



Yvonne Connelly

Regional Manager - Wales & South West /
Rheolwraig Rhanbarthol - Cymru a'r De
Orllewin

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Janet Finch-Saunders AM/AC
Chair/Cadeirydd
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Janet,

The Salvation Army are pleased to be called to give evidence to the valuable efforts of Petition P-05-864 on a proposed ban of the use of 'hostile architecture'.

The growing use of hostile architecture not only symbolises disrespect and a lack of care for fellow human beings, but its rollout is proactively harming the health, wellbeing and recovery of people who experience homelessness and the services we provide them in Wales.

Ultimately, hostile architecture is dehumanising. Our experience tells us that people who experience homelessness do not reside in busy central locations by choice. They simply have nowhere else to go. Hostile architecture merely forces them to move to more isolated and vulnerable locations as well as reinforcing the message that homelessness is 'not to be seen' in our communities. Additionally, we believe the use of hostile architecture to reflect a poor financial investment, which merely serves to move on an individual as opposed to offer a meaningful solution to the issue of homelessness.

Hostile architecture **destroys 'safer' spaces** where people experiencing homelessness commonly reside. We have viewed with concern the growing trend for organisations and authorities to simply block off access to spaces where people who experience homelessness have often gathered, generally on the basis that there is drug use and anti-social activity occurring there. However, rarely have we seen these actions go hand in hand with adequate support and a credible offer to end the experience of homelessness.

Shelter from poor weather conditions is a basic human right for good reason, because it fundamentally contributes to human survival, and yet hostile architecture is forcing people experiencing homelessness out into the elements and into less hospitable and often more dangerous environments.

Therefore, banning hostile architecture would help end the systematic displacement of people experiencing homelessness from 'safer' spaces and reduce projected harms to their health, wellbeing and recovery.

Furthermore, hostile architecture can directly **hinder our efforts to monitor, engage and support** people experiencing homelessness by damaging their little remaining trust of authorities and wider society. We fear that further efforts to drive people who experience homelessness away from central public locations will decrease their participation with our vital outreach services, such as The Bus Project and Housing First, which monitor the

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location, wellbeing, health and progress of rough sleepers which in turn feeds into a wider multi agency assertive engagement approach.

We know from our work delivering housing, in particular our Housing First services, that a significant factor in why people are disengaging from housing services and the wider community is because they no longer trust them.

Building trust and repairing the broken relationships is therefore key if we are sincere as a society in our desire to end homelessness and in particular rough sleeping. Physically forcing people in crisis out of their communities and reinforcing their perceptions of a lack of care, consideration and compassion through hostility, will only serve to increase the disengagement, distrust and destitution of this vulnerable group of people.

Therefore, The Salvation Army believes that banning hostile architecture will allow us all to clearly demonstrate care, compassion and fairness in all aspects of our community.

The proposed ban offers Wales a unique platform to lead on championing the concept of public space as space *for all*.

This very public statement will send out a clear message of value and acceptance to those who experience homelessness and importantly, it will also directly aid the efforts of organisations like The Salvation Army in our assertive work throughout Wales to build productive and meaningful relationships with people experiencing homelessness and deliver credible solutions to ending this experience.

We look forward to continuing this important conversation with you. If there is anything we can offer more in the meantime please get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Connolly



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