

St
Martin
in
the
Fields

Frontline
Network

IMPACT

of the Frontline Network 2016-19

The Frontline Network: A Network created to support frontline workers who work with people experiencing homelessness.



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Author: Marcus Loney-Evans

Director's Foreword

We believe many of the solutions, and barriers, to preventing homelessness are identified on the frontline, by frontline workers. That is why in 2016, the St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity set up the Frontline Network.

Since then, we have succeeded in supporting thousands of frontline workers to build relationships, develop solutions to preventing homelessness, and amplify their experience and expertise.

From our annual Frontline Worker Conference, to our yearly Frontline Worker Survey, the Frontline voice is at the heart of all we do at St Martin's Frontline Network.

We create unique opportunities to bring together frontline workers to share their experiences, by holding events through our Partner Networks across the UK, which link in frontline worker expertise with decision-makers.

We provide funding opportunities to assist the people frontline workers support, as well as their own professional development.

We recently funded a frontline worker's idea to help those fleeing domestic violence, by purchasing flooring and carpeting that was otherwise unaffordable. This frontline worker idea was commissioned through our 'Ideas Fund', as the 'Houses into Homes' project.

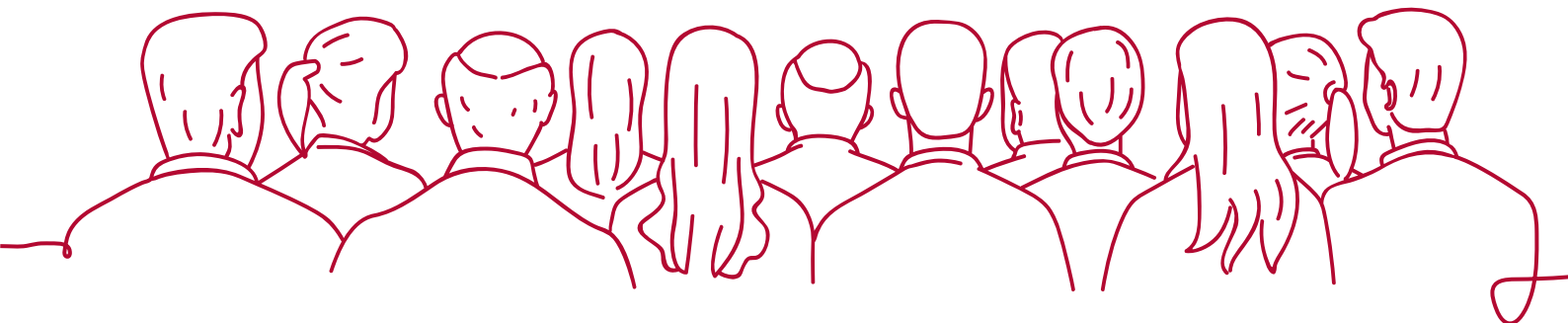
Many of our funded projects demonstrate the importance of frontline worker-led innovation, and the truly positive impact frontline workers can have on the lives of the people they support.

We hope this Impact Report illustrates the Frontline Network's impact during its first three years of existence, including both our challenges and our successes!

Thank you and I hope you enjoy reading,

Tim Bissett

Director, St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity



Frontline Network: Testimonial Wall



We are grateful for your continued support and investment that ensures frontline workers are able to influence and shape national policy based on their expertise.

Housing and Social Justice
Directorate, Scottish Government, 2019



The Frontline Network has allowed a community that empowers frontline workers to identify and test partnership working and problem solving. Having a collaborative network means there is a greater collective understanding about what help is available locally.

Ian Treasure, Partnerships Manager,
Blackpool Fulfilling Lives, 2019



By working with the Frontline Network, we have been able to equip frontline workers with theoretical and practical knowledge to help improve their approach and understanding in this complex area.

Sally Daghlian OBE, Praxis CEO



The numerous services you provide are vital in our aim to put an end to homelessness and are always highly appreciated.

Luke Hall, Minister for Rough
Sleeping and Housing, 2019



I just can't get enough of these events. They are brilliant. I love them.

Frontline Worker,
September 2019



Frontline Network: Impact Summary

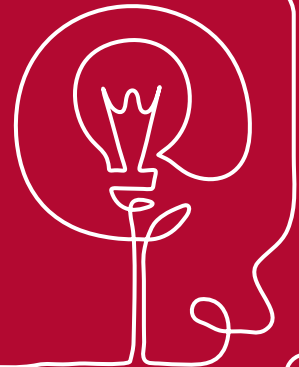
In the first three years, the Frontline Network has **welcomed over 3,800 frontline workers** in attendance at our events



The Frontline Network has held over **124 events across the UK**, for frontline workers supporting individuals experiencing homelessness



The Frontline Network funded fourteen ideas put forward by frontline workers, totalling over **£90k**



During this period, our Vicar's Relief Fund awarded **19,069 grants**

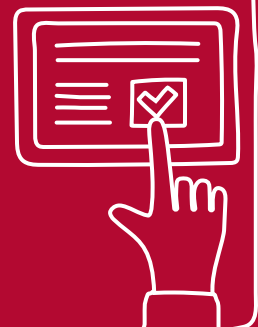
11,964 grants were issued to help people access accommodation, and **6,256 grants** were given to help prevent eviction



We ran three UK-wide conferences, with **over 475 frontline workers** in attendance



1,262 frontline workers registered with the Frontline Network

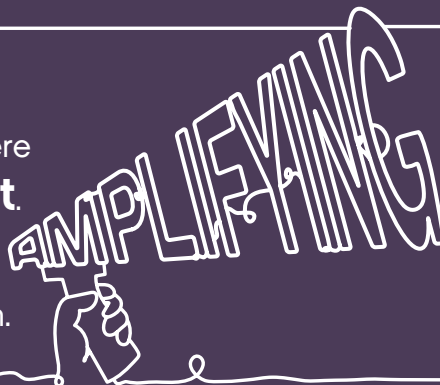


Frontline Network: Impact Summary Continued

Amplifying the Frontline Worker Voice

We ran three annual frontline worker surveys, where **2,918 frontline workers took part**.

The Frontline Worker 2019 survey was the most extensive of its kind, receiving feedback from 1,435 frontline workers across the United Kingdom.



Events Fund

Between 2016 and 2019, we spent **£5,114 to fund 11 events**, with an average award of £465 per event. 439 people from 128 organisations took part in these events.



Growing the Network

From 2016 to 2019, the Frontline Network **facilitated 18** local Frontline Networks across the UK, run by Partner organisations. These Networks provide regular opportunities to bring together frontline workers to share expertise, experience, and to link in with decision-makers.



Keeping Frontline Workers Informed

We created a Frontline Network website and a monthly e-newsletter. This means frontline workers are just a click away from receiving frontline expertise or advice, and the latest homelessness news. We also have a digital forum, which allows frontline workers to share best practice.



Digital Resources and Events

Our website gives access to specialist training events and resources for frontline workers.

In our first three years, we advertised

221 free & low cost frontline worker events

across the United Kingdom, and we also offered 43 specialist resources for frontline workers.



Shadowing Fund

From 2019, the Frontline Network **awarded £2,155 to 9 individuals** for frontline shadowing experiences. The average award amount was £239.



Who We Are

In 2016, the St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity set up the Frontline Network.

Our work aims to build relationships, share best practice, develop solutions, and communicate the experience and views of frontline workers. The Frontline Network supports workers from the public, statutory and voluntary sectors working on the frontline with those experiencing homelessness¹.

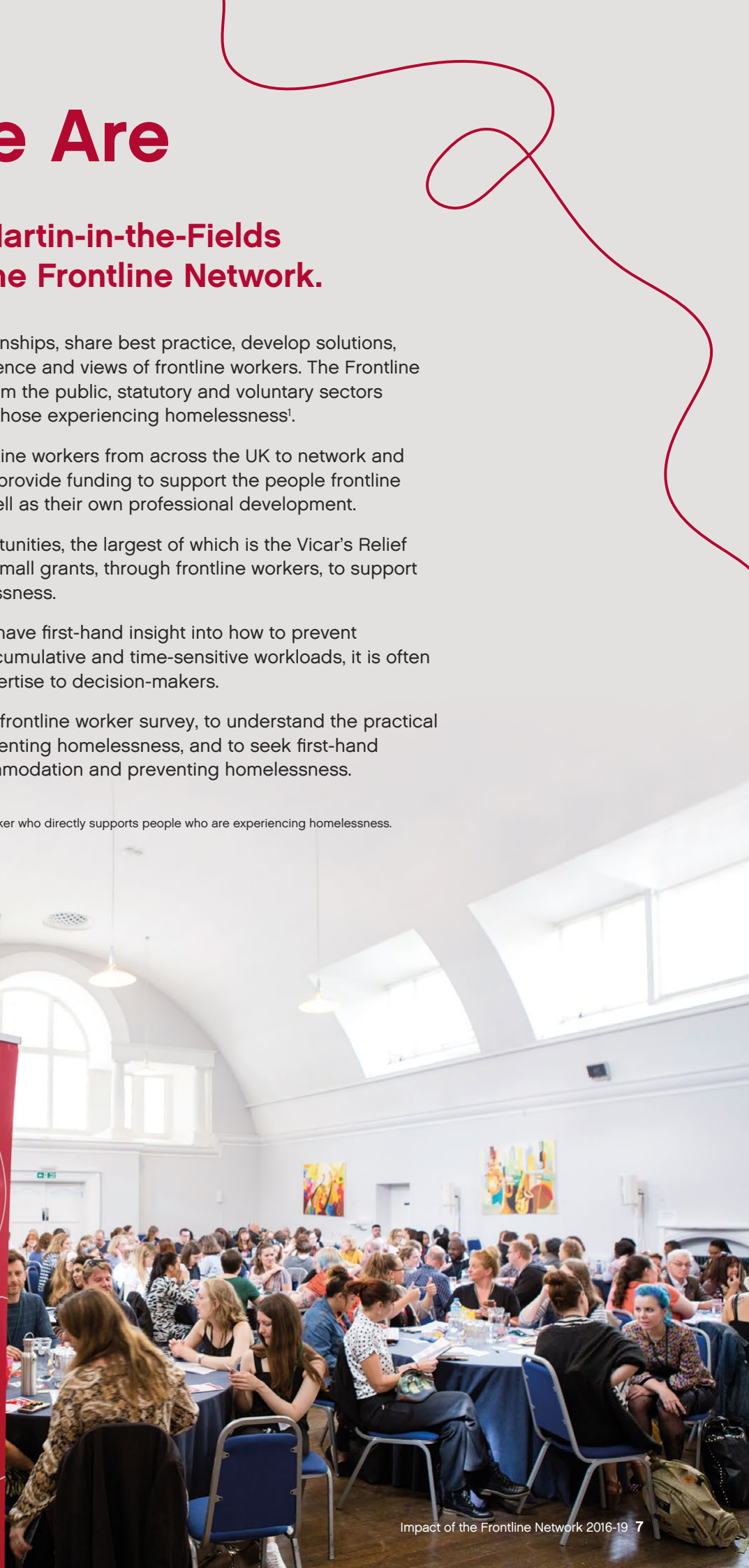
We work with over 1,200 frontline workers from across the UK to network and share best practice. We also provide funding to support the people frontline workers are supporting, as well as their own professional development.

We offer many funding opportunities, the largest of which is the Vicar's Relief Fund (VRF), which gives out small grants, through frontline workers, to support people experiencing homelessness.

We believe frontline workers have first-hand insight into how to prevent homelessness. And yet, with cumulative and time-sensitive workloads, it is often difficult to feed back this expertise to decision-makers.

That is why we run an annual frontline worker survey, to understand the practical and systemic barriers to preventing homelessness, and to seek first-hand solutions to accessing accommodation and preventing homelessness.

1. We define a 'frontline worker' as a paid worker who directly supports people who are experiencing homelessness.



ADVICE & GUIDANCE

At a national level, the Frontline Network provides opportunities for frontline workers to come together and share their experiences and expertise:

Create a space for frontline workers to share experience and expertise.



Highlight best practice within the sector, and share the solutions developed to preventing homelessness.



Amplify the voices of frontline workers, so they are listened to by funders and decision-makers.



Provide resources for frontline workers to better support the people they work with.



Have your say through our Annual Frontline Worker Survey and Conference.



Opportunities for frontline workers to support each other through our online discussion Forum.



Vicars Relief Fund

At the Frontline Network, we operate the Vicar's Relief Fund, which helps people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness through small, quick grants that prevent eviction or help people access accommodation. We award grants of up to £350, and we usually process grant requests in 1-3 days. We give grants to people across the UK through frontline workers.

The St Martin's Charity and the BBC Radio 4 Christmas Appeal

The Frontline Network is a part of the St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity. The St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity is well known for its annual BBC Radio 4 Christmas Appeal.

Our Partners 2016-19

Since 2016, the Frontline Network has been working with Partner organisations to build a successful network of frontline workers across the United Kingdom.

By facilitating Frontline Network activities and events, our Partners regularly get frontline workers to explore solutions to key issues affecting staff and the people they are supporting in their local areas. As we have grown, we have developed relationships with key people, and we are expanding the opportunities to amplify the collective voice of frontline workers.

Our Partners offer a key link between the frontline voice and decision-makers. Without these Partnerships, the Frontline Network would not be able to have achieved all it has during its first three years. This next section describes the fantastic work that has been undertaken by our Partners during this time.

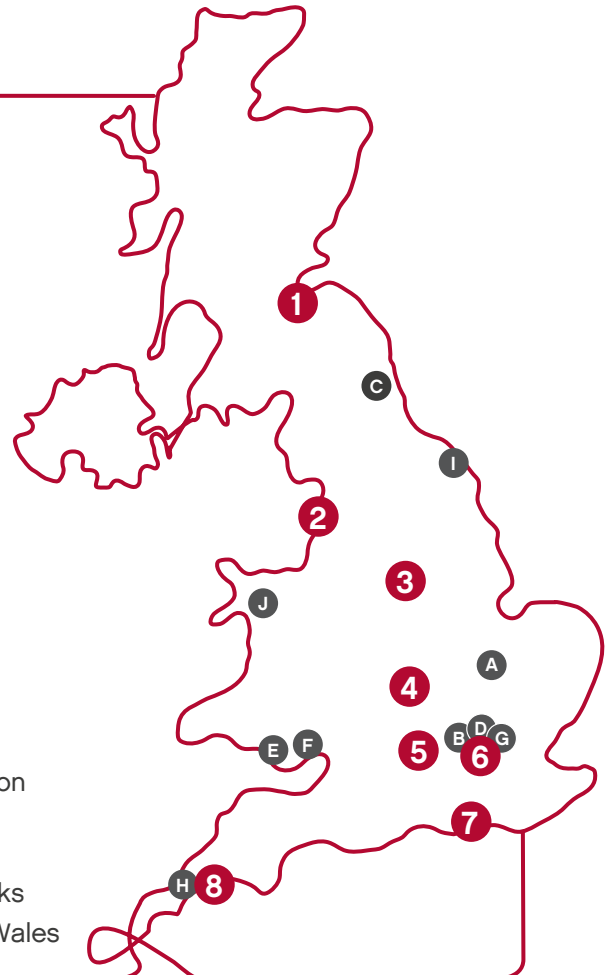


Our Partners are:

- 1 Cyrenians**
Scottish Frontline Network
- 2 Street Life Trust**
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Frontline Network
- 3 Target**
South Yorkshire Frontline Network
- 4 Coventry Citizens Advice**
Coventry Frontline Network
- 5 Mayday Trust**
PTS Frontline Network
- 6 Praxis**
Pan-London Migrant Frontline Network
- 7 Justlife**
Brighton and Hove Frontline Network
- 8 Path**
Plymouth Frontline Network

Our Former Partners:

- A Axiom** – Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
- B Baron's court project** – Hammersmith and Fulham, London
- C Changing Lives** – Gateshead, North East
- D Glass Door** – London
- E Gofal** – Wales
- F Huggard** – Wales
- G Manna Society** – London
- H St Petroc's** – Cornwall
- I The Rainbow Centre** – Scarborough, North Yorks
- J Kaleidoscope** – North Wales



Scottish Frontline Network: Cyrenians

Cyrenians run the Scottish Frontline Network, which offers support to frontline workers who work with people experiencing homelessness across Scotland.

During this period, the Scottish Frontline Network has achieved some incredible work in developing strong links between frontline workers and decision-makers, when considering strategies to prevent homelessness in Scotland:

Calls from The Frontline

In 2018, and on behalf of the Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group (HRSAG²), the Scottish Frontline Network collaborated with the Glasgow Homelessness Network (GHN) to co-facilitate two half-day events in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The events were organised to consult frontline workers on how £50 million should be spent by the Scottish Government over 5 years from 2018, to end rough sleeping and homelessness in Scotland.

Feedback from the Scottish Frontline Network event was collated in a report: 'Calls from the Frontline', which was fed back to the Scottish Government as part of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HRSAG) recommendations.

The Scottish Government's 'Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan' that this fed into, recognises the role of frontline workers and echoes the value that the Frontline Network seeks to place on frontline workers.

2. The Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group (HRSAG) was brought together by the Scottish Government in October 2017 to help create solutions to tackle homelessness and end rough sleeping in Scotland.



We must ensure that the frontline workers working directly with people experiencing homelessness, who often have the deepest insight into people's needs, are well-resourced and supported through training and access to the right resources.

Ending Homelessness Together:
High Level Action Plan, Scottish
Government, Nov 2018



Preparing and Caring for Staff Working in Frontline Roles

The Scottish Frontline Network has also established a reflective practice group, run by a psychologist specialising in Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE), which looks at long-term impact and supports frontline workers to maintain motivation and compassion while supporting individuals with long-term homelessness experiences.

South Yorkshire Frontline Network: Target



The South Yorkshire Frontline Network meets regularly to give frontline workers the opportunity to highlight their experiences on key issues for people experiencing homelessness in the South Yorkshire area.

These insights have been fed back to key local forums and decision-makers, from the former Shadow Minister for Housing, John Healey, to the Housing Solutions Manager of Rotherham Borough Council.



Frontline Worker Wellbeing and Mental Health

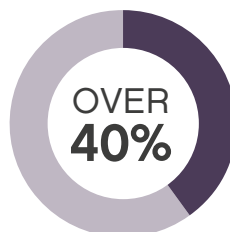
The South Yorkshire Frontline Network held an event which focused on the mental health and wellbeing of frontline workers. This event explored ways to enhance overall wellbeing of frontline workers through a range of workshops, bringing in expert speakers and sharing good practices through networking.

In addition, the South Yorkshire Frontline Network ran a survey to ask for views on your overall experiences of mental health and wellbeing in your workplace.

Key Findings



of support workers said one-to-ones with their manager are in place and are effective in supporting staff wellbeing. However, over 40% responded that caseload supervisions were not in place.



of support workers claimed that full lunch breaks were 'in place but not fully used'.

The feedback received suggested a strong connection between receiving frequent supervisions from a line manager and feeling supported at work. The South Yorkshire Frontline Network are using their results to advocate on behalf of frontline workers to local decision-makers from a frontline perspective.

By providing a snapshot of the working life of frontline workers today, the South Yorkshire Frontline Network highlighted the need to invest in frontline worker wellbeing.

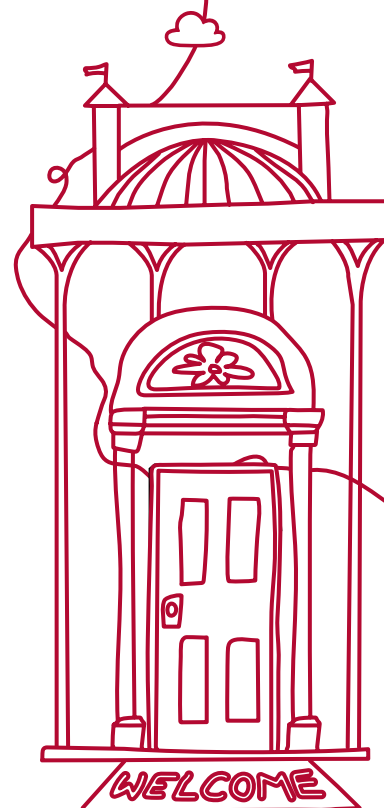
Brighton and Hove Frontline Network: Justlife

Justlife have run the Brighton and Hove Frontline Network since 2016. Their events have become increasingly popular among frontline workers, and have successfully demonstrated the importance of listening to frontline workers when considering different practical responses to homelessness.



The Frontline Network has been brilliant at bringing together workers from across the sector who are so busy and often have to work in their silo. Seeing them hearing other workers' struggles are the same as theirs, and that through relationships and sharing knowledge they can build solutions together, is amazing.

Simon Gale, Chief Executive, Justlife



Death on the Frontline and a Benchmark of Support

In 2018, responding to a recent media focus on the number of deaths of people who were experiencing homelessness, the Brighton and Hove Frontline Network put on an event to discuss 'Death on the Frontline'.

Co-planned with colleagues from Martlets Hospice and the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust, this event gave space to have conversations with other frontline workers – facilitated sensitively by people with experience in talking about death.

The event led to three action groups: one to set up a cross-organisational discussion about the different support available within different organisations to establish a benchmark for others to aim towards; one to establish a death café for discussion about death; and a death action group to explore how local support can be improved and joined up.

A year on, the "Brighton and Hove Frontline Worker Wellbeing Group" has now been created. The Wellbeing Group is open to anyone working in the sector, and the aim of this group is

to influence and encourage employers in the sector, to ensure the wellbeing of their workforce. The group wants employers in Brighton to implement best practice and commit to continual improvement.

This Wellbeing group is now looking to create and maintain a benchmark of support for employers in the sector. The Brighton and Hove Frontline Network is continually identifying and compiling resources and examples of good practice to feed into this exciting development.

Pan-London Migrant Frontline Network: Praxis



Our partnership with Praxis Community Projects has led to the creation of the Pan-London Migrant Frontline Network. This Network provides specialist advice and migrant-related updates to frontline workers - from access to healthcare for migrants, to the EU Settlement Scheme, and the rights of migrants experiencing homelessness with No Recourse to Public Funds.



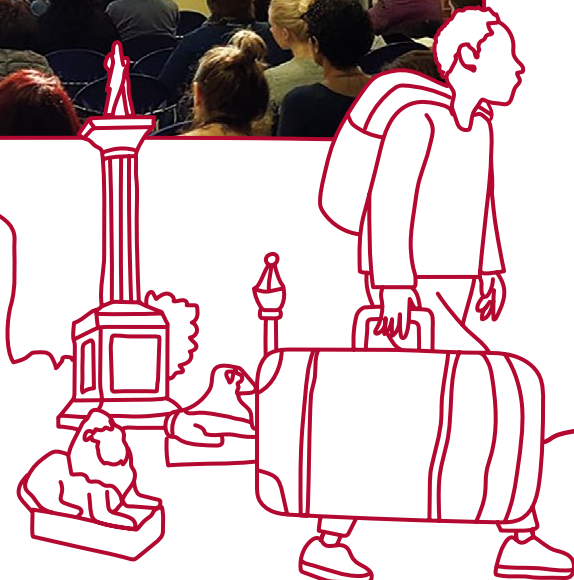
Immigration issues play a major role in homelessness. Frontline workers [engaging with the Pan-London Migrant Frontline Network] have shown a great thirst for knowledge.

Sally Daghlian OBE, Praxis CEO

EU Settlement Scheme

The Pan-London Migrant Frontline Network has provided several updates and held an event looking at the entitlements to housing and welfare benefits for EEA citizens and their family members who have been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

The large number of attendees at the event highlighted the impact this issue has for homeless EEA migrants in London. The Network provided information on how under the Scheme, EEA migrants and family members are granted either settled or pre-settled status, depending on the length of time that they have been in the UK.



Windrush

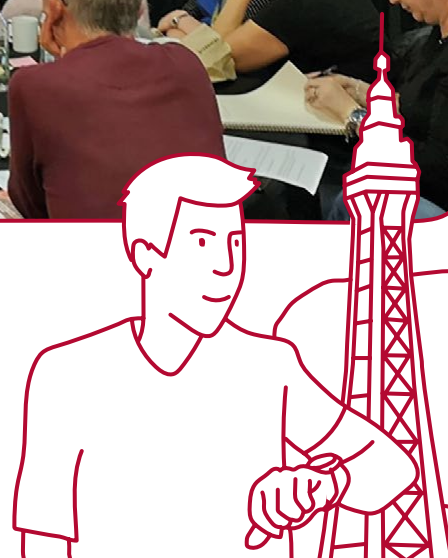
The Pan-London Migrant Frontline Network also facilitated an event focused on assisting frontline workers dealing with Windrush-related cases. This event provided information on how to support people experiencing Windrush issues as well as collating frontline workers' concerns around Windrush to be fed back to the Home Office.

Through the Pan-London Migrant Frontline Network, many frontline workers have been able to access vital training and information on people's immigration rights. Frontline workers have described that supporting people with immigration issues can often involve complex legal applications, which is why the Pan-London Migrant Frontline Network plays such an important role.

Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Frontline Network: Streetlife Trust



Streetlife Trust run the Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Frontline Network. This Network has led the way in creating positive multi-agency working relationships, locally helping frontline workers find the best way to help the individuals they support.



Collaborative Working with Statutory Services

A central focus in their work is to create links and build working relationships with frontline workers from agencies new to the Frontline Network. The Frontline Network met with Blackpool's Adult Social Care team to discuss better collaborative working practice. As a result, the Adult Social Care team have now developed a best practice assessment hoarding tool, which was presented at their annual conference. Statutory services such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Adult Social Care have also forged strong relationships through the Frontline Network in Blackpool, Wyre, and Fylde.

Universal Credit Networking Focus Group

Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Frontline Network also regularly host 'Universal Credit Networking Focus Group' meetings. The aim of this group is for frontline workers to discuss issues around Universal Credit, to seek solutions and to create and maintain positive links with all services in the area. Having seen the impact of Universal Credit in other areas of the country, the Network played a vital role in creating a group in anticipation of Universal Credit being rolled out in the area.

The collaborative working established between the Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Frontline Network and statutory agencies reflects this Network's growth. Closer agency alignment has been improving experiences between different sectors; addressing issues as they arise.

As a result of closer links and specific points of contact, frontline workers have been able to flag issues directly to decision-makers and the DWP, resulting in issues being addressed quicker and barriers to good working relationships have been reduced. For example, issues with ID, access to bank accounts and highlighting differences between policy and practice. Escalation routeways have been shared to frontline workers by the DWP along with information on landlords being able to request a UC47 if people are in two months of rent arrears, for a direct payment.

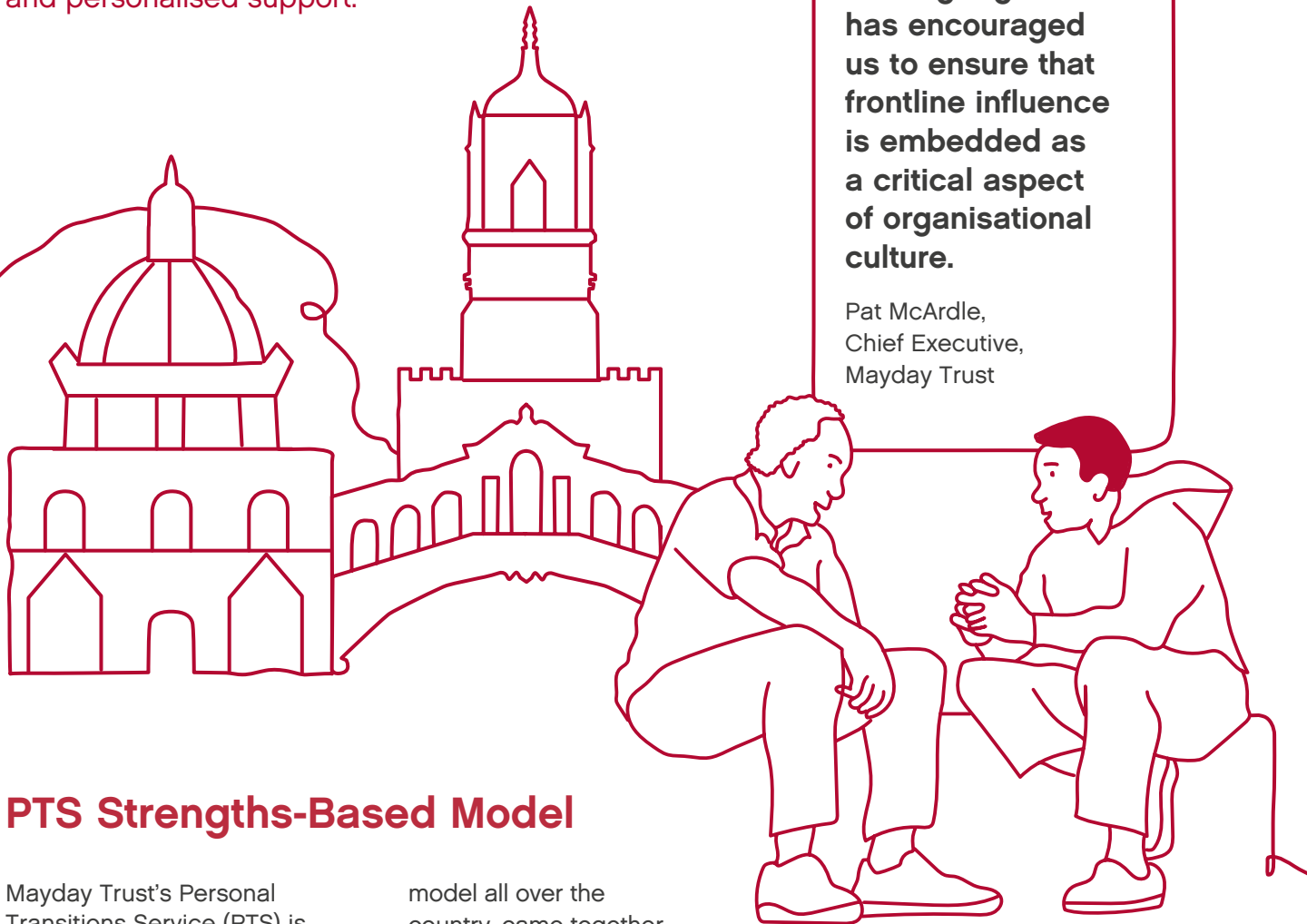
Personal Transitions Service Frontline Network: Mayday Trust

Mayday Trust run the Personal Transitions Service Frontline Network, which offers support to frontline workers who work with people experiencing homelessness through a Personal Transitions Service (PTS). The PTS model works with people going through tough times by providing strengths-based and personalised support.



The powerful and significant impact of frontline teams coming together has encouraged us to ensure that frontline influence is embedded as a critical aspect of organisational culture.

Pat McArdle,
Chief Executive,
Mayday Trust



PTS Strengths-Based Model

Mayday Trust's Personal Transitions Service (PTS) is about building strengths, aspirations, relationships, and purpose, rather than focusing on needs and problems. The aim is for people to transition out of homelessness and tough times in their lives quickly and positively, with a whole new community-based network of support built around them, ready for the next bump in the road.

In 2017, Asset Coaches, delivering Mayday Trust's PTS

model all over the country, came together in Birmingham to meet, share experiences, and challenge both themselves and the system. Most did not know each other, and had not met before, but they bonded through their shared passion and values. The feedback from this first ever UK Asset Coach Network event was very positive, with participants leaving challenged, empowered, reinvigorated and, most of all, connected to colleagues across the country.

Through our partnership with Mayday Trust, we have funded their 'Moving the Model Forward' days, which bring together frontline workers implementing a PTS from across the country to develop and feed back on the PTS and asset-based approach that Mayday Trust support and ensure that it is continuously reflected on and improved upon.

Coventry Frontline Network: Coventry Citizen's Advice



The Coventry Frontline Network, run by Coventry Citizens Advice, has been recognised as a go-to contact for local decision-makers. Since 2017, the Coventry Frontline Network has welcomed more than 100 people from over 40 organisations to meetings and quarterly forums, where frontline workers have networked with other agencies to discuss the issues that affect the people they support, and to share solutions and information to help them in their role.



We make sure decision-makers hear the views of the frontline, by gathering input from our members and responding to local and national consultations, so that the experience on the frontline can help shape policy. Our work aims to improve frontline wellbeing, both by sharing techniques, resources and best practice from across the sector, and by providing a space where members can network with their peers, share their experiences and support each other.

Kate Algate, Chief Executive, Coventry Citizens Advice

Quarterly Frontline Network Forum

The Coventry Frontline Network quarterly forum gives frontline housing and homelessness workers in Coventry the chance to get together and discuss the issues that affect their clients – from themes such as Universal Credit to the Homelessness Reduction Act. There is a strong operational focus in meetings, and the Network use their members' experience and knowledge to ask for improvements to existing issues.

The Coventry Frontline Network have a track record of contributing to new policies at the design stage through local consultations, so any changes being implemented are as close as possible to what the frontline would like to see.

Influencing Local Decisions

In 2018, the Coventry Frontline Network collected the views of frontline workers about the area's local Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) process and thought about how to improve it.

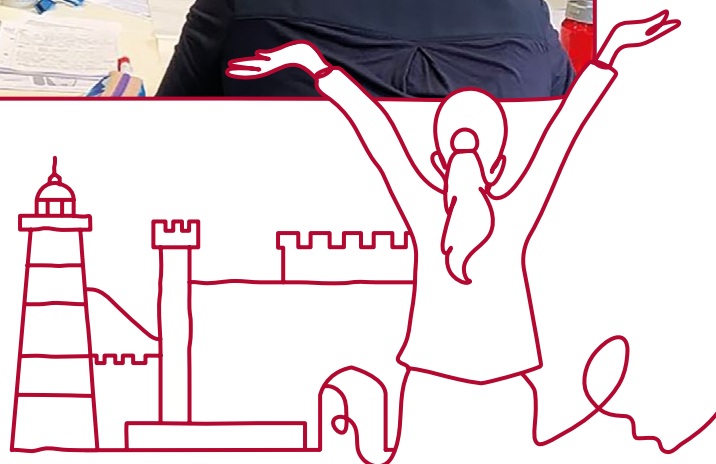
Suggestions included having a transparent policy of what would trigger SWEP and who owned that decision, along with more public visibility of SWEP. When the council convened a group to review SWEP, the Network were able to use their work to help inform those discussions, and that resulted in a document clarifying who had responsibility for SWEP, how and when it would be triggered and how it would be communicated across the city.

The Coventry Frontline Network has succeeded in keeping a diligent eye on policy and use the forum to keep everyone updated about changes, whether they are big national policies or local practices.

Plymouth Frontline Network: PATH



PATH (Plymouth Access to Housing) run the Plymouth Frontline Network, which offers support to frontline workers who work with people experiencing homelessness across Plymouth and Devon. The Plymouth Frontline Network has been a valuable resource for frontline workers' awareness of what homelessness and housing support is available locally.



Plymouth Frontline Network Forum Meetings: Access to Accommodation

For frontline workers, the Plymouth Frontline Network meetings offer great collaborative working opportunities among different local organisations in Plymouth. For example, the Plymouth Frontline Network facilitated an event on 'How to Access Housing & Related Services'.

This meeting helped raise awareness of what support is available locally in Plymouth for frontline workers and detailed how the referral process operates in Plymouth. Frontline workers felt this event was informative and a great opportunity to understand how clients and other agencies could more easily access housing and related support services.

Paul Green, a Senior Practitioner at Bournemouth Churches

Housing Association, attended this event, where he described how the Frontline Network's work allows for greater support among specialist agencies within the Plymouth area.

He recalled how one individual with substance and alcohol misuse issues was living in a flat without hot water, showering facilities or electricity. As part of the Frontline Network, and by working alongside the Community Mental Health Team, Paul was able to refer the person to a specialist drug/alcohol services team in Plymouth to start bidding for social housing.

The individual has now moved into one-bedroom social housing accommodation with help from St Martin's Vicar's Relief Fund to support rent in advance. Due to

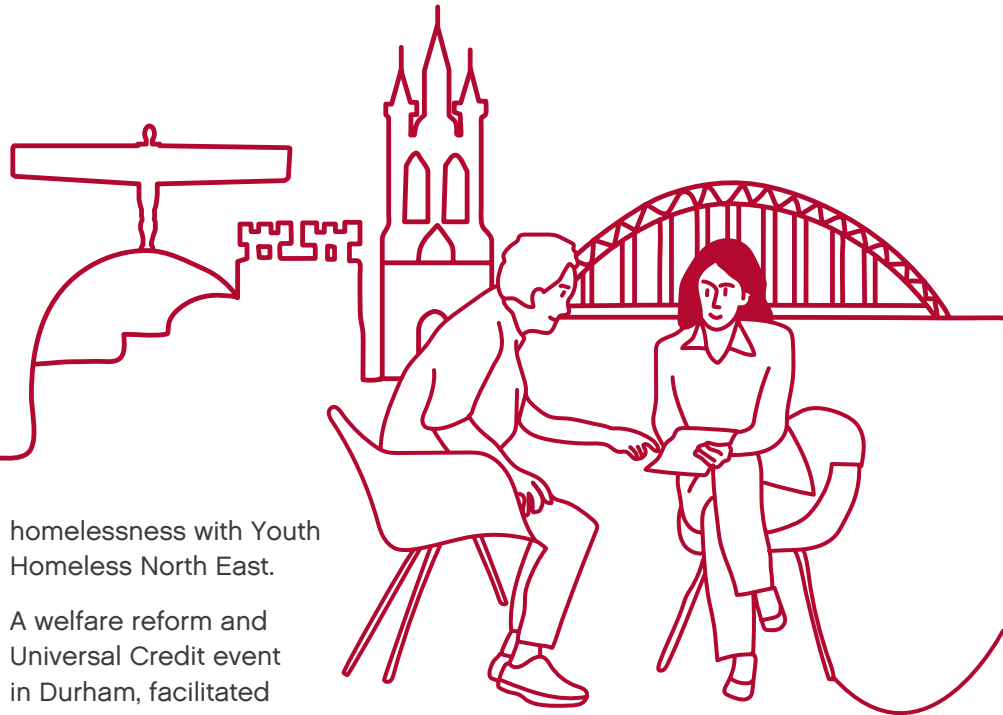
this collaborative work through the Plymouth Frontline Network, the person is now engaging with a specialist support group in Plymouth and is in on-going recovery from substance and alcohol misuse.

Plymouth Frontline Network have also been able to amplify the voice of frontline workers to a strategic level, as a Partner of 'Plymouth Alliance' – a collection of organisations which provides vital services for people experiencing homelessness in Plymouth. The Plymouth Frontline Network has developed good relationships with other external organisations, including Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) (a coalition of Homeless Link, Clinks, Collective Voice and Mind).

Former Partners

'Be the Change' Frontline Network: Changing Lives

Changing Lives facilitated our North East 'Be The Change' Frontline Network from 2016 to 2019. 'Be the Change' was run as a joint network with Homeless Link, facilitating events supporting frontline staff across the North East.



Events engaged frontline staff working in the voluntary, statutory and public sectors in Durham, Newcastle, Gateshead and Middlesbrough. Themes explored Psychologically Informed Environments, the Care Act, access to accommodation for people in contact with the criminal justice system and youth experiences of

homelessness with Youth Homeless North East.

A welfare reform and Universal Credit event in Durham, facilitated by DWP and Fulfilling Lives staff, opened a dialogue on the impact of sanction use on people experiencing multiple and complex needs.

The event engaged 52 staff from 20 agencies and offered solution-focused practice on collaborating and furthering understanding within services.

North Wales Frontline Network: Kaleidoscope

Kaleidoscope ran the North Wales Frontline Network from 2017 to 2019. Activities focused on partnership working at a local level across North Wales, the impact of Universal Credit on people experiencing homelessness and the importance of frontline staff wellbeing, as well as engaging with local decision-makers.

67 frontline staff from 37 different services attended the Network's Universal Credit event at the Crisis Cafe in Wrexham to network and share local learning.

Another event focused on the mental health and wellbeing of frontline staff and brought

together 42 people across 13 agencies to explore the challenges frontline staff experience and ways that peers could support each other.



Next Steps for Frontline Network Growth

At the Frontline Network, we are only as strong as our members, and we are pleased to see the effective links developed by local frontline networks across the UK.

Going forward, we will be reviewing the areas where there is not a local Frontline Network and have recently employed a Local Network Coordinator.

If you are a frontline worker, you can check out the local network opportunities in your area, or set up a network in your local area, by getting in touch today: frontline@stmartinscharity.org.uk

Funding the Frontline

In the first few years, the Frontline Network has offered funding opportunities to assist the people frontline workers are supporting, as well as their own professional development.

In this section you can read about the funding opportunities we offer to frontline workers, and how this has impacted their work to prevent homelessness.



Events Fund

The Frontline Network Events Fund can be used to help fund frontline-worker organised events, for frontline workers to develop networks, share learning and identify best practice.

This funding has helped with the costs of venue hire, catering, speakers, and travel bursaries. Through this Fund, we have supported various events covering a wide range of issues; from supporting asylum seekers to commissioning mental health support projects.

Between 2016 and 2019, we provided £5,114 to fund 11 events, with the average award of £465. 439 people took part in these events, including 128 organisations.

Events Fund – Slaying the Dragon

Will Golding, Tutor at Crisis Skylight in Edinburgh, organised an event called 'Slaying the Dragon' through our Events Fund. This event was held in Edinburgh and was supported by Cyrenians as well as Crisis.



The day consisted of a series of workshops led by people who have experienced homelessness, with a focus on how they have learnt and worked together to challenge and change the circumstances they have faced.

In planning the event, every speaker, and workshop leader had a direct experience of homelessness themselves. Everyone was pro-actively involved in organising at a grassroots level and educating themselves and others in their situation to work together to bring about positive change.

Almost 150 people attended the event. New ideas have emerged and are informing the development of a possible national network of homeless people in Scotland.

By sharing private troubles, learning together and acting collectively, this event showed that people experiencing homelessness can and do have the power to be involved in re-shaping these circumstances for themselves and others.



Team buzzing with ideas after Bristol Refugee Rights trip

As part of the Frontline Network Shadowing Fund, InterAction visited Bristol Refugee Rights (BRR), to see what lessons could be learned from another organisation supporting asylum seekers and refugees.

Richard, (Director of Operations), Kate, (Drop-in Manager), and Tolosa, (Drop-in Coordinator), from the Action Foundation team travelled down to Bristol to learn how BRR operates on a day-to-day basis. The team came away full of ideas on how to develop their own InterAction drop-ins, which have been running since May 2019.

Bristol Refugee Rights was set up as a voluntary organisation in 2006 with the aim of upholding and championing the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees. BRR provides a place of welcome where asylum seekers and refugees can meet, as well as helping them to play a full part in the wider community.

The team were really impressed with what they saw in Bristol and are going to implement the wrap-around team meetings before and after each drop in session with the volunteers. The Action Foundation team will consider translating registration forms into five different languages and setting up a computerised sign-in and registration system.

Shadowing Fund

If frontline workers want to find out how other services work or operate, then the Frontline Network's Shadowing Fund allows workers to go and shadow other organisations so that they can learn, share experiences and good practice.

We granted £2,155 to 9 individuals for shadowing since 2019.



*Picture Copyright Sheffield Star

Ideas Fund

Our Ideas Fund has helped frontline workers access funding to turn an idea that will improve the situation for people experiencing homelessness into reality.

The funding ranges from

£200 to £10,000 for ideas big and small.



Between 2016 and 2019 we funded

14 frontline worker ideas, totalling over £90k.



Here are a few great examples of where our Idea Fund had significant impact:

An Asset Coach at Nomad Opening Doors in Sheffield put forward an idea to give the clients they work with more control over who they receive counselling from and **“shift the power of decision-making back to the person when it comes to their own mental health support”**. As a result, we have provided £10,000 with the aim of enabling 18 clients to access 12 counselling sessions with a counsellor of their choice.

Ideas Fund case study

'From Start to Finish' is a project which was commissioned through the Ideas Fund to help those fleeing domestic violence purchase flooring and carpeting. The Frontline Network funded project made it possible for flooring and carpeting to be purchased, which would otherwise be inaccessible.

"In running this project, we hoped to help our clients in making their forever house a home. Our feedback shows that the project had a strong positive impact upon the emotional wellbeing of all those who were granted funding".

Lindsay Birrell of CAHA Women's Aid



Jane* (not her real name) received this funding after having sustained a horrific assault which required surgical intervention. She fled with her children and presented as homeless to a local authority in a different area.

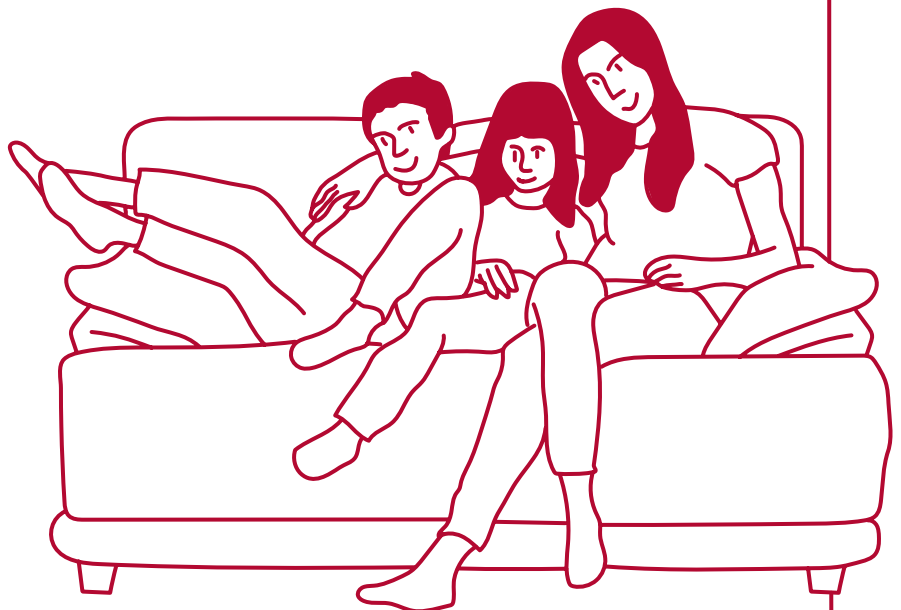
She and her children were provided with emergency housing for a short time before she was awarded a 3-bedroom property. However, this property was not furnished. Jane and her children had very few belongings but accepted the property immediately.

In these circumstances, Jane was able to apply for carpeting through our project. We processed her request and provided her with the required flooring. Once Jane secured the necessary grants, she was able to move into the property and start her journey of independence: free from fear and harm.

Jane described how this grant has made a huge difference to her and her children:

"[The house] instantly became a home. The children's rooms are lovely, and I couldn't have asked for anything more. We are just very grateful".

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) used in our feedback showed that recipients of the grant had an increase of up to 30% in their emotional mental wellbeing. No negative impacts were cited, with an overall average increase of 16.1% in the wellbeing of recipients.



The Vicar's Relief Fund

The Vicar's Relief Fund (VRF) helps people experiencing homelessness through small, quick grants that prevent eviction or help people access accommodation. From 2016 to 2019, the VRF awarded

19,069 grants.



Informing Funding Opportunities: Training Fund

In our 2018 Annual Frontline Worker survey, **over 80%** of frontline workers told us it would be useful for the Frontline Network to provide funding for training.

At the end of 2019, we launched our 'Training Fund' and its impact will be reported in our future Impact Report.



Bringing Frontline Workers Together



Between 2016 and 2019, the Frontline Network held three UK-wide annual conferences. These events are the perfect opportunity for frontline workers to get together, harness ideas, energy, and experience, as well as highlighting the challenges being faced.

Our conferences are free to frontline workers, and provide a day filled with a range of expert speakers and activities. Over the three annual conferences, we have agreed £9,495 worth of travel bursaries, allowing 80 additional frontline workers to attend.

Conference 2016

In 2016, we held the first Frontline Network national conference, with approximately 170 frontline workers attending from across the UK. The conference provided an opportunity for frontline workers from across the UK to attend workshops ranging from supporting young people at risk of homelessness, to transforming health services for homeless people and included a session on exploring how we can better use the experiences and insights of those working on the frontline as well as opportunities for networking. Feedback from the day included “Really enjoyed the day and learnt a lot. One of the nicest parts of the conference was meeting a lot of ‘like minded’ people.” and “Hearing that my organisation is not the only one struggling due to cuts and issues that are out of our control”.



Conference 2018

At our 2018 conference, ‘Wellbeing on the Frontline’, we brought together over 100 frontline workers from across the UK to discuss the key issues facing them in their work.

A range of speakers facilitated conversations with frontline workers around themes such as increased targets and Universal Credit, as well as wellbeing workshops covering subjects like mindfulness and resilience.

The theme of ‘Wellbeing’ came from feedback in the Annual Frontline Worker Survey 2017 and listening to our partner community.

Our conference facilitated workshops which reflected this feedback including subjects such as stress management, maintaining resilience, addressing the impact of legislative changes and policy reform, overcoming compassion fatigue and apathy.



Conference 2019

In 2019, we continued to build on the theme of 'wellbeing on the frontline' from our previous conference and dedicated an entire afternoon to workshops focused on frontline worker wellbeing. The wellbeing focus was in response to what frontline workers told us was important in the 2018 Annual Frontline Worker Survey: that wellbeing was a crucial part of their work.

The feedback highlighted that maintaining positivity and resilience in an ever-changing environment of funding cuts, welfare and organisational reforms can be hard, and lead to potential burnout.



Highlights from the day

“Uplifted and grateful for a discussion around our needs in resilience”

“Lots of info to feedback to my local frontline colleagues. Ways to cope with rising stress levels. A better understanding of other frontline challenges”

“I have learnt the importance of sharing experiences at work with other frontline workers. It helps to improve on my work and support my clients”

“I am very positive about the network. I appreciate my employer better than before I came here”

“Ideas to take back to work. We are great people trying to change lives. Had a good moan, feel better being able to talk freely about pressure and demands”

“Fundamental to the learning from my experience is that we, as a collective, have to have a stronger voice. It felt like there was a lack of ability to escalate and challenge some of the status quo and it was clear to me that we all have a role to play. Organisations do not appear to empower their frontline workers to have a say in delivery. Commissioners do not

do enough to genuinely listen to concerns”

“Encouraged that there are many services pushing for some changes with the system and people who care”

“New information and positive vibes”

“Be kind to myself, mindfulness in life and work. Suggestions to share at the office about wellbeing”

Frontline Workers Feedback, Conference 2019



Amplifying the Voice of the Frontline Worker

At the Frontline Network, it is not about us. It is about the frontline worker. We fully appreciate how busy frontline workers are, which is why we provide an annual opportunity for frontline workers to have their say through our Frontline Worker Survey.

We want to know what the challenges are, and the great work undertaken to overcome some of these challenges. From hostels to hospitals, night shelters to Jobcentres and food banks to Housing First services, we have sought expert feedback, which has given us an insight into the working life of frontline workers across a range of settings.

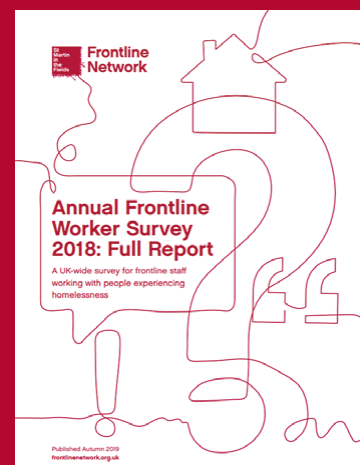
The Frontline Network conducted three annual frontline workers surveys between 2016 and 2019, where 2,918 frontline workers took part. In this section, you can read the key findings and impact of our Frontline Worker Surveys, and what we have done so far with the feedback frontline workers have provided.



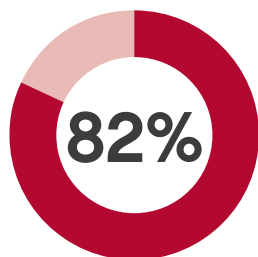
Annual Frontline Worker Surveys

The 2019 Annual Frontline Worker Survey was the most extensive survey of frontline staff working with those experiencing homelessness across the UK. It builds on our 2018 and 2017 surveys. We retained some questions to allow trends to be tracked and added new questions to reflect priority areas such as Universal Credit, the Homelessness Reduction Act, and Brexit.

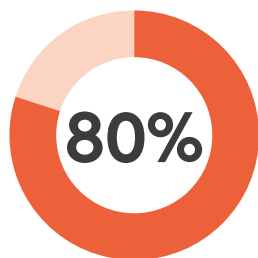
In providing a snapshot of the working life of frontline workers today, our most recent report highlighted the importance of listening to the frontline when considering policy responses to homelessness.



Key Findings From The Frontline Worker Report 2018

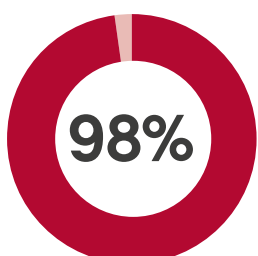


of frontline workers found it overwhelmingly difficult to prevent homelessness.

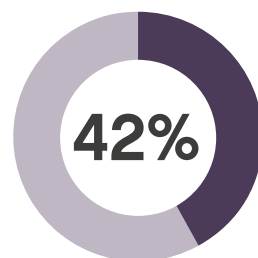


of frontline workers found it difficult or very difficult to access accommodation within the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate.

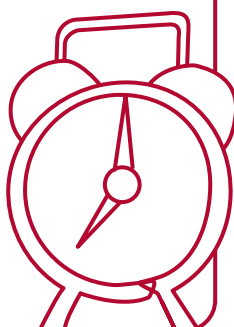
The survey also found that access to mental health support and benefits for their clients has got harder across every region in the UK.



of frontline workers felt 'having enough time to do my job effectively' was extremely or very important.



of frontline workers felt they had enough time to do their job effectively.



Frontline Worker Survey 2018

- ✓ The frontline worker difficulties expressed in finding accommodation within the LHA rate were highlighted within Crisis' report: "Cover the Cost: Restoring Local Housing Allowance rates to prevent homelessness".
- ✓ We also presented the survey's findings at the Homeless Link Policy Forum on the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act on single homelessness in London.
- ✓ Homeless Link developed a webinar on Universal Credit, which was informed by feedback from this survey, addressing some of the key concerns raised by frontline workers.
- ✓ We used the findings in this survey to support our evidence submission to the Government's consultation on repealing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988: the no-fault eviction notice. Our findings confirmed that frontline workers strongly believe landlords should no longer be able to evict tenants at short notice, and without good reason.

The Frontline voice is at the heart of all we do at St Martin's Frontline Network, which is why we believe the feedback from our annual Frontline Worker Survey reports reflect a valuable link between the frontline voice and key decision-makers.

Looking Forwards

St Martin's Frontline Network exists to harness the ideas, energy, and experiences of those at the frontline working with people experiencing homelessness. As we have grown in these first few years, we have developed relationships with key people, and we are expanding the opportunities to amplify the collective voice of frontline workers.

We believe this report shows the value of a Network which gives frontline workers a platform to share their expertise, and the ability to develop resources guided by frontline knowledge. We believe now it is more important than ever to give frontline workers who are at the forefront of preventing homelessness a role in shaping the strategies that are developed to reduce homelessness.

We will continue to provide opportunities for better collaborative working, so that frontline workers can come together to share their experience and expertise.

Thank you to all the frontline workers who have helped to grow the Frontline Network, we could not do it without you.



Get Involved!

If you're a frontline worker in the sector, we encourage you to join the Frontline Network – registration is free, and members can access support, training, and a strong frontline community. Please get in contact if you would like to find out more about your local Frontline Network.

If you are a decision-maker, check out our annual frontline worker survey reports, where we explain why it is so important to listen to frontline workers when developing strategies to reduce homelessness. These survey reports are the most extensive of their kind and help to identify the best ways of supporting frontline workers in their work.

Please look out for our Frontline Worker Survey 2019, which will be released soon.
www.frontlinenetwork.org.uk



Frontline Network

Frontline Network

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