

Capacity to Change at LSE

Policy brief | Roundtable held 15 April 2026 | London School of Economics and Political Science

Key messages: Recovery policy should move beyond crisis response and short-term targets; lived experience should shape service design; and proportionate, trusted evaluation is essential to support integrated, long-term recovery systems.

Executive summary

On 15 April 2026, the *Capacity to Change* roundtable at the London School of Economics and Political Science brought together policymakers, service providers, researchers, technology experts, and people with lived experience of homelessness and addiction. Organised by The People's Recovery Project (TPRP) and LSE's Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, the event focused on how evidence, evaluation, and lived experience can strengthen decision-making and support longer-term change in recovery services for people facing multiple disadvantages.

The roundtable included colleagues from TPRP and LSE, alongside invited guests from government, local authorities, academia, charities, and the wider recovery and homelessness sectors.

Policy context

The discussion highlighted that recovery journeys are rarely linear and that policy frameworks must move beyond crisis response and short-term metrics. Participants emphasised the need for evaluation approaches that capture outcomes across health, housing, justice, relationships, employment, and opportunities to do something meaningful in life, while also remaining practical for frontline organisations. They also stressed the importance of setting clear aims and objectives for this work at both national and local levels, ensuring that they are timely, up to date, and responsive to current concerns and evidence. This included reflection on whether existing priorities and assumptions in the field, particularly the continued focus on people who use opiates and/or crack, still fully align with how best to achieve positive impact for individuals and wider society. This matters because better evidence can support more sustainable services, more responsive commissioning, and stronger accountability to people using support.

Policy recommendations

- **Build cross-sector partnerships:** Policymakers and commissioners should support collaboration across government, health and social care, housing, and community organisations to deliver joined-up responses.
- **Embed lived experience in policy design:** People with direct experience of homelessness and addiction should be involved in shaping, reviewing, and improving services and policy responses.

- **Strengthen data and evaluation systems:** Services need practical, proportionate data collection and reporting approaches that support learning, adaptation, and accountability without creating excessive burden.
- **Use evidence transparently and build trust:** Data and evaluation should be used in ways that are clear, ethical, and credible to providers, commissioners, and people accessing services.
- **Link research to decision-making:** Ongoing collaboration between researchers, practitioners, commissioners, and policymakers is needed to ensure that evidence informs service planning and investment.
- **Adopt holistic responses:** Effective policy must address the interconnections between addiction, mental health, housing instability, economic insecurity, and community support.

Next steps

Policymakers, commissioners, service leaders, and practitioners should act now to support integrated, evidence-informed recovery systems. Priority actions include creating cross-sector working arrangements, investing in pilot and scale-up activity, embedding lived experience in service design, and establishing regular feedback and learning mechanisms. A more coordinated and transparent approach can help services respond better to complex needs and deliver longer-term change.



Attendees

The event brought together TPRP and LSE colleagues, together with invited advisors and stakeholders from policy, practice, academia, and the voluntary sector.

- **TPRP and LSE team**
 - Ed Addison - Co-Founder and Director, TPRP
 - Lee Bozward - TPRP community member
 - Matt Hindhaugh - Senior Research Innovation Manager, LSE Research & Innovation
 - Khosru Miah – TPRP Recovery Community Mentor
 - Nathan Rosier - Co-Founder and Director, TPRP
 - Dr Michela Tinelli - Associate Professorial Research Fellow, LSE Care Policy and Evaluation Centre
 - Jenevieve Treadwell - Policy Fellow, School of Public Policy at LSE
 - Dr Raphael Wittenberg - Deputy Director and Associate Professorial Research Fellow, LSE Care Policy and Evaluation Centre
- **Invited guests**
 - Professor Carol Black - Internationally recognised physician and policy leader in addiction, health, and work; former President of the Royal College of Physicians
 - Rachel Blake MP - Member of Parliament
 - Rob Calder - Chief Executive, Society for the Study of Addiction
 - David Eastwood - Strategic Lead for Rough Sleeping, Westminster City Council
 - Iain Gray - Senior Commissioning and Partnerships Officer, Drug & Alcohol Action Team, Southwark Council
 - Jess Harris - Senior Research Fellow, King's College London
 - Will Haydock - Chief Executive, Collective Voice
 - James Herbert - Entrepreneur and technology leader in software, data, and digital public services, collaborating with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
 - Simone Hermida - Housing Needs Team Manager, Westminster City Council
 - Mihretab Melesse Salasibew - Director of Evidence, Centre for Homeless Impact
 - Simon Young - Principal Public Health Specialist and Substance Misuse Partnership Lead, London Borough of Hackney
- **Observer**
 - Jake Hall - Developer Relations Engineer, Hedera

Contact: For further information about the event or the ongoing collaboration between the Care Policy and Evaluation Centre and The People's Recovery Project, contact Dr Michela Tinelli, Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, m.tinelli@lse.ac.uk.