

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Barriers and facilitators to accessing health and social care services for people living in homeless hostels: a qualitative study of the experiences of hostel staff and residents in UK hostels
AUTHORS	Armstrong, Megan; Shulman, Caroline; Hudson, Briony; Stone, Patrick; Hewett, Nigel

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	James, Richard Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Public Health
REVIEW RETURNED	29-May-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	The paper made for an enjoyable and informative read. The focus on issues directly relevant to the provision of care for people experiencing homelessness is certainly a welcome addition to the existing body of literature. The entire paper read well as a single narrative, with conclusions appearing both well supported by transparently presented evidence, and practically relevant in addressing issues highlighted in the introduction.
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REVIEWER	Kneck, Åsa Karolinska Institutet, Department of Health Care Sciences
REVIEW RETURNED	29-Jun-2021

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Important paper - Overall well written and interesting even if findings not come with much of news.</p> <p>The manuscript would benefit from a more theoretical discussion. As the results are on a descriptive level with lots of quotes it would be interesting in the discussion to address these findings in relation to one or several concepts/theories, for instance 'inclusion health' or the SDG's or health equities. Furthermore, the role of the staff could be compared to the role of family members to persons with certain illness especially if stigma is involved. It would be interesting to read more of the similarities and differences between being an employed staff and a family member, both trying to get access and ensure the right to health and health care for another person.</p> <p>The aim could be more clear. No aim is stated in the abstract but the focus on "accessing health and social care support" is addressed, in the end of the introduction part it is stated "interviews explored the health of residents, the support residents receive from hostel staff and external service and the views of staff and residents regarding what may improve and support for the people that live within the hostels". Additionally in the results section it is stated "exploring health and access to health and social care services for people living and working in homeless hostels."</p> <p>It would be preferable to have one (and the same) aim in the whole</p>
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	<p>manuscript. PPI in the study is interesting but would benefit to be more described, who were those in the advisory board, with own experience of working with people in homelessness or being homeless themselves? Ethical consideration could be developed, e.g. was written consent taken?</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer 1

The paper made for an enjoyable and informative read. The focus on issues directly relevant to the provision of care for people experiencing homelessness is certainly a welcome addition to the existing body of literature. The entire paper read well as a single narrative, with conclusions appearing both well supported by transparently presented evidence, and practically relevant in addressing issues highlighted in the introduction.

Many thanks for your kind and supportive comments. We are pleased you found the paper enjoyable and informative.

Reviewer 2

Important paper - Overall well written and interesting even if findings not come with much of news. Many thanks for your positive review of this project and for the helpful comments to strengthen this paper.

The manuscript would benefit from a more theoretical discussion. As the results are on a descriptive level with lots of quotes it would be interesting in the discussion to address these findings in relation to one or several concepts/theories, for instance 'inclusion health' or the SDG's or health equities. To address this we have added to page 16 in the discussion: "The barriers to health and social care combined with the stigma and lack of understanding around the needs of people experiencing homelessness highlights an urgent need for more training, support and dedicated funded inclusion health in this area for more equitable access." Additionally we have elaborated elsewhere in the discussion about the need for inclusion health or in-reach.

Furthermore, the role of the staff could be compared to the role of family members to persons with certain illness especially if stigma is involved. It would be interesting to read more of the similarities and differences between being an employed staff and a family member, both trying to get access and ensure the right to health and health care for another person.

Added to page 16: "People experiencing homelessness often have a limited social network with many estranged from their family [23]. This social isolation can lead to the hostel staff taking on a more familial role by emotionally supporting residents and visiting them in hospital in their free time, as well as even arranging funerals and vigils [14, 17]. This study echoes those findings by highlighting how the hostel staff go above and beyond their job role consistently to try to meet the residents' needs." The aim could be more clear. No aim is stated in the abstract but the focus on "accessing health and social care support" is addressed, in the end of the introduction part it is stated "interviews explored the health of residents, the support residents receive from hostel staff and external service and the views of staff and residents regarding what may improve and support for the people that live within the hostels". Additionally in the result section it is stated "exploring health and access to health and social care services for people living and working in homeless hostels."

It would be preferable to have one (and the same) aim in the whole manuscript.

I agree. Having looked back through the paper I can see there is an inconsistency here. To address this I have:

- Edited the title to elaborate on the focus of the paper to "Barriers and facilitators to accessing health and social care services for people living in homeless hostels: a qualitative study of the experiences of hostel staff and residents in UK hostels"
- Added the aim to the abstract: "The aim of this paper is to identify the barriers and facilitators to

accessing health and social care services for people living in homeless hostels.”

- Retitled the two of the themes to: “impact of lack of health and social care support on hostel staff” and “Potential facilitators to health and social care access”

Therefore the narrative/aim throughout is around health and social care access and the impact this has on the staff and residents.

PPI in the study is interesting but would benefit to be more described, who were those in the advisory board, with own experience of working with people in homelessness or being homeless themselves? We have clarified on page 5 that this individual has lived experience of being homeless. The remaining advisory board is made up of researchers, clinicians, social care providers, and a hostel manager. (added to page 5).

Ethical consideration could be developed, e.g. was written consent uptaken?

Added to page 6: Written consent was given from all participants. CS and MA are both trained in assessing capacity to ensure informed consent was given.