LAUNCH: Addressing Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in Social Work Education

HSCWRU homelessness series webinar 18.3.24

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NIHR | Policy Research Unit in Health and Social Care Workforce

KING'S College LONDON

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Report Launch today

Addressing multiple exclusion homelessness (MEH) in social work education in England: Gaps, innovative practice and resources

- Small National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) School for Social Care Research funded project (2023 - 24).

- Produced a free short report/resource: offers baseline snapshot of teaching and learning in England: the gaps, innovative practice and links to useful resources.

- Contributes to growing body of research evidence and advocates more systematic teaching and learning to prepare social workers to address inequalities in access to support for this excluded and disadvantaged population.

Download at: https://doi.org/10.18742/pub01-172

Background to this study

- Addresses one finding of larger NIHR SSCR funded HSCWRU-led study (2019 – 2023) on <u>Safeguarding responses to homelessness and self-neglect</u>: that social workers (SWs), including those leading Adult Safeguarding, may be under-prepared for working with people experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness (MEH).

- Many SWs reported limited learning on qualification courses and uncertain attitudes about the role of social work in this area; those SWs who are striving to drive good practice in this area are often isolated and unsupported by peers, who do not recognise the value of this work.

- Hence <u>this project</u>; project on <u>specialist homeless social worker role</u> (report Nov 2023); and support for <u>national Peer Network</u> (est Oct 2023).

Outline of the report/resource

NIHR | School for Social Care Research

Addressing multiple exclusion homelessness in social w... Research Programme in th... London. It is funded by the...

Addressing m... education in E...

This report presents fin... homelessness (MEH) is ... and shares ideas, innova...

Main message...
Messages from our 'Ca... responses from approxi... that provide social work... follow up interviews wi... alongside innovative te...

- This project contrib... evidence that highl... social work prepare... more systematic te... workers to address... excluded and disad...
- Half of university 'C... report that homele... social work curricu... lecture or seminar... coverage (including...
- Teaching on multip... regarded as 'niche',... students a space to... encourage them to... perpetuate stigma a...
- Over half of respon... people with lived e... but this can be very... experience are rare... students, but depe... availability. It may... experience speaker...
- 85% courses offer a... homelessness setti... stakeholders as ric... challenges include... These non-statutor... second-rate option... employability or st...
- 78% of CfE respond... and in particular to... Curriculum pressur... teaching on MEH, b... resources. All woul...

What is N... Homeless...

Multiple Exc... is a term tha... between ho... of deep soci... experience... substance u... 'street cultu...

'a distinctive... vulnerable s... homeless po...

A range of fa... people both... homeless, p... these includ... experiences... acquired bra... conditions a...

Past negativ... services and... discriminati... mistrust and... seeking or a...

Towards 'Inclusion Social Care' for people experiencing MEH?

The estima... people exp... increased b... 2021. Amo... mean age a... 40s (ONS fi...

Social Wor... training sta...

Back...

This proje... safeguard... homeless... College L...

Semi-str... betwee... participa... social w... current... homeles... professio... neglect, i... experienc... 'umbrella... professio... contribut... appropria...

One stud... Safeguard... experienc... teaching... recomme... understa... approach... those w... across En... Howeve... innovativ... 'snapsh...

Project ethics, methods, lim...

Minimal Risk Research Ethics permission was secure... College London, registration number: MRA-22/23-3...

An initia... studies)... and is re...

Snapshot of teaching

The Call for Evidence (CfE) findings summa... here, with additional illustrative quotes fr... interviews, relate to teaching and learning... undergraduate degrees, postgraduate mas... degrees and diplomas, apprenticeship and... track programmes across England.

Scope and forms of current teaching

- Roughly a quarter of universities repor... report more extensive coverage, inclu... pages 4 to 5; the remaining half of uni...
- In terms of current practice, 35% who offer direct... policy, or law and policy combined. 20% offer the... with aspects of law and policy. 20% teach throug... local charities or people with lived experience, an... remaining 25% teach on homelessness in module... on all degrees) or 'contemporary issues' modules, ...
- Within reflection, ethics, values and 'critical' socia... students with spaces to critically reflect on societ... ability to recognise and resist narratives that can ...

    '(It's important we are) building those foundatio... that can persist: ... 'They've been offered someth... 'intentional homelessness' culture that does abs... or critical reflection is the key, really, to just try to...

Involvement of lived experience perspectives

CASE STUDIES of inn... Multiple exclusion hom...

Thank you to our Call for Evidence...

Case Study 1 – People in Environm... (Problem-Based Learning)

Students are given one of several c... to work on as a group exercise. On... case studies involves a homeless c... are sleeping rough in a city centre... Stud... their... Som... hom... assu... They... unde... ident... They...

Practice placem...

85% of Call for Evidence res... the possibility of a placeme... occasional placement for or... homelessness service settin... cohort. These were explore... providers and academics, a... challenges of these placeme...

A poor substitute for a st...

This study questions one na... seen by some as a substitute... respondents report being u...

    'As part of our teachi... our use of placement...

    '...we really struggled... placements first and s... good proportion of th... heavy, umm, reliance...

This narrative was also evide... employment. They describe... could offer a 'wider breadth... the social work role outside...

Suggested resources

For more see the National Peer Network for social workers specialising in homelessness webpage.

Films

Beryl – Series of short films by Ellie Atkins, Manager of an Entrenched Rough Sleeper Social Work Team.
Episode 1 - What you need to know, to end rough sleeping (13 mins)
Episode 2 - Why You Need To Know About Executive Functioning (10 mins)
Episode 3 - What We Need To Do To End Rough Sleeping (7 mins)

Searching for Answers – Short film (10 mins) shares personal experiences of multiple exclusion homelessness and workbook on co-occurring conditions for further learning by NHS Transformation Partners in Health and Care.

Clarissa - Short film (23 mins) with accompanying Resource Pack by Groundswell to improve the support of people affected by homelessness. Clarissa's story is woven from real experiences of people facing homelessness.

Strengthening adult safeguarding responses to homelessness and self-neglect – Short animation (4 mins) of summary research findings from a national study led by HSCWRU at King's College London.

Articles

User and carer perspectives

Grant, S. (2023), 'Dancing Stars from Chaos: The Impact of Specialist Social Worker Involvement upon the Experiences o... a Brain Injury Survivor', The British Journal of Social Work, 53(3), 1841–1848, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad027

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Voronka, J. and Grant, J. (2022) Service user storytelling in social work education: goals, constraints, strategies, and risks, Social Work Education, 41(5), pp.977-992. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2021.1908251

Understanding multiple exclusion homelessness

Fitzpatrick, S., Johnsen, S. and White, M. (2011), 'Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK: Key Patterns and Intersections'. Social Policy and Society.10(4):501-512. https://doi.org/10.1017/S147474641100025X

Further reading including case studies and practice briefings

Mason, K. and Harris, J. (forthcoming) Crossing the Threshold: Addressing Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in Social Work Education.

What happens if you leave hospital, and you are homeless? Two stories - true case studies co-produced by a Peer Research Advisory Group of 'Experts by Experience', as part of a national research study led by HSCWRU at King's College London.

Harris, J., Martineau, S., Manthorpe, J., Burridge, S., Ornelas, B., Tinelli, M. and Cornes, M. (2023), 'Social work practice with self-neglect and homelessness: Findings from vignette-based interviews', The British Journal of Social Work, 53(4), 2256-2276, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcac180

Care and support and homelessness - Top tips on the role of adult social care (2022) Local Government Association

Methods

Scoping Review of Literature – 22 studies

National 'Call for Evidence' from Universities – 45 responses from 39 (almost 50% SW providers in England)

Interviews with Academics – 15 conducted

Interviews with Placement Providers – 6 conducted

Group interviews with Students – 9 participants

Key messages from literature

Homelessness runs alongside issues all social workers (SWs) work with; SWs have key skills for work with people who experience complex needs and are marginalised, yet this topic is often neglected

- Aykanian and Ryan-Dedominicis (2021) three tiers of curriculum integration: low to high effort.

- Creative classroom approaches help to engage values / biases or invigorate creative thinking outside what individual 'silos' can do. Some inter-disciplinary learning approaches (Petrovich and Navarro, 2020; Siegel et al, 2020) or academic-industry partnerships (Watson et al, 2021)

- Lived experience is sometimes thought of as gold standard but this has a range of problems when it comes to more extreme marginalisation and normative discourses around 'recovery' may be expected, so is delicate and needs a careful approach (Veronka and Grant, 2022)

- Important to remember students may have their own experiences of insecure housing or homelessness (Mulrenan et al, 2018; Crutchfield et al, 2020)

Call for Evidence: Extent of Coverage

Coverage of topic on SW programme
(No. of positive responses)

Legend: ■ Coverage of topic on programme
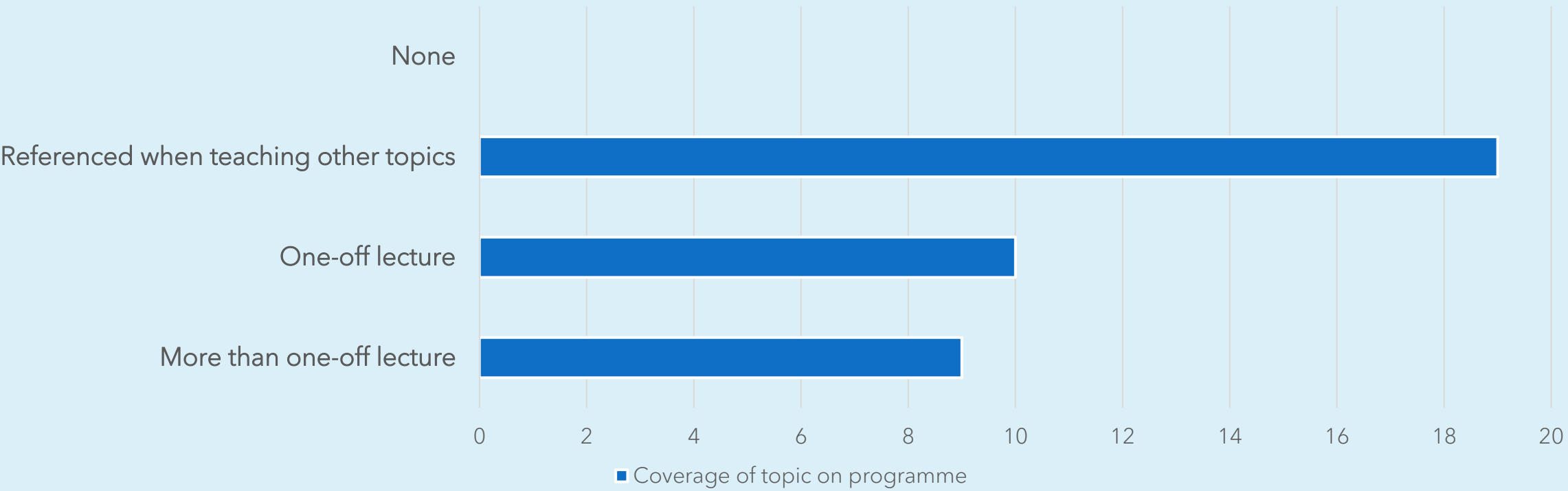
Call for Evidence: Inclusion and Barriers

Where is teaching included?
(% of positive responses)
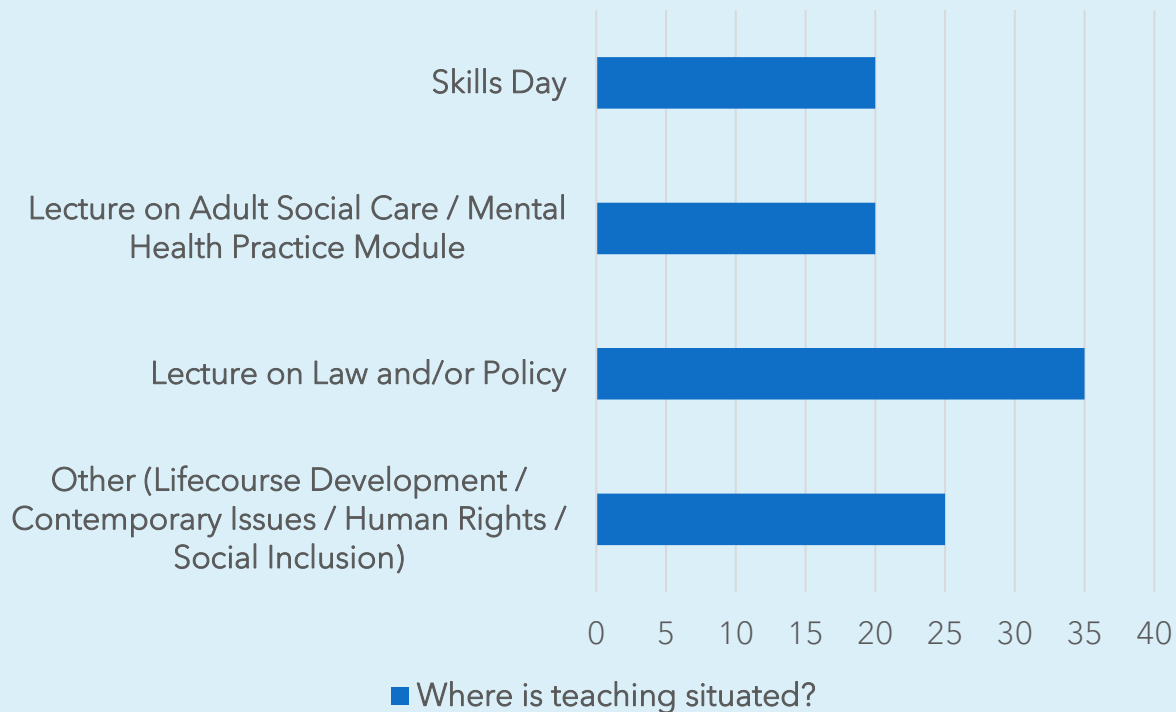
Barriers
(No. of positive responses)
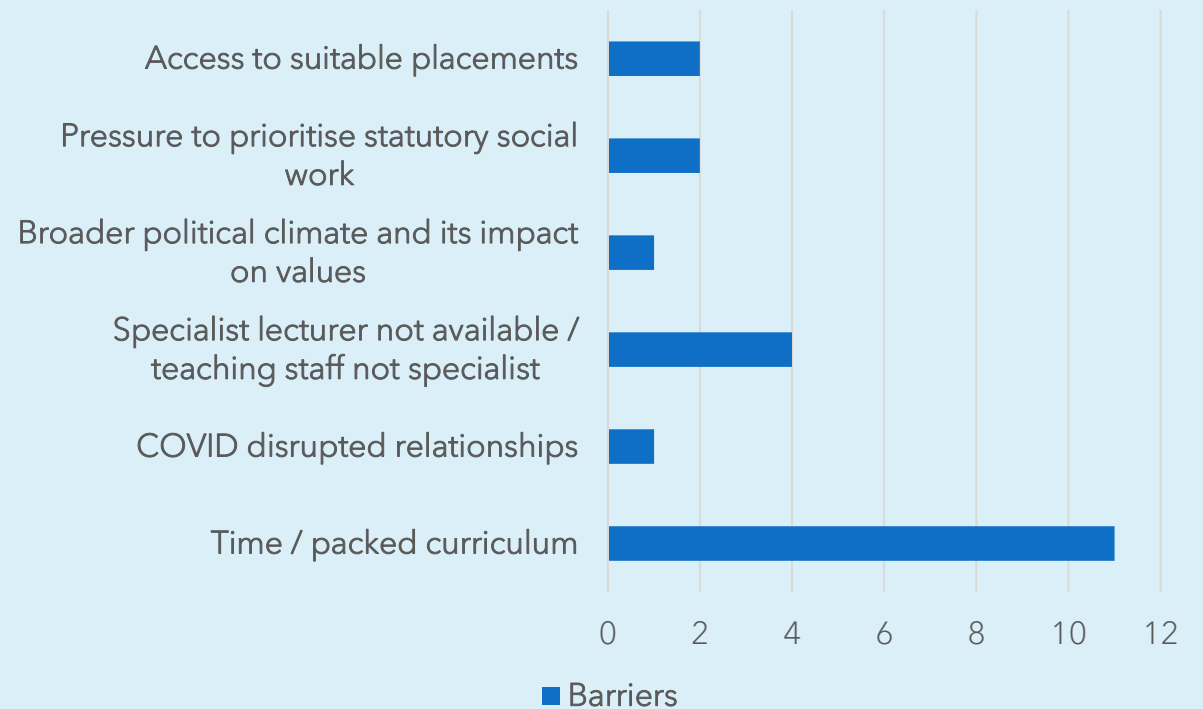
Particularly innovative examples of teaching

- **Validation with Chartered Institute of Housing** – "(We) insert housing in the core modules, so as they go through, I go in and do sessions on homelessness in relation to professionalism, partnership working, the life cycle… different elements of the core social work curriculum" (Academic interview 1).

- **Widening participation partnership with local charity** – "We were asked by a local homelessness charity to do a session on resilience with their residents… (which turned into) a 3 or 4 month course where we teach them academic skills and critical thinking based on lived experience… The brilliant thing for our social work students is they meet first hand people who are really, they are so honest about what's happened to them, and the feedback from the students is it's really useful and humbling" (Academic interview 3).

- **Problem-based learning** – "Based on a homelessness case I had worked with, what always struck me was the 'ping pong' thing: they sent her back and forth, back and forth, she'd rock up at social services and we'd be saying *'There's nothing we can do - you need to go back to homelessness'*… (U)sing a problem-based learning approach… we can actually dramatize it in the classroom, so we physically have this person walking from one place to another… made it very real to the students … We tie that in with legal literacy and thinking *'How does this work and what role do we do we have*?'" (Academic 9 - interview)

- **Use of film in inter-professional learning** - "We have an interprofessional event (for) students from the medical school and social workers… (who) work together to develop a risk assessment, unpick the reasons why (X) is homeless and to select person centred tools to facilitate engagement" (Participant 11, CfE)

Placements in homelessness settings

Do you offer placements in homelessness? (No. of positive responses)
- Yes
- No
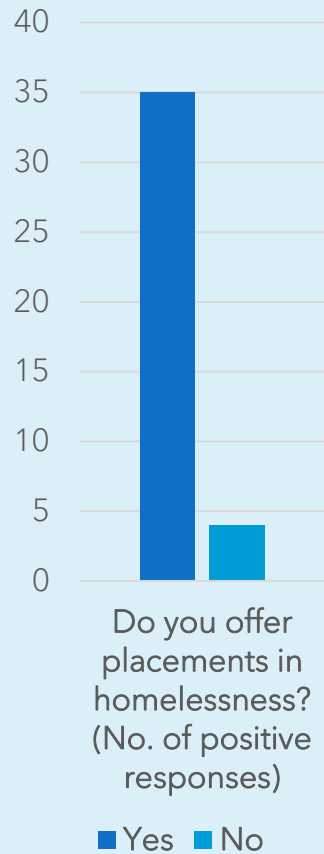
- "Of course there is, you know, lots of complexity here, homeless agencies do exist but they're smaller. The ones that are very much established and perhaps in a position to grow student placements have already been taken, if you like, by the bigger universities and therefore it's harder to get to get those relationships." (Academic 3)

- "We did, but currently don't, use an outreach service. This is because they needed students to be able to work late evenings and with student poverty this was no longer viable" (CFE Participant 1)

- "We're not part of a teaching partnership and we really struggled to get statutory local authority placements … we work with four plus large homelessness service providers and have a really, really high proportion of placements first and second year going out to various different types of homeless provision" (Academic 8)

Student roles on placements

- "They get initiated into building relationships with our regular clients, sometimes its sporadic but down the line they've learned how to welcome people, to properly listen: '*Tell us your story*' rather than '*What's your date of birth*' or going down the form filling road. So it's 'Come in, have a cuppa, have a sit down. What's going on? …" (Placement Provider 8)

- "My role was that of a Housing First support worker … pretty much hit the ground running when I started placement. We started off with one or two cases being allocated to me and it was entirely my work to do. So, I did initial assessments with some, building that bond with someone" (Student 1)

- "It was a real hands-on experience working with the street team - I went out and would visit people that were street homeless… in hostels, people that moved from hostels to their homes and supported them… met people from prison and went to appointments with people. And I think that was some of the most eye-opening experiences was walking along alongside people in their shoes … seeing how they experienced it, with all the additional challenges that they had" (Student 6)

- "We provide emergency accommodation for homeless people in the homes of local volunteers … Students get involved in their placement and they do different tasks, they are the main point of contact for the client when they get in contact with the service, they explain about the service, but also they complete the risk assessment for the client and that's obviously to make sure that they will be safe within the volunteer home and then they support the client as well with the move on, they also help us with the volunteers." (Placement Provider 7)

Under-prepared and under-informed?

- "Before my placement, I didn't even know social workers helped homeless people" (Student 2)

- "I think we maybe touched on it in like the social policy units. We maybe had like one or two lessons that that mentioned homelessness, but it certainly wasn't anything substantial" (Student 3)

- "Placements that students were often going on, particularly that first placement, which not always, but was often third sector, and that often included either very explicitly a homelessness organisation … I recognized that students were going out and hadn't really been taught anything about how was it, or homelessness" (Academic 9)

- "But in terms of the homelessness legislation they don't know much about it. They don't know about how the local authority will deal with the homeless person when they present themselves and into the local authority. Sometimes when we get clients that they are refused support from the local authority, they don't know the reason" (Placement Provider 7)

Teaching as challenging

Teaching on MEH is challenging in relation to assumptions that students may have around the experience of homelessness, but it also challenges dominant and institutional ideas about what is legitimately considered to be social work. This may be as challenging for educators and the wider profession as it is for students.

- "A lot of students come in and think it's just that they haven't got four walls and a bed to live in, once we give them that that everything will be fine, we have to sort of demystify this concept of homelessness. Students come in with a lot of stereotypes and preconceptions" (Placement provider 1)

- "They think if they're not filling the assessment form then they're not doing social work and you think, you know, that's just the set up we have that rotates around statutory social work. That's not what social work is. And I think that that is a challenge for them" (Academic 5)

- "There is a belief that actually, it's 'statutory' that is 'real social work'. (Teaching innovation around MEH) is all just soft stuff… and I think degree apprenticeships feed into that because they're funded by the councils, I guess the fast-track stuff too" (Academic 15)

- "It's really hard, how do you teach this material in the current status quo" (Academic 10)

Teaching on homeless as integrative

Teaching on MEH integrates a wide range of aspects of the traditional social work curriculum, so can consolidate learning about social work (mental capacity, social exclusion, communication skills) but it also illustrates how homelessness is encountered across the range of sectors in which social workers are employed.

- "It's so complex and layered, you're dealing with so many different things at the same time, mental health, loneliness, people who are on the edges of society, it's hugely complicated" (Academic 15)

- "Show me a social work case that doesn't have some form of housing problem or homelessness, its very, very common, so we inserted housing in the core modules and as they go through, I go in for sessions on professionalism, partnership working, there's a module on the life cycle, I talk about children and housing, adults and housing, older people and housing" (Academic 1)

- "Students get to really look at the complexity of things and the uncertainty and it brings in so much, physical and mental health, poverty, trauma, relationship breakdown, drug and alcohol use, all those things and there's a lot of correlation between people who have been in care and adults who are homeless" (Placement provider 1)

Teaching as transformative

Teaching on MEH can be transformative when it helps students to engage with values that are widely held in society and holds these up in the light of the conditions in which people are living in contemporary society in the UK – this can be shocking. Encounters with the extreme forms of precarity mean engaging with ethical questions in a more open and critical way.

- "They talk openly in class about how shocked they are by the conditions people are expected to live in and they can make that transition to thinking about what it might be like to be this person in this situation, and then when they link up with a local agency, they can see there might be support available, but also specific challenges" (Academic 14)

- "One takeaway is that we sometimes have to break the rules. I have done certain things on placement where I've gone against what theory would suggest or what my professors have said in class, but that was the best outcome in that situation and I had to stick to it and it might feel wrong in the moment and you morally and ethically might not agree to it. Your personal morals clashed with your professional morals, but you have to do it" (Student 4)

- "I met them from prison. I had to let them go off and score and wait for them. When they then came back we went and got a methadone script for him to go into a placement. I remember finding that so uncomfortable because it was against everything that I believed and my morals" (Student 6)

- "Looking at actual homelessness and that was a real eye opener for my student … saying how cynical she felt about people being regarded as intentionally homeless, and this kind of rubber stamps on the application" (Academic 7 – interview)

Parting shots 1–Students want to know more about non-traditional settings and have space to discuss in class

- "I don't know how you would go about doing it, but obviously I think when you take on the social work course, you picture it, you're either gonna be in child protection or you're gonna be working with adults and that's it. But there's so many smaller sections in it that that I don't think are necessarily advertised. I'm really grateful that I did get that experience, but obviously not everybody does. So I think maybe just education on how many vast roles of social work can do, should be at the forefront, because I think it would actually appeal to a lot more people" (Student 8)

- "I think we need to come back and have a platform to share our experiences about going into placements in the homelessness setting because there is a stigma and stereotype that people associate with this group. I have seen fellow students who felt uncomfortable when they've seen homeless people on the street and has been OK because of had the placement experienced, but not everyone has" (Student 1)

Parting shots 2 – Stop thinking of homelessness as 'niche' for social workers

- "I think every placement's talking about housing of some description, isn't it?" (Academic 6)

- "Homelessness and housing in a broader sense, it is something they will encounter … it's not niche, social workers in and across teams: mental health, learning disability, older people, children and families are going to come across housing and homelessness in some form in their careers. So I think perhaps that's one thing we can do is assert, that it's not niche, and therefore that it needs to be part of mainstream curriculum" (Academic 9)

Note – An academic article is under review, further presenting/discussing study findings:

Mason, K. and Harris, J. (forthcoming) Crossing the Threshold: Addressing Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in Social Work Education

References / further reading

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Thanks & disclaimers

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