

# Report into homelessness and drug misuse published

Treating homeless people for drug misuse is exceptionally difficult unless their housing needs are addressed at the same time, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) has today advised the Home Secretary.

The [report](#), published today (19 June 2019), finds that housing authorities, local councils and health services should work together to adopt a tailored approach to tackling drug misuse among homeless people in their area.

The council's recommendations come as official statistics show that 32% of all deaths among homeless people in England in 2017 were a result of drug poisoning. This compares with 1% for the general population.

Chair of the ACMD, Dr Owen Bowden-Jones, said:

One of the first priorities in helping people experiencing homelessness and using drugs is securing a safe roof over their heads.

Today's report found good evidence of interventions which can tackle drug-related harms in homeless populations using a range of different co-ordinated approaches.

Housing provision, harm reduction interventions and quality drug treatment are essential to meeting this challenge.

The ACMD also found that:

- people who use drugs and are experiencing homelessness suffer a particular lack of social connectedness and their personal safety is at greater risk
- the needs of people who are homeless, particularly rough sleepers, are not well met by mainstream benefits, health and social care and some drug services
- homeless populations are over represented in groups who experience serious bacterial infections from drug use – in addition, levels of HIV and hepatitis C in drug users who are homeless are high

The council's recommendations include:

- enabling local services to adopt a tailored approach to tackling the specific needs of homeless drug users in their area
- substance use, mental health and homelessness services adopting evidence-based approaches to tackling drug misuse such as integrated and targeted services, outreach, and peer mentors to engage and retain homeless people in proven treatments

- raising awareness among service providers of the levels of stigma experienced by homeless individuals who use drugs and ensure they are treated with respect
- involving people with experience of homelessness and substance use in the design and delivery of the service provision for substance use and homelessness services