UC).
- 49% frontline workers in London found that, compared to other types of benefit, supporting clients with UC is much longer.

Key Findings on HRA in London

The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 marks a renewed focus on prevention to address homelessness. In our latest survey, among other questions, we asked Frontline Workers what impact the HRA has had on their ability to prevent homelessness.

- Our report showed that 91% of frontline workers based in London said that they were aware of HRA (96/105).
- We also found that 41% of frontline workers based in London said it was about the same level of difficulty in preventing homelessness since the introduction of HRA
- Only 51% in London felt they had had enough training in relation to the HRA.

These findings suggest that most frontline workers based in London find it is overwhelmingly difficult to prevent homelessness. This would indicate that the intended impact of the HRA (2017) hasn't yet been felt by most frontline workers based in London.

Frontline Worker Key Comments

The Annual Frontline Worker report contained 2,530 responses to our open questions. Below is a selection of quotes which highlight the recurring themes frontline workers expressed in relation to 'HRA'.

- *“It is hard to see any difference that the HRA has produced. There don't seem to be any additional workers at the Housing Options team and someone who came recently to our Drop in just had a list of direct access hostels - 9/10 of which no longer existed or no longer took direct access”.*
- *“HRA cannot be properly implemented to prevent homelessness if the funds are not provided to assist high rent costs in London”.*
- *“Councils go through the motions of implementing HRA, but the fact is that until more housing stock is available, they will have no choice but to keep trying to knock people back that they do actually have a housing duty towards and job people. They have very few housing options to offer to people”*

Several frontline workers commented that greater resources and support are needed if HRA is to be successfully implemented. Frontline workers also suggest the new legal duties within HRA will only succeed in preventing and relieving homeless if there is a commitment to future ring-fenced funding, which increases the supply of affordable housing in the UK.

'Frontline Worker Survey 2019' Launch

On 4th November we will be releasing our '2019 Frontline Worker Annual Survey'. This survey will offer the opportunity to review how the impact of HRA is being felt, one year on. Keep an eye out for this and other exciting developments by signing up to our [Monthly E-newsletter](#).

At the Frontline Network, we support workers from the public, statutory and voluntary sectors working on the frontline with those experiencing homelessness. Please join the [Frontline Network for free today](#), if you are not already a member.