

Anonymous written evidence submission

In relation to the committee's work on APPGs, I would like to direct the chair's attention (as an example) to the recent APPG on Homelessness which published a report about Housing First.

I am simply a member of the public but I have been very involved in the homelessness issue and have been for 15 years.

Please look at this website, which is what you get if you type in the Parliamentary Group on Homelessness.

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/appg-for-ending-homelessness/>

In other words, this report is, in fact, produced by Crisis - who provide the secretariat to the APPG - and is a policy paper campaigning for a particular approach to housing (put simply, that anyone who is homeless should be given housing permanently and without condition - even if they are (for example) sent to prison, are drug addicts and refuse treatment, and so on). My point is this is a contested point of view. Undoubtedly Housing First has a role to play, but this paper - written with the Portcullis symbol on the front - does not convey that nuance. When points are asserted, for example, where it says that "there is enormous evidence", in fact the footnote refers to another Crisis campaign paper of five years previously.

I have spoken to some of those homelessness organisations cited at the end of the document. They are resigned to the fact that this was produced by Crisis, that they provide the secretariat.

I use this only as an example of an APPG that, in my view, is being used as an elegant front by a campaigning organisation. I absolutely stress, there is nothing wrong with Crisis itself making an argument in favour of a particular policy. By issue that that I think a parliamentary group is being used to front this up and I feel it is giving a misleading impression. The parliamentary symbol is a very powerful one.

13 January 2022