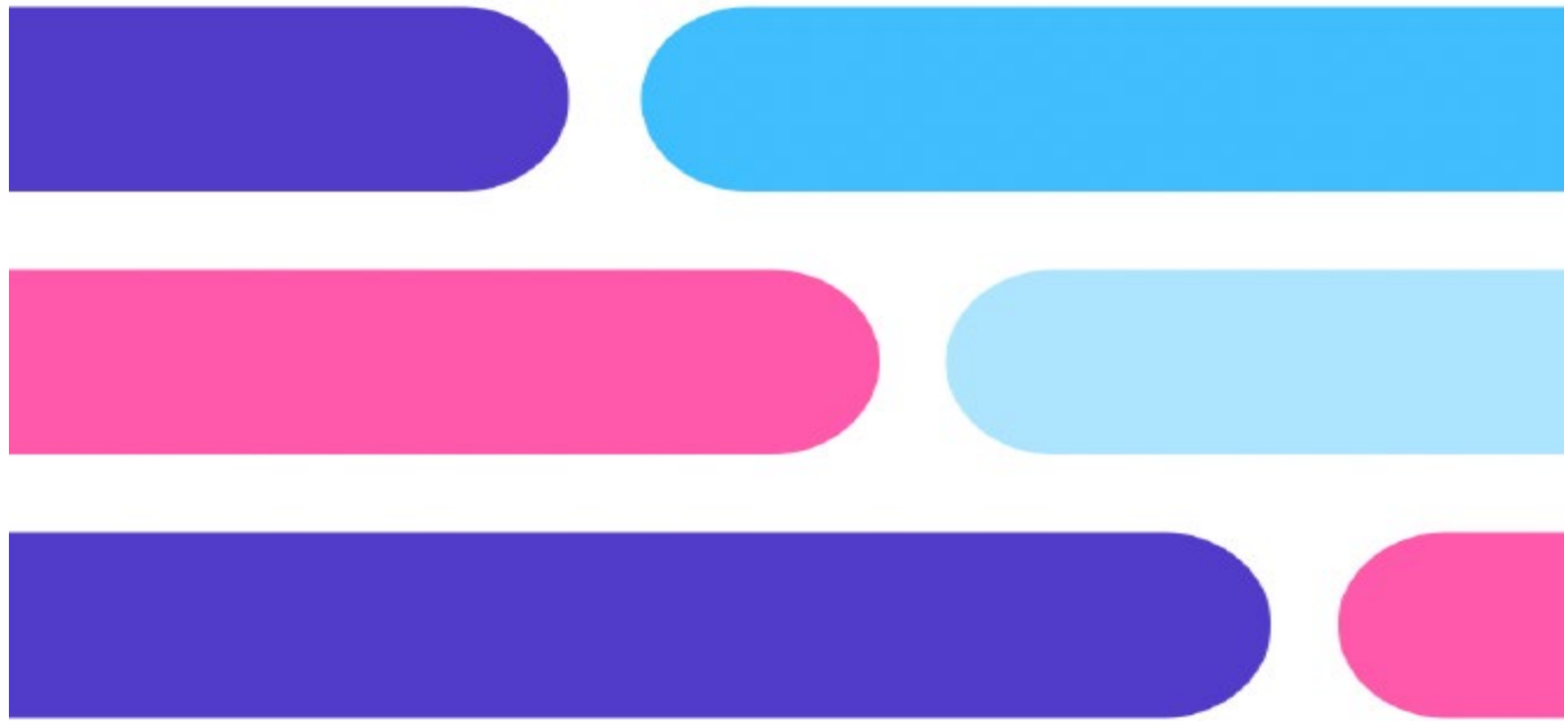




The Homeless Health Needs Audit (HHNA): A starter guide



For over a decade, organisations around the country have used the Homeless Health Needs Audit (HHNA) to help understand the health inequalities faced by people experiencing homelessness in their area.

What is the HHNA?

The HHNA is a practical way to reduce physical and mental health inequalities and improve the health of people who are experiencing homelessness in your local area.

It does that by helping you gather a valuable set of data that can be used to understand local needs and experiences of accessing services, informing service improvements and evidence-based commissioning.

If you repeat the audit 1-2 years later, it also starts to show you the changes that are happening as a result of the decisions and changes you make.

Why carry out an audit?

People experiencing homelessness have some of the highest and most costly health needs in a local community. These needs are not always well understood, though, and are often overlooked when health and social care services are planned and commissioned.

Inequalities are very real for people experiencing homelessness. Addressing health inequalities is a statutory requirement for the NHS, including for local Integrated Care Systems. To achieve this, it's vital we improve the evidence base around the health of people experiencing homelessness and the services they use.

The Homeless Health Needs Audit provides a framework you can use to gather information with direct input from people who are experiencing homelessness. It also guides you in using that information to assess your local needs and improve healthcare services in your area.

In gathering local data, the audit aims to:

- bring statutory and voluntary services together to develop responses to local priorities and address gaps in services,
- increase the evidence available about the health needs of people experiencing homelessness and the wider determinants of their health, as well as the effectiveness of current services,

- enable local commissioning decisions to be driven by evidence of local need, and
- give people experiencing homelessness a stronger voice in local commissioning processes.

The HHNA also supports the work of local integrated care systems by:

- helping them to understand this important group within their Core20PLUS population and identify their specific healthcare needs, and
- informing decision-making around how to ensure equitable access, positive experience and optimal outcomes for people experiencing homelessness in their area.

Who should use the audit?

Anyone with an interest in homeless health can use this audit, but it's designed to be used on an area-wide basis in partnership with representatives from the local authority, voluntary sector and health services.

You'll need to agree a lead partner, which can be anyone from a health, housing or homelessness role and who has an interest in addressing the health inequalities faced by people experiencing homelessness.

With the time and commitment from your local agencies, you can undertake the audit and come together to use the results.

To find out more, visit www.homeless.org.uk or contact Homeless Link at homeleshealth@homelesslink.org.uk

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