

<b>Institution:</b> Cardiff University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Geography and Environmental Studies (14)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Homelessness: Shaping legislation in England and Wales, and informing international policy debates		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2011-2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Peter Mackie	Reader	01/09/2009– present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 17/09/2014 – 26/02/2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Mackie's research showed that homeless legislation in Wales, largely unchanged since 1977, was no longer fit for purpose as it only required local authorities to assist a minority of homeless people. His recommendations of new duties to assist all homeless people and focus on prevention formed the basis of a new law in Wales: the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The legislation was replicated in England as the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017). Mackie's subsequent research shaped the implementation of the Act in Wales through his membership of the Welsh Government's Homelessness Action Group and his engagement with the third sector. Mackie's research also informed homelessness policy debates in Scotland, Canada and Australia.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<b>2.1 Reviewing homelessness legislation in Wales</b>		
<p>In 2011, Mackie was commissioned by the Welsh Government to lead a team of five from two other research organisations, and one independent consultant, to undertake a comprehensive review of Welsh homelessness legislation. The review produced five reports – the most significant of which set out recommendations that would require the creation of new legislation [3.1]. As project lead, Mackie was key in deciding the direction of the review and cohering the research into the final recommendations.</p>		
<p>Mackie's large-scale mixed-methods review engaged widely with the homelessness sector and was the most significant review of Wales' homelessness legislation in a generation. Research methods to assess the current legislation included collating and analysing a unique case level administrative data set on local authority homelessness assistance in Wales, as well as in-depth interviews with key sector representatives. The research also took Welsh Government representatives to stakeholder workshops across the country. Two academic papers set the Welsh study in an international context, showing that Wales' challenges were commonplace and that the proposed new legislation might be internationally transferable [3.2, 3.3]. The research concluded that homelessness services in Wales had begun to shift towards earlier interventions and away from crisis response, although there were four key weaknesses [3.2, 3.3]:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• legislation had not been effectively reoriented towards prevention;</li> <li>• vast geographical variation in service availability;</li> <li>• services were highly selective in relation to who receives and deserves support;</li> <li>• prevention services were not a statutory requirement.</li> </ul>		
<p>The review recommended a universal right to earlier, prevention-focused services. The keystone of Mackie's 'Housing Solutions' model was "a new duty for local authorities to take all reasonable steps to achieve a suitable housing solution for all households which are homeless or threatened with homelessness" [3.1]. Specific proposals included [3.1]:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extending the definition of homeless from 28 to 56 days;</li> </ul>		

- the new duty would be owed to all eligible homeless households, with no account taken of priority need or local connection;
- changes to assessment of priority need, including adding two groups ('verified' rough sleepers and young people under 25), with a view to phasing out priority need entirely;
- assessing whether or not an applicant has become homeless 'intentionally' would become a power rather than a duty.

## 2.2 Identifying what works to end rough sleeping

In 2017 Mackie examined the impacts of the new Housing (Wales) Act 2014 [3.4]. This included analysing data on the outcomes for homeless households and interviewing 50 people who had sought homelessness assistance. Mackie concluded that services had been reoriented towards prevention, with fewer people remaining homeless after seeking help; however, there were failings in relation to some single people and rough sleepers [3.4]. He was subsequently commissioned by Crisis, a UK-wide homelessness charity, to review the evidence base on what works to end homelessness with single people and rough sleepers, recommending key principles that should underpin a new policy approach [3.5]:

- recognising the varying housing and support needs and entitlements of rough sleepers;
- swift action to prevent or end street homelessness, and assertive outreach leading to a suitable accommodation offer;
- housing-led – Housing First has been particularly effective in providing swift access to settled housing;
- person-centred support and choice based on cross-sector collaboration and commissioning.

## 2.3 Reframing homelessness prevention and a future UK homelessness policy agenda

In 2019 Mackie was involved in a collaborative study of homelessness prevention in the UK, leading to a co-authored policy briefing [3.6]. Investigating the relative effectiveness of homelessness prevention across the four UK jurisdictions, he advanced a five-category prevention typology for use as an analytical tool [3.6]:

1. Universal – preventing or minimising homelessness risks across the population;
2. Targeted – upstream prevention focussed on high risk groups (i.e. vulnerable young people) and risky transitions (i.e. leaving local authority care or prison);
3. Crisis – preventing homelessness likely to occur within 56 days, in line with legislation;
4. Emergency – support for those at immediate risk of homelessness;
5. Recovery – prevention of repeat homelessness and rough sleeping.

## 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[3.1] Mackie, P., Fitzpatrick, S., Stirling, T., Johnsen, S. and Hoffman, S. (2012) 'Options for an improved homelessness legislative framework in Wales', Welsh Government: Cardiff. PDF.

[3.2] Mackie, P. (2015) 'Homelessness prevention and the Welsh legal duty: lessons for international policies', Housing Studies 30(1) 40-59. DOI: 10.1080/02673037.2014.927055

[3.3] Mackie, P. (2014) 'The Welsh homelessness legislation review: delivering universal access to appropriate assistance?', Contemporary Wales 27(1) 1-20. PDF.

[3.4] Mackie, P., Thomas, I. and Bibbings, J. (2017a) 'Homelessness prevention: reflecting on a year of pioneering Welsh legislation in practice', European Journal of Homelessness 11(1) 81-107. PDF.

[3.5] Mackie, P., Johnsen, S. and Wood, J. (2017b) Ending rough sleeping: what works? An international evidence review', Crisis: London. PDF.

[3.6] Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P. and Wood, J. (2019) 'Homelessness prevention in the UK: policy briefing', UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence: Glasgow. PDF.

## 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The evidence base provided by this body of research – Mackie's identification of weaknesses in existing legislation, recommendation of a 'Housing Solutions' model of earlier, prevention-focused services and recommendations of key policy principles – transformed homelessness

legislation and policy. It underpinned new laws in Wales and England; shaped the implementation of legislation in Wales; and informed key policy debates in Scotland, Canada and Australia.

#### 4.1 Informing new homelessness legislation in Wales: The Housing (Wales) Act 2014

Mackie's commissioned research, including the 'Housing Solutions' model he recommended, was used in Welsh Government's 2012 White Paper 'Homes for Wales' [3.1.]. The subsequent Housing (Wales) Act [5.1a] – passed in 2014 and commenced in 2015 – was described by Welsh Government as *"the most fundamental reform to homelessness legislation in over 30 years"* (BBC News, 2015) [5.1b].

The Act was the world's first legislation to mandate a right to homelessness prevention, with a new duty for local authorities to "help prevent homelessness...for everyone who is threatened with homelessness or who is homeless" [5.3a]. The Senior Homelessness Policy Officer at Welsh Government at the time described it as a *"ground-breaking legislative development"* which *"draws upon the Mackie review"* [5.2]. They further noted: *"[Mackie's homelessness legislation review], and the Housing (Wales) Act which emerged from it has significantly changed the way homelessness assistance is delivered in Wales and is impacting on the lives of thousands of homeless people"* [5.2].

The Act contains the key change recommended by the review: a duty on local authorities to take "reasonable steps to help" all applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness [5.1a]. Previously, local authorities were only required to assist those deemed in priority need for assistance (approximately 54% of homeless people) [5.3a].

Some of Mackie's other recommendations included in the legislation [5.1a] are:

- extending the definition of homeless to 56 days;
- testing for intentionality was made a power rather than a duty for local authorities.

Emma Williams, Director of Housing and Regeneration in Welsh Government, stated: *"The legislation has been widely acclaimed for its success in changing the focus of local authority homelessness services to prevention rather than relief"* [5.2]. Welsh Government statistics (April 2015-March 2019) show that since the new law commenced, more than 36,000 households have been assisted before they became homeless [5.3a]. Extending the methodology from [5.3b] to March 2019 means that homelessness has been prevented in 65% of these cases and the number of households who ultimately remain homeless after assistance has reduced by 57%.

#### 4.2 Shaping implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and reframing homelessness prevention policy in Wales

##### a. National Assembly for Wales Inquiry into Rough Sleeping

Despite the positive impacts of the 2014 legislation, an increase in rough sleeping led to a National Assembly for Wales Inquiry in 2018. Mackie was one of only two academics called to give evidence, which drew directly on his research findings [3.2, 3.6]. His evidence is cited 26 times in the final report (2018) and influenced many of its 29 recommendations, including [5.4a]:

- steps for phasing out priority need;
- strengthening Housing First as a default option for rough sleepers, due to its person-centred approach, and that Welsh Government explore Housing First models;
- adopting models of *"assertive outreach support"*.

The Inquiry's recommendations shaped the Welsh Government's approach to tackling rough sleeping. For example, the recommendations were a factor in the Government's decision to work with the Housing First network to establish an 18-month trailblazer programme [5.4b]. Housing First is designed to support rough sleepers with complex or co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues. The Welsh Government has to date funded four projects providing 45 units of accommodation for individuals under this programme, which has housed people in independent, permanent homes and provided tailored, long-term support [5.4b].

Julie James, Welsh Government Housing and Local Government Minister, stated: “We aim to support the most vulnerable people in Wales, and Housing First is a sound investment that can save money, as well as lives, in the long term” [5.4c].

#### **b. Welsh Government Homelessness Action Group to end homelessness in Wales**

In 2019 the Welsh Minister for Housing and Local Government set up an Action Group to provide a plan on preventing and ending homelessness. Mackie was the only academic invited to sit on the group of twelve, chaired by Crisis. Jon Sparkes (Director) and Matt Downie (Policy Director) of Crisis note that the Group was “*unique in its set up, and its remit to directly advise the Minister on strategies to end homelessness in Wales*” and that “*Mackie’s particular contribution to the Group centred around providing research and evidence for the group’s consideration and discussion*” [5.5]. The Group reviewed existing evidence on ending homelessness, including Mackie’s report for Crisis [3.5]. Recommendations for immediate actions – which were all accepted by the Minister – in the Group’s first report (October 2019) reflect Mackie’s work [5.6]:

- Recommendation 1: “ensure that there are sufficiently well-trained assertive outreach workers deployed...”;
- Recommendation 6: “all public bodies must ensure that everybody discharged from a public institution has a sustainable housing solution”;
- Recommendation 10: “Remove the barriers and address misunderstandings that stop people at risk of homelessness or who are rough sleeping from accessing the basic human need for adequate housing and support”.

Crisis confirmed that the Group’s final report (March 2020) [5.6] was “*framed around the five-category prevention typology*” [5.5] advanced by Mackie in [3.6]. Emma Williams, Welsh Government’s Director of Housing and Regeneration, noted that “*the report...has underpinned the Welsh Government’s response to the COVID 19 crisis and our plans to ensure that no one should be forced to return to the streets post pandemic*” [5.2]. All of the report’s recommendations have been accepted in principle by the Minister [5.5].

#### **c. Shaping third sector practice**

Mackie supported third sector homelessness agencies in Wales to advocate for change on homelessness challenges in Wales, develop their policies and provide guidance on implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Jennie Bibbings, Campaigns Manager at Shelter Cymru, confirmed that Mackie’s “*considerable support and guidance to our policy and research functions*” has included helping to deliver robust policy studies; increasing the agency’s research capacity through co-location of PhD students; advising “*major funders on their strategic direction in order to maximise resources available for homelessness work*”; and “*[challenged] services to raise standards of implementation [of the Act]*” [5.7]. Frances Beecher, Chief Executive of homeless charity Llamau, confirmed that Mackie “*continues to provide the evidence base and understanding to help challenge remaining issues with the homelessness legislative framework in Wales, particularly with regard to the lack of priority need status for many young people*” [5.7].

Beecher also acknowledged Mackie’s key role as a founder member and research lead for the agency’s End Youth Homelessness Cymru (EYHCymru) campaign. His “*support and understanding... enabled EYHCymru to develop its key priorities and establish a strategy capable of ending youth homelessness in Wales within ten years*” [5.7].

#### **4.3 Informing new homelessness legislation in England**

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) (2017) was introduced in England in 2018 [5.8]. Crisis, the main advocate for changing the law in England, states that it “*marks the most significant transformation to the homelessness legislation in England in the last 40 years, placing a much sharper focus on preventing people from losing their homes in the first place*” [5.5].

Crisis convened a panel of experts in 2015 to assess the existing statutory framework and draw from the Mackie Review and the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which “*was seen to be*



sector-leading and formed the basis of the English version” [5.5]. They confirmed that Mackie was “instrumental in developing” a new Act in England by providing advice and guidance to the panel and modelling the potential impact of a preventative form of legislation. Mackie’s research was central to articles highlighting the success of the Welsh legislation in the media and this “media attention led to widespread calls for the Westminster Government to replicate developments in Wales” [5.5].

Crisis confirmed that their negotiations with the UK Government “were directly informed by Pete’s work” [5.5]. The legislation includes the main proposals from Mackie’s research, including a new duty for all local authorities to take ‘reasonable steps’ to help all applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness [5.7, 5.5]. Since it commenced, more than 250,000 households have been assisted before becoming homeless and in nearly 60% of these cases homelessness was prevented (April 2018-March 2020). The legislation also reduced the number of households who ultimately remain homeless at the end of the process by approximately 50% [5.3c].

#### 4.4 Informing policy debates in Scotland, Canada and Australia

*Scotland:* The Scottish Government convened the Scotland Prevention Review Group to develop recommendations for a legal duty or duties to prevent homelessness. Mackie was invited to the first meeting of the group (November 2019), which built on the Welsh and English prevention legislation, to give an overview of the legislation in Wales and its impacts.

*Canada:* Following an ESRC IAA-funded visit by Mackie to explore the potential for policy mobility, Section 5 of ‘The Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness’ (published by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and A Way Home Canada) draws on Welsh legislation for an integrated approach to prevention [5.9]. The CEO of A Way Home Canada, stated: “We cannot underestimate the importance of the Roadmap for communities and all orders of government to understand what prevention is and how it can be implemented in policy, planning and practice” [5.9]. Mackie is on the international advisory panel for the organisation’s new federally-funded Centre of Excellence on youth homelessness.

*Australia:* Following an invited visit from Mackie, agencies across the sector have advocated for change in line with the Welsh legislation. Council to Homeless Persons, the country’s lead third sector homelessness agency, stated: “Australia could reduce homelessness if we adopted the Welsh model of requiring governments to deliver prevention support” [5.10].

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[5.1] a) Housing (Wales) Act (2014), Part 2, Chapter 2, Sections/ Sub-Sections: 53.8 (a-d), 55 (4), 65 (a), 66 (1), 73 (1), 78 b) ‘Law to prevent homelessness comes into force’, *BBC News* (27 April 2015)

[5.2] Testimonials: Welsh Government: Senior Homelessness Policy Officer (2014), and Emma Williams, Director of Regeneration and Housing (2020)

[5.3] Homelessness statistics: a) Welsh Government b) Mackie, P.K., Thomas, I. and Bibbings, J. (2017a) ‘Homelessness prevention: reflecting on a year of pioneering Welsh legislation in practice’, *European Journal of Homelessness* 11(1) 81-107. *This paper shows statistics up to 2017 using data from 5.3a. This methodology has been updated to March 2019 for the statistics used in section 4. c) UK Government*

[5.4] a) ‘Life on the Streets: Preventing and tackling rough sleeping in Wales’, *National Assembly for Wales Rough Sleeping Inquiry* (April 2018) b) Senedd Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee: Record (March 2019) c) Welsh Government press release (28 August 2019)

[5.5] Testimonial: Jon Sparkes (Director, Crisis) and Matt Downie (Policy Director, Crisis)

[5.6] Reports of the Homelessness Action Group (October 2019 and March 2020)

[5.7] Third sector testimonials: Jennie Bibbings (Campaigns Manager, Shelter Cymru) and Frances Beecher (Chief Executive, Llamau)

[5.8] Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), UK Government, Section 4, 2 (2); Section 5, 2 (2)

[5.9] Testimonial: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

[5.10] Council to Homeless Persons (Australia) statement (6 August 2019)