



The Dying Homeless Project

Museum of Homelessness

The Dying Homeless Project, run by the Museum of Homelessness (MoH), is here to remember people who have died while homeless with love and dignity, and to provide a space and network for us to support each other in grief and campaign for change to prevent future unnecessary deaths.

We believe that part of a respectful death is that people are remembered for who they were, not how they died; that's why we feature personal memorials on our website. If you have lost someone you cared about, we would welcome your submission for our memorial site where you can tell us a bit about them. They will be remembered with love and dignity. You can submit names and tributes via the 'Submit' button on the site itself (<https://dying-homeless.museumofhomelessness.org/>), but sometimes it's easier to talk about someone. If it's tricky to summarise your memories of someone or you would rather just talk, we are always open to being contacted and together we can create a memorial.

We know how tough it is when someone dies, and we've heard people telling us that they need a space to come together and talk about death. We hold Dying Homeless Death Cafés, which is an online space for us all to confidentially explore our feelings and thoughts about death and loss, and to remember people we have lost. This is not a clinical space, or a meeting with an agenda, but simply an open gathering of people to come together and share.

We have also established the Dying Homeless Coalition, a group of individuals who all come together to take action on preventing deaths of people experiencing homelessness – including staff and volunteers at homelessness organisations, grassroots activists,

artists, healthcare workers, and journalists. We meet to support each other with initiatives within our different areas of work, to share information, and to campaign together.

We are pleased to see that more cities are holding memorial services to remember people who have died whilst experiencing homelessness; this is such an important part of grieving and honouring the lives of those who have died and we are always pleased to support organisations who wish to organise one.

Overall, we are seeing more organisations approaching us for support and recognising that death is an important part of their work – both preventing it, and handling it properly when it does happen.

In 2020 the Dying Homeless Coalition wrote an open letter to the Home Secretary to call for harm reduction/overdose prevention spaces to be used in the UK. We are proud that a new charity, The People's Recovery Project, has been formed to promote access to recovery treatment with the support of the Dying Homeless Coalition and we see that the movement to establish harm reduction spaces is growing.

An ongoing challenge is that death is hard to talk about. There is still a lack of awareness in dealing with grief, and deaths aren't always learned from.

We encourage organisations and local authorities to collect data on deaths, to have reflective spaces to talk about death, to support people experiencing homelessness as well as staff and volunteers with bereavement, and to actively seek to learn from deaths that occur to ensure that future deaths can be prevented.

We will continue calling for improved mental health support that focuses on helping people to heal safely from trauma, and harm reduction spaces, as we see these as being key elements to preventing future deaths.

If you are interested in attending a Death Café, would like to contact us about remembering someone on our memorial site, or want to discuss other aspects of our work and partnerships, please email miranda@museumofhomelessness.org