

## ***Being Missed or Missing Out: where next for women and rough sleeping?***

On Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November, over 160 professionals came together for our webinar, ***Being Missed or Missing Out: where next for women and rough sleeping?***

This event – the first in a proposed series - sought to interrogate and challenge ‘traditional’ ways of looking at and engaging with ‘rough sleeping.’ It considered the way ‘rough sleeping’ is characterised, counted, and operationalised and how this can affect women. The event shone a light on the work being done by organisations in the sector to create and deliver specialist women-centred responses and considered how women experiencing ‘multiple disadvantage’ and homelessness are currently being catered for.

Along with a contribution from Spring Housing’s Thea Raisbeck, we were joined on the day by representatives from Basis Yorkshire, Leeds City Council, Porchlight (Kent), Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse and Solace Women’s Aid. The event was expertly Chaired by Michaela Campbell, Ending Women’s Homelessness Lead at Homeless Link.

You can view a recording of the webinar:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/m2ZRZILxl6wyz8E20kd\\_HucExERfJJSuueLSm\\_zhH30JmUBcZ\\_F6XSez4WpD2qgA2igokAFPQe\\_34KAy.7ZR3vcvXSVv-GTUB](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/m2ZRZILxl6wyz8E20kd_HucExERfJJSuueLSm_zhH30JmUBcZ_F6XSez4WpD2qgA2igokAFPQe_34KAy.7ZR3vcvXSVv-GTUB)

**Thea Raisbeck’s** opening talk set out some of the key issues and perspectives around the complex topic of women and rough sleeping. This included setting out a challenge to the sector around the way rough sleeping is counted and defined; reviewing research evidence; exploring intersectionality and the way we conceptualise (and compartmentalise) violence, trauma, and abuse.

You can view the slides for Thea’s presentation here: [Presentation Slides](#)

**Porchlight’s Laura Davis** gave an overview of the women’s services project at Porchlight – a project to champion positive change for women within mixed-gender homelessness services. Laura discussed the project’s origins, initial actions taken, the impacts of the pandemic on women who are homeless, and progress made so far. Laura also shared some of the project’s positive outcomes and key learnings.

You can view the slides for Laura’s presentation [here: Porchlight – Women’s Services – External Presentation](#)

**Basis Yorkshire’s Cat Tottie**, along with **Bryan Wagnder-Adair and Lisa Fisher from Leeds City Council** spoke about Leeds’ history of innovating change for women. Leeds City

Council and Basis Yorkshire have recently been working in partnership to identify space for change within homelessness and housing policies that disproportionately impact women. Their presentation explored how these changes were made possible, discussing the role of both the statutory and third sector in driving for meaningful improvement to systems. The presentation also explored the work done by both agencies in responding to women's homelessness, and the groundwork laid for future strategic responses to hidden homelessness.

You can view the presentation [here: Basis Women's Homelessness and Strategic Change](#)

**Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse's Natalie Wong and Michaela Lynch from Solace Women's Aid discussed the** Westminster VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) Housing First project. This project provides permanent, independent housing and intensive support for 30 women experiencing long term homelessness, alongside any form of VAWG and multiple disadvantage. As a trauma and gender-informed service, the project focuses on ending homelessness for some of the most marginalised and chronically homeless women in Westminster. Standing Together manage partnerships within a coalition of housing partners who provide units for the project. Solace Women's Aid work to build relationships with the women and provide intensive 'woman-led' support to help them maintain a tenancy and improve physical and mental wellbeing.

You can view the Westminster Housing First project presentation [here: Westminster Housing First](#)

The feedback during and after the event was incredibly positive, and there is a clear appetite to continue these conversations; working collectively to improve the circumstances of, and provision for, women. All those who registered for the event have been sent a short survey about the shape and content of future events along with a list of resources around the topic of women and rough sleeping.

We will soon be planning the next event in this series, so watch this space for further information!