



SEHF was originally established in 2007 as a sub group of the then Regional Housing Forum, with the aim of ensuring that the issue of homelessness was considered in the wider work of the Regional Housing Board. Whilst these, and other more formal structures no longer exist *SEHF* has continued to develop and establish an identity of its own.

SEHF is unique in the South East in that it brings together individuals from all sectors, from a range of backgrounds and organisations – Local Authorities, Central Government, service providers, landlords from both the social and private sectors, campaigning groups, and independent bodies from across the South East who are interested and involved in seeking to reduce the incidence of homelessness, and helping individuals who are affected by it. By bringing together experts in the field of homelessness from such a diverse range of standpoints it adds a dimension to the discussion that can be lacking in other more narrow fora, to provide a distinctive South East view of the issues affecting homelessness

We recognise that the roots of homelessness are often complex, and impact on individuals lives in many different ways. As such we understand that successfully dealing with the problem, and the consequences for individuals, cannot be dealt with by one organisation alone. Rather they require a range of organisations and individuals to work together. Such an approach is central to the core ethos of *SEHF* of engaging with and encouraging all parties involved to adopt a collaborative approach to working in this area.

The prevention of homelessness is an area that can give rise to strong emotions, and become an increasingly politicised area of work. Whilst we encourage the development of passion in this area, *SEHF* is a non political organisation, which recognises the constraints that exist on many organisations and individuals working in this area. As such we aim to adopt positions built on consensus, that can command the widest possible level of support.

SEHF meets three times a year, and encourages the development of closer working between partners on an ongoing basis. Through our meetings we hope to act as a focus for raising some of the issues around homelessness that are specific, or are more accentuated in the South East, such as those of above average property prices, high land values, relatively low levels of social housing, and increasing demand from a growing population, and through discussion develop potential means of resolution to specific issue faced, and increase the clarity of understanding of these issues .

In the past we have;

- Held a conference on preventing homelessness through the Private Rented Sector
- Run Housing Advice road shows
- Circulated good practice on how best to implement Local Housing Allowance

As the recession continues to impact on the lives of large numbers of individuals across the South East, dealing with the problems of homelessness is only likely to increase the pressures on local authorities in particular at a time when they are having to operate with a reduced level of resources. At such a time the developing of shared solutions becomes even more important, and as such we see the role of *SEHF* as becoming more important. We operate an open membership policy, and are always open to suggestions and new ideas, so please feel free to contact us if you think there is something that we should be covering, or if you would like become more involved in the work of *SEHF*.

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