

19 May 2026

## **Duties under Section 6(A) of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988**

**Under Article 6A5 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 (as amended by the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland), various agencies shall take the homelessness strategy into account in the exercise of their functions. As a named agency under the 1988 Order, please provide any information held which relates to how the homelessness strategy is taken into account in the exercise of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's functions.**

**Please treat this as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.**

**Please include any information held during the period of the current Homelessness Strategy, which began in 2022.**

The Belfast Inclusion Health Service (BIHS) use the homeless strategy to guide their day-to-day practice and plan the care that they deliver to those experiencing homelessness across the Belfast Trust Area.

Some of the key areas, aims and objectives that we work towards to improve the health outcomes of the population include:

Prioritization of Blood Borne Virus (BBV) testing, Hepatitis C (HCV) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) with those experiencing homelessness and who inject drugs

- Timely referrals to secondary care specialist service Hepatology / Genitourinary Medicine (GUM)
- Support treatment concordance both Hepatitis C and antiretroviral therapies
- Providing Needle Exchange service to reduce transmission of both viruses
- Prevention – through increased education on transmission awareness, safer injecting and safe sharps disposal
- Ongoing joint specialist outreach to ensure follow-up and treatment planning- Genitourinary medicine, Hepatology and Sexual & Reproductive Health
- Participation in Unlinked Anonymous Monitoring Survey (UAM) for HCV
- Service user Focus Groups raising awareness of BBV transmission and service user opinion on treatment adherence
- Work on Phase 2 of the Hepatitis C Elimination plan is currently underway

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#### Further development and embedding of the role of the Band 5 Support Worker

- Identifying new service users and establishing credibility and rapport with existing service users
- Treatment support for service users on HCV treatment and Antiretroviral therapy
- Assisting in primary and secondary care appointments
- Advocating on behalf of service users
- Participation in BBV focus groups and
- Participation in the needle exchange programme, harm reduction, and reduced transmission.

#### Pathway Developments

- Pathways have been successfully established with teams and departments relevant to those experiencing homelessness, such as Emergency Department (ED), Mental Health services, Adult Safeguarding, Hepatology, Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare and GUM.
- BIHS are currently working to develop a pathway with HMP to ensure a better transition of discharge for service users.

#### Local Enhanced General Practitioner Services

- Aimed at any individual experiencing homelessness in the Belfast area, particularly those who have complex and diverse health and social care needs and often difficulty in accessing timely treatment and care.
- The local enhanced service will enable: - GP registration for this population - A gateway to appropriate referrals both Primary and Secondary care - Timely access to treatment - Ensure chronic health conditions are monitored and treated appropriately - Reduce the ED inappropriate attendances for conditions treatable by the GP - Reduction in hospital admissions - Provide opportunities for case reviews and joint Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings to improve outcomes for this population