



The GM Homeless Action Network has approached national charity [St Martin in the Fields](#) (SMITF) about the possibility of joining their 'Frontline Network'. The Network has drafted and shared an 'Expression of Interest' for the consideration of SMITF outlining what might be involved in the partnership. Any further progress will depend on feedback from both sides, and Network members are invited to share their thoughts as part of that process.

This document outlines some key information about the SMITF Frontline Network in Section 1, with Section 2 outlining what the partnership might mean for the GMHAN.

All GMHAN Network Members are invited to read this proposal and share their feedback. You can do this by:

- Leaving your comments in this [shared document](#) (google sign in may be required – you can do this with any email address)
- Attending the GMHAN Open Space on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 11am-1pm. Please go to [gmhan.net/news-and-events](#) for joining instructions.
- Emailing [info@gmhan.net](mailto:info@gmhan.net)

Feedback on the partnership proposal will be considered by the GMHAN 'Strategy & Support Group' and Advisory Board's over the autumn and winter alongside further discussions and exploration with SMITF.

## Section 1: About St Martin in the Fields

### **Who we are and what do we do?**

The [Frontline Network](#) launched in June 2016, and works at a national and local level to empower frontline workers across the UK. At a [local level](#), we provide regular opportunities to bring together frontline staff to network, share experience and expertise and link to decision makers. We do this via our community of [8 Partner organisations](#). Anyone who is a paid frontline worker in the voluntary, statutory and public sector can [register with the Network](#).

As a Partner of the Frontline Network, you enable us to understand what is happening in your local environment; to see how national policies are impacting frontline staff and the people they are working with. You help us draw out key learning/ solution-focused approaches from frontline staff; to improve both their experiences as well as for the people they are working with experiencing homelessness. As a Partner, your role is to:

- **Provide opportunities** for frontline workers to regularly come together in your local area- to network, share experience and expertise

- **Explore potential solutions** on key issues affecting frontline staff and people they are supporting
- **Build links** between frontline workers and decision-makers

### Why join our Partner community?

To support you in your activities as a Local Network Partner, we can provide up to £20,000 per year for 3 years. This supports you to organise regular networking opportunities and information sharing amongst frontline workers in your area.

We have worked hard over the last 3 years to build a Partner community of like-minded organisations. This provides opportunities to support each other, share experiences, network and seek advice from one another. We can also provide:

- **Choice and flexibility** in how you report on your activities to us- from quarterly to 6-monthly, written or via in-person meetings
- **A specific point of contact** to support and guide you via our Partnerships Manager
- **Support with your Communications** and any Policy work via our Policy and Comms Officer

### A bit about how we currently work

As a Partner, you would organise regular opportunities to bring together frontline staff in your area to network, share experiences/ expertise and link to local decision-makers. Our Partners organise regular events that are steered by what people working on the frontline want and need. This has resulted in increased networking, multi-agency, multi-sector working, and collaboration at a local level.

### Local Network themes have included:

- Wellbeing on the frontline
- Homeless Reduction Act (HRA)
- Experiences of death
- EU Settlement Scheme and Migrant related experiences of homelessness
- Asset and strengths-based approaches
- Access to accommodation

Learning is drawn from comments, discussions and feedback forms at their events, and has been shared with local commissioners/ decision makers to support influencing change. Our Partners also support us with highlighting our national resources of [Funding](#), [Community](#) and [Resources](#) and how frontline staff can access these additional resources to support them in their roles. We have developed our resources from speaking with frontline staff and listening to what they tell us they need. It's not about us, it's about people working on the frontline.

**Example:** [Frontline Worker Emergency Fund Survey](#). This survey asked frontline staff about their experiences of responding to Covid-19, how this was impacting people experiencing homelessness as well as the impact of this on their organisations, we launched our [VRF Emergency Fund](#).

The fund provides support around three areas of- basic essential need, overcoming barriers to support and securing accommodation. To ensure this support is as effective as possible, we have deliberately maintained a flexible funding approach; in recognition of what frontline staff and people they support told us was needed.

## Section 2: About the GMHAN Application

### Questions to consider:

Independence, transparency and collective decision making are important principles for the HAN, so the primary questions we have for the Frontline Network is how the relationship would impact on our local autonomy, particular in light of the resource support. E.g.

Q: What conditionality would come with the funding?

Q: What input would the Frontline Network look to have on future decisions regarding topics the HAN focuses on or ways in which it works?

Q: What would happen if the Frontline Network and GMHAN as a collective disagreed on a plan of action or particular policy/approach?

The GMHAN is also focused on involving a range of people in efforts to end homelessness, and has given particular emphasis to people with experience of homelessness and services, whose views don't always align with those of frontline workers.

Q: Would the focus on frontline workers in any way weaken the HAN's involvement of people with lived experience?

The Greater Manchester Homeless Action Network (GMHAN) is a network for everyone working to end homelessness in Greater Manchester. The Network brings together all the different sectors and specialisms involved in this ambition, so we can work together towards a common cause.

We do this through large scale **events** every 3 months aimed at co-designing Greater Manchester's homelessness **policy** and showcasing **best practice**. We also have an Advisory Board to work on topics raised in between events and promote the Network's voice on the GM Homelessness Programme Board (which is where decisions are made).

The Network is cross sector, including representatives from all ten Greater Manchester boroughs. Most importantly, it operated on the basis of 'community development' and co-production, bringing people together to work side by side rather than alone or in hierarchies.

Information flows from the Network events through the Advisory Board to the Programme Board and operational teams delivering services or interventions. It also comes back the other way in a continual feedback loop.

### **What might be the benefit of being a Partner of the Frontline Network?**

Since it's inception in 2017, the GMHAN has been an unconstituted network of partners, without specific resource and delivered through the willingness of individuals involved to take on required actions. The purpose of becoming a Partner of the Frontline Network would be to enhance what network members are currently doing to deepen the Network's reach and impact.

Particular advantages of a partnership between the GMHAN and Frontline Network may be:

- Continuing to ensure power is shared around partners in the GMHAN and everyone's voices are heard in decision making
- Explicitly developing opportunities in local areas and within types of services to involve more partners in network activities and decision making
- Helping there to be regular dialogue between frontline workers, people with lived experience and those making decisions about homelessness
- Learning from other areas doing similar things and sharing our experience to help end homelessness across the UK

### **What activities will a partnership help the GMHAN to develop?**

A Partnership with the Frontline Network would help us continue to maintain all of the above channels of communication through which we bring together frontline workers with decision makers and people with lived experience to share learning and explore developing work streams.

We would continue to do this whilst also deepening the relationships and opportunity to contribute on a local level in each of the 10 boroughs by increasing our activity on that level.

### **How would being a Partner of the Frontline Network support the HAN's wider work?**

Being a Partner of the Frontline Network would support the GMHAN's wider work on two key areas:

- It would enhance the Network's ability to involve others in ending homelessness, not just frontline workers. This would include people with lived experience, sectors such as health or housing, faith groups and local business. As a Partner of the Frontline Network.
- It would help members of the Network to reflect on what we're doing in our area, learn from others about what does and doesn't work in theirs, as well as better influence national policy as part of a broader collective working nationwide.

### **Suggested budget and activities**

The GMHAN will continue to be supported by the Strategy & Support group made up of individuals and organisations from the network, alongside the Advisory Board which contains wider 'system partners' and representatives from key groups like the local councils, business and the NHS. These groups will continue to hold responsibility for delivery of actions the Network identifies as needing to take place.

Additional resource is required to keep governance structures going and channel key information between them and broader network members. More specifically, resource is needed to help make these things happen:

- Quarterly full network events
- Fortnightly 'Open Space' events
- Local network development in the 10 boroughs of Greater Manchester

Details of these activities, suggested outputs, and for which budget is needed, are:

Activity	Suggested output/target	What activities would support this?	Estimated time (as proportion of 'Full Time Equivalent' role)
Full network events held quarterly	At least 400 attendances in full network events per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event design</li> <li>Speaker liaison</li> <li>Promotion</li> <li>Event management</li> <li>Follow up</li> </ul>	35 hours/quarter = <b>~3 hours/week</b> = ~0.1 FTE
Fortnightly open space	Open space events held every fortnight  At least 75 separate individuals involved per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agenda design</li> <li>Promotion</li> <li>Facilitation</li> <li>Follow up with Strategy &amp; Support</li> </ul>	<b>~3.5 hours/week</b> = ~0.1 FTE
Governance and oversight	Advisory Board involving frontline workers, people with lived experience and commissioners/ decision makers from across the system meets to consider emerging issues every 2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agenda prep and sharing</li> <li>Liaison with Chair and Strategy &amp; Support</li> <li>Follow up actions</li> </ul>	10 hours / 2 months = <b>~1.25 hours/week</b> = ~0.05 FTE
Local Network Development & Support	Opportunities for active local engagement in each borough by end of year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outreach</li> <li>Liaison</li> <li>Actions &amp; Follow up</li> </ul>	3.5 hours / borough / month = 35 hours / month = <b>~9/week</b> = ~0.25 FTE
<b>Total</b>			<b>0.5 FTE</b>

The cost of recruiting a Network Co-ordinator on a 0.5 FTE contract at a wage of £26,000 'full time equivalent' (annual salary if the role was full time), including management costs and sufficient expenses, is estimated at **£19,900**.

The current proposal is that the Network Co-ordinator sits within [Greater Together Manchester](#), an active member of the GMHAN who work across the 10 boroughs, including hosting of other partnership projects.

Plans are in place to match fund contributions from the Frontline Network to support the wider system's change aims of the Network and expand this to a full time post. Any savings from match funding – especially managements cost for the host organisation – would be channelled toward expenses to support the network activities.