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Homelessness in New Zealand

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SUMMARY

- ▶ In New Zealand, homelessness is officially defined as having no options to acquire safe and secure housing.
- ▶ Unaffordable accommodation has been an on-going issue, along with concern over homelessness.
- ▶ Factors often linked to homelessness include a lack of affordable accommodation, poverty and unemployment, mental health issues, emotional trauma and addictions.
- ▶ Affordable accommodation is a key measure to address homelessness.

Introduction

This paper examines homelessness in New Zealand, particularly those people living without shelter and in temporary accommodation given they can experience severe health problems. The paper first provides a definition of homelessness and a brief history of unaffordable accommodation. It then reviews the current state of homelessness and characteristics. Finally, it outlines recent initiatives designed and intended to help address the issue.

Defining homelessness

A working group charged with the task of developing an official definition of homelessness was established in July 2008. This included Statistics New Zealand, Housing New Zealand Corporation and the Ministry of Social Development. The *New Zealand Definition of Homelessness* was published by Statistics New Zealand in 2009. Homelessness was defined as having no other options to acquire safe and secure housing. According to the working group, there are four categories of homelessness:

- Without shelter: No shelter or makeshift shelter. Examples include living on the street and inhabiting improvised dwellings, such as shacks or cars.
- Temporary accommodation: Overnight shelter or 24-hour accommodation in a non-private dwelling not intended for long-term living. These include hostels for the homeless, transitional supported accommodation for the homeless, and women's refuges. Also in this category are people staying long-term in motor camps and boarding houses.

- Sharing accommodation: Temporary accommodation for people through sharing someone else's private dwelling. The usual residents of the dwelling are not considered homeless.
- Uninhabitable housing: Dilapidated dwellings where people reside.¹

A 2013 University of Otago study using 2001 and 2006 Census data measured homelessness nationally. The authors of this study used the term 'severe housing deprivation' rather than 'homelessness' because the latter 'is burdened by stereotype'.²

Historical overview

1860s – 1960s

In 1864 the *Otago Daily Times* reported that Dunedin and Auckland had 'filthy back slums', by 1903 Auckland's Chief District Health Officer was still reporting that the city contained 'ruinous and insanitary houses'.³ The Liberal Government built workers' dwellings, and housing loans for workers were introduced in 1923. Overcrowding nevertheless increased with the Great Depression.⁴ A 1936 national survey found nearly a third of the total urban housing stock was unsatisfactory and 15% of this only fit for demolition.⁵ Māori in particular experienced poor housing conditions.⁶ The first Labour Government loaned money for private house purchases and built state housing to rent.⁷ During the 1950s, the National Government moved to reduce the waiting list for state housing and promoted home ownership, but lengthy waits for some people were reported. Likewise, concern was expressed over severe overcrowding, especially among Māori.⁸ By the late 1950s, Wellington's housing needs were identified as 'particularly acute'.⁹ In the 1960s voluntary organisations recorded a gradual increase in some groups experiencing housing difficulties. The Christchurch Methodist Church night shelter found that their main users were employed people who could not afford other accommodation, unmarried women with children, and those leaving homes because of domestic violence also increasingly sought shelter.¹⁰

1970s – 1990s

In 1975, the Housing Corporation referred to the 'serious effects' of a housing shortage with 'many situations of overcrowding', and a 1979 pilot survey of Auckland found that numerous people did not have access to adequate housing.¹¹ Surveys conducted in the early 1980s concluded there was a 'housing crisis' in Christchurch, and in Auckland homelessness also

¹ Statistics New Zealand, [New Zealand Definition of Homelessness](#), July 2009, pp.6-7 and 20.

² Kate Amore and others, [Severe Housing Deprivation: The problem and its measurement](#), Official Statistics Research Series, Statistics New Zealand, September 2013, pp.7-8.

³ '[Inveniam viam aut faciam](#)', *Otago Daily Times*, 28 January 1864, p.4. See also Ben Schrader, *We Call It Home – A History of State Housing in New Zealand*, Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2005, p.22.

⁴ Schrader, pp.26-27 and 30-31; and 'The futile life of the tramps', *Waikato Times*, 2 December 2013, p.14.

⁵ Tony Simpson, *The Slump – The 1930s Depression: Its origins and aftermath*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 1990, pp.95-96.

⁶ Philippa Howden-Chapman, Sarah Bierre and Chris Cunningham, 'Building Inequality' in Max Rashbrooke (editor), *Inequality – A New Zealand Crisis*, Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2013, pp.107-108.

⁷ Housing New Zealand, '[History of State Housing](#)'; and Schrader, pp.41-42.

⁸ Schrader, pp.48 and 61. See also Howden-Chapman et al., p.108.

⁹ *Report of the State Advances Corporation of New Zealand for the year ended 31 March 1959* [1959] I AJHR B13 at 24.

¹⁰ Gael Ferguson, *Building the New Zealand Dream*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Limited, 1994, p.211.

¹¹ Report of the Housing Corporation of New Zealand for the year ended 31 March 1975 [1975] II AJHR B13 at 7; and Katherine Percy, *Homelessness in the Auckland Region*, Wellington: National Housing Commission, Research Paper 82/5, June 1982, p.1.

appeared to be a 'significant problem'.¹² A 1988 report by the National Housing Commission estimated at least 20,000 households had a serious housing need.¹³

In 1991, full market rents for state houses were introduced, with the government providing an accommodation supplement. The Housing Corporation was restructured, and some state housing sold.¹⁴ The Citizens Advice Bureaux Association received 2,500 emergency housing inquiries in 1995, a 40% increase over the past three years. Contributing factors included a shortage of state housing, along with rents and bonds often being too high for beneficiaries and low income earners.¹⁵ Concern was expressed over homelessness in large cities and smaller areas.¹⁶ After the 1999 general election there was a moratorium on selling state housing and income-related rents were reintroduced.¹⁷

Recent years (2000 –)

There was publicity and discussion over homelessness during the early 2000s, and a 2007 report on homelessness for the Methodist Mission said that increasing attention from media and local government over the past few years suggested growing concern about homelessness.¹⁸ Parliament's Social Services Committee received a New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness (NZCEH) briefing on homelessness in February 2011. It resolved to inquire further into boarding houses, the interim report finding 'a number of significant issues that are worthy of pursuing further'.¹⁹ The Committee heard that dangerous and insanitary conditions existed among lower market boarding houses. According to the Committee –

- Further consideration should be given to whether current minimum standards were appropriate, and the ways relevant legislation could be updated and made consistent.
- The merits of taking a more proactive approach to ensuring compliance with building and health and safety standards or establishing a compulsory registration system could usefully be examined further.
- More central-local government collaboration and coordinating mechanisms were needed to share information.
- Government departments could develop risk-based standards for local authorities to apply.²⁰

¹² Pamela Lea and Janet Cole, *Homelessness in Christchurch*, Christchurch: Christchurch Housing Research Unit, Research Paper 83/1, 1983, p.80; and Percy, pp.26-27.

¹³ Report of the Housing Corporation of New Zealand for the year ended 31 March 1989 [1987-1990] IV AJHR B13 at 9.

¹⁴ Schrader, p.65; and Howden-Chapman et al., p.110.

¹⁵ 'Homeless surge predicted', *The Dominion*, 9 September 1996, p.2.

¹⁶ 'Numbers at night shelter outgrow beds', *The Evening Post*, 24 March 1998, p.9; 'City Mission Numbers Skyrocket', Scoop Auckland, 16 July 1999; 'Shelters fill as homeless feel winter's savage bite', *The Press*, 13 June 1996, p.1; and 'Homeless men suffer most', *Evening Standard*, 23 April 1998, p.3.

¹⁷ Schrader, p.75.

¹⁸ 'On the street with no home to go to', *The Dominion Post*, 22 August 2002, p.3; 'Workers wade into homelessness row', *The Dominion Post*, 9 November 2002, p.5; 'Parks turn away city's homeless', *The Press*, 28 June 2004, p.1; 'Meeting called to address homeless issue', Auckland City Council, 17 June 2004; and Chez Leggatt-Cook, *Homelessness in New Zealand: A Discussion and Synthesis of Research Findings*, Report prepared for Methodist Mission Northern, November 2007, p.3.

¹⁹ 'Inquiry into boarding houses in New Zealand', Social Services Committee, New Zealand Parliament, 30 September 2011; and 'Inquiry into boarding houses in New Zealand', Interim report of the Social Services Committee, 30 September 2011, pp.1-2 and 4. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment defines boarding houses as residential premises that contain one or more boarding rooms, with facilities for communal use by the tenants and is occupied, or intended to be occupied by at least six tenants at any one time. However, boarding houses have been defined in various ways. While the 2006 Census identified 177 occupied boarding houses, the Department of Building and Housing listed over 500. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 'Boarding house tenancy rules'.

²⁰ 'Inquiry into boarding houses in New Zealand', pp.3-4. Also see Max Rashbrooke, 'Nowhere else to go', *New Zealand Listener*, 13 October 2012, pp.31-32.

On 30 June 2014 Priority A social housing waitlist applications totalled 3,188.²¹ The NZCEH, an incorporated society seeking to end homelessness by 2020, has supported the call for a cross-party approach to achieve this.²²

Estimated size of the homeless population

It is very difficult to accurately estimate the number of homeless, but some figures are available (see Table 1). The 2013 University of Otago study using 2001 and 2006 Census figures and emergency housing data estimated that 12,900-21,100 dwellings would be needed to house the 2006 severely housing deprived population. These were in addition to housing required to address other forms of need, and underlying demand.²³

Table 1: Selected national estimates for homeless and severe housing deprived

Date of statistics	Source
2009	Housing Shareholders Advisory Group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban homeless (those sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings) likely to number less than 300 with 500-1,000 in rural improvised housing. 8,000 to 20,000 in temporary accommodation unsuited for long-term habitation (caravans, campgrounds, substandard housing and boarding houses).²⁴
2007	Centre for Research Evaluation and Social Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 285 (2.5%) of at risk young and vulnerable young clients had no fixed abode/street. Another 123 lived in emergency housing, 38 in camping grounds, 27 in hotels/motels/backpackers and four in night shelters (1.7%).²⁵
2006	University of Otago: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33,946 people experienced severe housing deprivation on census night. Those without accommodation numbered 5,031. 65% of severely housing deprived people lived with others in severely crowded permanent private dwellings; 18% lived in commercial accommodation (such as boarding houses or camping grounds) and marae, and 15% lived on the street or in improvised or mobile dwellings. 2% lived in emergency accommodation such as night shelters or women's refuges. Most severely housing deprived people lived in main urban centres, the majority were in the upper North Island, with 44% in Auckland. The prevalence of severe housing deprivation increased in all regions except Tasman and Nelson from 2001 to 2006. Severe housing deprivation was relatively consistent across urban and rural areas.²⁶

²¹ Priority A clients are people considered 'at risk' and include households with a severe and persistent housing need that must be addressed immediately. The household is unable to access and/or sustain suitable, adequate and affordable alternative housing. Ministry of Social Development, ['Social housing waitlist'](#).

²² [New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness \(NZCEH\)](#); and NZCEH, ['Support for cross-party approach to end homelessness by 2020'](#), press release, 14 October 2013.

²³ Amore et al., pp.52 and 54.

²⁴ Housing Shareholders Advisory Group, [Home and Housed: A Vision for Social Housing in New Zealand](#), April 2010, p.14.

²⁵ Kay Saville-Smith and others, [Access to Safe and Secure Housing for At Risk and Vulnerable Young People](#), Centre for Research Evaluation and Social Assessment, November 2008, p.15.

²⁶ Amore et al., pp.8, 31, 32 and 34. Note: Figures in the emergency accommodation category were derived from administrative data. The number of services that provided 2006 data was nearly three times higher than provided 2001 data, so the difference between the 2001 and 2006 numbers should not be interpreted as growth.

Date of Statistics	Source
2001	University of Otago: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28,917 people experienced severe housing deprivation on census night. Of these, 1,296 were living without accommodation. 67% of the severely housing deprived population were temporary residents in severely crowded permanent private dwellings, 28% were in commercial accommodation and marae, 5% had no accommodation, and 1% used emergency accommodation. Most severely housing deprived people lived in urban areas.²⁷

Regional estimates

Some regional data is available (see Table 2). Unaffordable accommodation is particularly an issue in Christchurch, where earthquakes have reduced the supply of housing, rental accommodation and social housing. Contrasting this, demand for low cost, emergency and temporary housing has increased.²⁸ According to estimates by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, in March 2013 there were 5,510 to 7,405 residents experiencing housing insecurity, compared with 3,750 before the earthquakes.²⁹ In early 2014 Christchurch City Mission social workers received five to six phone calls a week from people desperate for suitable accommodation and the lack of accommodation continues to be publicised.³⁰

Table 2: Estimated homeless in various cities

Location	Source
Auckland	The Auckland City Mission's 2013 Street Count was conducted on the evening of 10 March. ³¹ 68 people were found to be sleeping rough (living without shelter), and eight people who might otherwise have been sleeping rough were accommodated at the James Liston Hostel. A further 13 people who again would have slept rough were in institutional care. The average number of 'rough sleepers' identified over the past ten years on each count equated to 71 persons with their number averaging 65 over the last three years. ³²
Christchurch	In 2013 the Christchurch City Mission's 30-bed night shelter for men accommodated 738 men (with 28% of these new). The average length of stay was 11 nights. The seven-bed women's night shelter accommodated 182 women (63% were new), their stay averaging 9.8 nights. ³³
Hamilton	In August 2012 the Hamilton City Council estimated 30 people were 'living rough'. An estimated 400 did not have 'security of housing'. For instance, they lived in garages or stayed with friends. ³⁴

²⁷ Ibid., pp.31 and p.37.

²⁸ Human Rights Commission, [Monitoring Human Rights in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery](#), December 2013, pp.59-61.

²⁹ This report used the term 'housing insecurity' to reflect the Statistics New Zealand definition of homelessness as 'living situations where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing: are without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household or living in uninhabitable housing'. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, [Housing Pressures in Christchurch – A Summary of the Evidence](#), March 2013, p.1.

³⁰ Correspondence with Christchurch City Mission, 18 February 2014; 'Couch-surfing rising as rental shortage bites', *The Press*, 27 February 2014; 'For mother and child, park the only option', *The Press*, 31 May 2014, p.3; and 'This isn't my sob story - I'm lucky', *The Press*, 11 June 2014.

³¹ This survey sought to identify people sleeping rough (on streets, parks and cars) within a 3 km radius of the Sky Tower.

³² Correspondence with Auckland City Mission, 4 February 2014, and Auckland City Street Count Results 2013.

³³ Correspondence with Christchurch City Mission, 18 February 2014.

³⁴ 'Pressure on city homeless', *Waikato Independent*, 17 August 2012.

Location	Source
Invercargill	During the year to 30 June 2013 the Salvation Army estimated 12 people slept rough. Another seven were in crisis or short-term emergency housing, 12 lived in boarding houses and 133 stayed with family and friends. ³⁵
Palmerston North	In May 2014 an estimated five people were living rough with another 59 housed by the Shepherds Rest charitable trust, which provides social housing. ³⁶
Rotorua	In December 2013 the Rotorua Night Shelter Trust estimated up to 23 people were living on streets. ³⁷
Tauranga	In April 2014 the Tauranga Moana Nightshelter Trust estimated the chronic street homeless numbered 30-40. ³⁸
Wellington	<p>Of the 836 people who engaged with Wellington's Downtown Community Ministry (DCM) services in 2013, 468 experienced homelessness according to the official definition. This compared with 793 in 2012, 427 of them experienced homelessness. People in 2013 experienced homelessness in the following settings (2012 figures in brackets):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 176 Shared/couch surfing (131) • 121 Night Shelter dormitory (132) • 117 Rough sleeping (92) • 107 Boarding house/backpackers (113) • 50 Night shelter hostel (25) • 45 Temporary homeless accommodation (48) • 21 Garage/shed/vehicle (28) • 9 Unknown (23) • 2 Women's refuge (3) • 1 Marae (0) • 1 Dwelling lacking facilities (3) <p>In May 2014, 107 of the 228 people who engaged with DCM services were homeless. This included: 29 shared/couch surfing; 28 rough sleeping; 26 in boarding house/backpackers; 15 in night shelter dormitory; nine in temporary homeless accommodation; five in night shelter hostel; three in garage/shed/vehicle; and one unknown.³⁹</p>

Characteristics and contributing factors

Various issues can increase the likelihood of becoming and staying homeless. These include:

- Lack of affordable accommodation.
- Poverty and unemployment.
- Mental health issues.
- Alcohol, drug and gambling addictions.
- Emotional health and trauma. Traumatic life events include childhood abuse, family breakdowns or instability, foster care, frequent moving, institutional care and parental death.
- Convictions and imprisonment along with a lack of appropriate support following release.
- Discrimination by some landlords.⁴⁰

³⁵ 'Homeless problem worsens', *The Southland Times*, 19 November 2013.

³⁶ Correspondence with Shepard's Rest, 2 May 2014.

³⁷ 'More assistance being planned for city's homeless', *Rotorua Review*, 18 December 2013, p.15.

³⁸ 'Shelter found for Tauranga homeless', *Bay of Plenty Times*, 23 April 2014.

³⁹ Correspondence with Wellington Downtown Community Ministry, 15-16 April and 10 June 2014. Temporary homeless accommodation refers to that accommodation with a fixed time limit. This differentiates it from boarding homes/backpackers. See also Max Rashbrooke, 'In shadows and behind closed doors', *FishHead*, August 2012, p.35.

⁴⁰ Chez Leggatt-Cook, *Homelessness in New Zealand: A Discussion and Synthesis of Research Findings*, Report prepared for Methodist Mission Northern, November 2007, pp.5-6, 54-55 and 61-64; and 'Thousands of homeless Kiwis forced to live in camping grounds', *Taranaki Daily News*, 18 September 2013, p.3.

Demographics

Based on the 2013 University of Otago research, in both 2001 and 2006 the severely housing deprived were predominantly children and young adults, ethnic minorities, and either part of sole-parent families or not accompanied by family. Severe housing deprivation was associated with new migration, especially from the Pacific or North Asia, high residential mobility, limited education, unemployment, labour force exclusion and unskilled work. Of all severely housing deprived adults, 49% worked, studied or did both. Despite this, they had insufficient resources to obtain a minimally adequate home for themselves or their family.⁴¹

The number of males and females who were severely housing deprived was almost even. However, males were more likely than females to be living without any accommodation.⁴² Severely housing deprived adults had a comparatively low level of education. Those who had not finished high school (no qualification) were particularly overrepresented. More than half of all severely housing deprived people were younger than 25 years, and half of these children under 15 years. The three most common ethnicities were European/Other (36%), Māori (34%), and Pacific (16%).⁴³

Of the 107 counted in different homelessness settings by the DCM during May 2014, the majority were male (84). The most common ethnic groups were Māori (49) and New Zealand European (40). More specifically, 23 of the 'rough sleepers' were male with the dominant ethnic groups Māori (13) and New Zealand European (9).⁴⁴ The 2013 Auckland survey of 'rough sleepers' found the majority were Māori and older than 30 years of age.⁴⁵ At the Christchurch City Mission men's night shelter in 2013 the most common ethnic groups were Pākehā (53%), Māori (38%) and Pacific (5%). With regard to the women's night shelter, 50% were Pākehā and 41% Māori.⁴⁶ For Invercargill single men aged between 20 and 49 years were most at risk of homelessness in 2013.⁴⁷

Physical health

People living without any shelter are highly susceptible to potentially severe health problems. These can include poor dental and foot health, sexually transmitted diseases, venereal disease, liver disease, pneumonia, skin diseases along with malnutrition and under-nutrition. Health problems are worsened by few medical facilities and services openly targeting the needs of homeless people living rough, and the stigma of homelessness discouraging access to mainstream health care. The focus on daily survival can also preclude seeking medical attention until problems are severe. Maintaining personal hygiene is challenging with difficulties around showering, washing clothes and storing personal belongings. Moreover, homeless people living on the street can be especially vulnerable to assault and injury.⁴⁸

Mental health

Homeless people are 'excessively burdened' with mental health problems. Mood disorders, primarily major depression, are among the most common psychiatric disorders affecting the homeless.⁴⁹ Mental health issues may raise the risk of homelessness for some people, while the

⁴¹ Amore et al., pp.7-8.

⁴² Ibid., p.41.

⁴³ Ibid., pp.40-43 and 48.

⁴⁴ Correspondence with Downtown Community Ministry, 17 April and 10 June 2014.

⁴⁵ Correspondence with Auckland City Mission, 4 February 2014.

⁴⁶ Correspondence with Christchurch City Mission, 18 February 2014.

⁴⁷ ['Homeless problem worsens'](#), *The Southland Times*, 19 November 2013.

⁴⁸ Leggatt-Cook, pp.55 and 59-61.

⁴⁹ Kate Amore and Philippa Howden-Chapman, 'Mental Health and Homelessness', in Susan J. Smith (editor), *International Encyclopedia of Housing and Home*, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2012, pp.268-269.

stress and hardship of homelessness can increase the likelihood of developing a mental illness. For example, disaffiliation from family and community can have a strong impact on self-esteem and a sense of identity.⁵⁰ In late 2013, Canterbury District Health Board records indicated that 146 mental health service users were either homeless, living in unsafe housing or waiting in services they no longer needed. The Christchurch City Mission estimated about one person a day visited seeking accommodation, with about a quarter suffering some mental illness. The Mission said people with psychiatric disabilities had always been at-risk, but 'it seems that because of the housing shortage they are even more visible now, and consequently even more at-risk'.⁵¹ In December 2013, the Human Rights Commission noted 'We are now seeing high levels of psychosocial harm caused by the stress of community dislocation, financial distress, unresolved insurance claims, and poor or insecure housing'.⁵²

Recent moves to address homelessness and housing accessibility

According to the 2013 University of Otago study, the scale of severe housing deprivation in 2006 indicated that providing affordable, adequate housing needed to be a 'top government priority'. This was especially so given that the problem's scale was likely to have increased in recent years with an economic recession and major earthquakes. The study said there was a 'clear and urgent' need for significant investment in developing quality housing that is affordable for people on low incomes.⁵³

Housing New Zealand, through Community Group Housing, works with organisations that provide residential community housing.⁵⁴ The Rural Housing Programme has renovated and replaced inadequate houses, and the Government's Social Housing Fund supports the growth of community housing providers.⁵⁵ The Social Housing Reform (Housing Restructuring and Tenancy Matters Amendment) Act 2013 provides a framework for the future provision of social housing. It aims to promote contestability by increasing the number and diversity of social housing providers, and increase the housing choice available to tenants and prospective tenants.⁵⁶ Community housing providers will be eligible for a subsidy with social housing reform, enabling income-related rents for high needs tenants and their families. The Ministry of Social Development, rather than Housing New Zealand, will assess the need for social housing to provide a more comprehensive view of social support. The reforms have included changes so that social housing tenancies can be reviewed.⁵⁷

The Government's 2014 budget provides an additional \$30 million of operating spending to the Social Housing Fund. This spending involves ongoing funding of \$10 million a year for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18. The Minister of Housing said that the community housing sector with this funding 'will be able to help hundreds more high-need New Zealand families get access to a warm, dry, affordable home'. The initiative is part of the Government's social housing reforms and plan to grow the community housing sector.⁵⁸ Overall, social housing initiatives in budget

⁵⁰ Leggatt-Cook, pp.5 and 56-57.

⁵¹ 'Homeless people worry health board', *The Press*, 18 October 2013, p.6.

⁵² Human Rights Commission, '[Commission releases report on human rights in Canterbury recovery](#)', press release, 9 December 2013.

⁵³ Amore et al., p.54.

⁵⁴ [What is community group housing?](#) Housing New Zealand.

⁵⁵ '[Māori housing – te noho whare](#)' The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand; and Social Housing Unit, [What is the Social Housing Fund?](#)

⁵⁶ [Social Housing Reform \(Housing Restructuring and Tenancy Matters Amendment\) Bill](#) as reported by the Social Services Committee, 30 September 2013, p.1. For additional information see [Social Housing Reform \(Housing Restructuring and Tenancy Matters Amendment\) Act 2013](#).

⁵⁷ '[Social housing reform](#)', Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 20 November 2013.

⁵⁸ Nick Smith, Minister of Housing, '[\\$30m Budget boost for Social Housing Fund](#)', press release, 15 May 2014.

2014 total \$107.5 million operating funding over four years and \$18.2 million capital. In addition to the Social Housing Fund spending there is \$64.3 million in new operating funding and \$16.4 million of new capital funding for social housing needs assessment functions at the Ministry of Social Development, \$8 million to support higher social housing tenant mobility and \$5.2 million in new operating funding, along with \$1.8 million new capital funding for reviewable tenancies to ensure reviews are thorough and careful.⁵⁹

The New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness (NZCEH) has proposed a framework consisting of seven key areas in which action to address homelessness can be formulated (see Table 3).⁶⁰ The importance of coordinated service responses, outreach services, and on-going support following re-housing is recognised.⁶¹ More specifically, 'wet' house accommodation allowing those with long-term alcohol dependency to consume alcohol on the premises has been advocated. A 2009 attempt to provide such accommodation in Wellington failed with opposition from members of the local community.⁶²

Table 3: New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness (NZCEH) Framework to address homelessness

Key areas	Example
Policy	Tangata Whenua and the community and voluntary sector are actively engaged in developing and implementing policy.
Planning	Regional agencies, local agencies, and Tangata Whenua concerned with homelessness collaboratively devise and implement local homelessness strategies with culturally appropriate local solutions. These are informed by overseas and local good practice, and include standardised data collection processes.
Prevention and early intervention	Prevention is informed by an understanding of causes and pathways into homelessness, and knowledge of the social groups most at risk. Early intervention programmes are implemented, including family/whānau mediation and tenancy facilitation.
Data collection	A standardised process for collecting demographic and quantitative data is introduced.
Systems prevention	Government agencies are asked to review and improve integration of their operational systems in terms of homelessness prevention and early intervention.
Specialised service delivery	Transitional and emergency accommodation is reviewed to identify demand and gaps in provision, and increase supply to address identified needs.
Long-term solutions	The supply of affordable social housing is increased, while friendly landlord schemes are incentivised in the private sector to enable better access for mental health consumers, Māori, and at risk groups.

⁵⁹ Bill English, Minister of Finance, ['Housing initiatives to support growing economy'](#), press release, 15 May 2014.

⁶⁰ Steve Richards, [Homelessness in Aotearoa: Issues and Recommendations](#), New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness, 2009, pp.4-6. More generally see Rashbrooke, 'In shadows and behind closed doors', p.38.

⁶¹ Leggatt-Cook, p.6.

⁶² Stephanie McIntyre, [Wet Housing - an accommodation option for people who have experienced chronic homelessness and long-term alcohol dependence](#), A report on a study trip supported by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 2009; and [Study suggests homeless should be allowed to drink in shelters](#), Radio New Zealand, 20 January 2012.

Conclusion

Homelessness has been a continual issue, and concern has arisen over people without safe and secure housing. Factors that can be linked to homelessness include unaffordable accommodation, poverty and unemployment, mental health issues, addictions, traumatic life events, convictions and imprisonment along with the use of insecure accommodation. The severely housing deprived are predominately children and young adults, ethnic minorities, members of sole-parent families and less educated. Health problems are common among the homeless. Addressing homelessness requires a multi-level and faceted approach including prevention and early intervention. A key measure is the provision of affordable accommodation.

Useful links/sources

Amore, Kate, Viggers, Helen, Baker, Michael G, and Howden-Chapman, Philippa, [Severe Housing Deprivation: The problem and its measurement](#), Official Statistics Research Series, 6, Statistics New Zealand, September 2013

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