

Is the Westminster Government on track to meet its manifesto commitment to *“end the blight of rough sleeping”* in England by the end of this Parliament?



appg

for Ending Homelessness

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We will also end the blight of rough sleeping by the end of the next Parliament by expanding successful pilots and programmes such as the Rough Sleeping Initiative and Housing First, and working to bring together local services to meet the health and housing needs of people sleeping on the streets.¹

Conservative Party Manifesto, 2019



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¹ The Conservative Party (2019) Get Brexit Done, Unleash Britain's Potential – the Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019 <https://www.conservatives.com/our-plan/conservative-party-manifesto-2019>

Foreword

We are four of nearly 40 people with lived experience of homelessness who have given evidence as part of the APPG for Ending Homelessness’ inquiry into rough sleeping. We passionately believe that with the right political will, rough sleeping in England can, and must, be ended. We’re pleased to be given a platform in this report as it’s vital that our expert voices are heard by policy makers so we can avoid the mistakes of the past and build a better future.

Individually and collectively, we have experienced a wide range of the most acute forms of homelessness including rough sleeping, suffering exploitation and abuse, night-shelters, eating at soup kitchens, sofa surfing and more. These experiences devastated our mental health and compounded the adverse childhood experiences we had already endured.

We have all been failed by the systems that are supposed to help us. We have experienced criminalisation, stigma, discrimination, enforcement, and a lack of support. We’ve knocked on every door looking for help, only to be told we are not a priority, we are “intentionally homeless” and have our appeals for support rejected. We’ve felt alienated from systems that lacked compassion and understanding, which saw us as problems rather than people in need of help. Only with the dedicated support of local organisations and homelessness charities have we been able to begin to put our lives back together.

Government committed to ending “the blight of rough sleeping in England by the end of the next Parliament,” which is in 2024. We debated whether this was an unrealistic aim and concluded that the experience of Everyone In at the height of the pandemic has taught us that, with the right political

will, it is within our grasp. Our concern is that those gains are quickly fading away and without a renewed commitment and the right policies in place, the goal to end rough sleeping by 2024 will not be met.

If this target is not met, we are deeply concerned about the risk that thousands more, like us, will have their lives destroyed, their mental health will be damaged – and they may even lose their lives altogether. That’s bad for us as a society. When one of us suffers, we all do.

By contrast, if this Government keeps its promise, all of us will benefit. The NHS, the criminal justice system, social care services will all reap financial savings from ending rough sleeping. That’s why we wholeheartedly support the recommendations in this report which focus on preventing homelessness, ensuring that where rough sleeping does happen, we intervene at the earliest opportunity to end it, and providing sustained support to those with enduring needs so that homelessness does not happen to them again.

Preventing homelessness happening in the first place is vital. You can’t end rough sleeping if you’re not preventing it. We cannot limit how far back we go with our efforts – we know that childhood trauma figures highly in predictors of homelessness, as does time spent in prison. As a priority, we must immediately ensure that support services are readily available to people at those crucial times of crisis when homelessness threatens. This must include the expansion of emergency mental health support to ensure people are not left to struggle on the streets without vital help when they need it most.

Government must make sure that if rough sleeping does happen, it is as brief as possible. The longer a person is on the

streets, the worse their problems become. High-quality assertive outreach which is personalised to meet the needs of the individual is key to ending rough sleeping. We need to stop de-humanising and criminalising people who are homeless, and instead link them to the services that can support them to rebuild their lives.

We know that getting someone off the streets is not always the end of their rough sleeping. Many of us experienced shelters and other temporary accommodation that was so unsuitable and dangerous that we felt we had no choice but to sleep on the streets. When people are housed, they need decent and sustained access to mental health and addiction services, benefits advice and emotional support. Some of us were terrified of becoming homeless again because we didn’t have any support with paying the bills or sustaining a tenancy. The right support is crucial, and therefore, it concerns us that key funding streams for local support services including Housing First are soon ending, with no certainty about the future.

We need to invest in our communities to end rough sleeping, particularly in the supply of genuinely affordable housing. It’s one of the reasons councils turned us away when we asked for help. Benefits need to meet the cost of housing, particularly amidst the ongoing cost-of-living crisis so that people aren’t faced with the impossible choice between paying their rent or eating.

We agree with the recommendations in the report that the diverse needs of people experiencing homelessness must be met and that tailored provision for specific groups who are most obviously failed now – including women, LGBTQ+ people, those with no recourse to public funds and care leavers – are critical if rough sleeping is to be ended by 2024.

We have been energised by our involvement in working with the APPG for Ending Homelessness. We’ve been given hope for the future, for a time when we raise the baseline of what is acceptable poverty in society, for when people aren’t dying on the streets because they are homeless but instead living the fulfilling lives that they are capable of. We are all determined to be part of this movement to make real and dramatic change and to use our expertise of experiencing homelessness to make a positive difference.

It’s time for the Government to reflect on their commitment and to deliver the change that people like us need. It’s too late to put this right for us but they have the chance to take decisive action and put this right for others.

We want those who read this report to feel determined, committed and hopeful about ending rough sleeping. We must come together with all who seek to end it and campaign for change. Everyone has a moral right to a safe, secure, and decent home. Together we can make it happen.

Signed,

Amanda Hailes, Robin Leigh, Michael Royffe and Anne Taylor

Executive summary



Bob Blackman MP

As Co-Chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Ending Homelessness, we are very pleased to introduce this report on the Government’s progress towards its manifesto commitment to “end the blight of rough sleeping” in England by the end of this Parliament in 2024.

Our inquiry into tackling rough sleeping in England has been extensive – we’ve held three evidence sessions hearing testimony from experts across the homelessness sector and received evidence submissions from organisations working and delivering services in the homelessness sector, local authorities and, crucially, testimony from people with direct experience of homelessness.



Florence Eshalomi MP

The consensus from these testimonies and submissions was clear – despite welcome progress towards ending rough sleeping, without urgent and impactful action, the Westminster Government will not meet its manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping in England by 2024, particularly as the ongoing cost-of-living crisis will force more people into destitution and at risk of losing their home in the coming months.

All organisations welcomed the Government’s ambition in committing to ending rough sleeping – the most devastating and damaging form of homelessness – and their subsequent efforts to tackle it. This has led to considerable progress towards the commitment, saving lives and helping many people to begin to recover and rebuild their lives away from rough sleeping. In particular, the Government’s Everyone In initiative was lauded by respondents as making incredible progress towards the commitment. Indeed, the 2021 rough sleeping count shows street homelessness at its lowest for four years. We welcome government’s continued focus on rough sleeping in the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy published in September 2022, and recognise it takes steps forward to our shared goal of ending it by 2024, particularly with a welcome focus on prevention and expanding accommodation for people experiencing or facing a night on the streets.

However, respondents fear the progress government has made towards this commitment since 2019 is at risk of being overwhelmed and lost, as the cost-of-living crisis we face worsens in the coming months. We agree with respondents and urge government to take action to ensure that the Everyone In initiative does not become a footnote in our efforts to tackle homelessness but instead represents a permanent shift in our approach to tackling it once and for all.

It showed that with bold and ambitious government policy, ending rough sleeping is possible, and highlighted the critical importance of providing stable housing and access to support for recovery.

We have heard from organisations, local authorities and people with experience of homelessness how, to meet their commitment by 2024, the Westminster Government must implement further measures to stem the flow of rough sleeping, and to tackle wider forms of homelessness. We have seen how rough sleeping is not usually the first or only form of homelessness people experience, and that people often move between different types of homelessness, for example from sofa surfing to rough sleeping when they have exhausted their options, to night shelter to temporary accommodation. While respondents understood why ending rough sleeping is the main focus of government, not looking to tackle other forms of homelessness risks making their progress temporary and unsustainable up to 2024.

Looking towards 2024, respondents were in consensus that the three crucial building blocks to successfully end rough sleeping and, crucially, sustaining this in the run-up to 2024 and beyond were:

1. Preventing rough sleeping and homelessness wherever possible:

“Prevent it from happening before it does. There is no need for homelessness to happen. There are plenty of...indicators that show when and where people are at risk of becoming homeless. Awareness of these factors can help to prevent it before it happens and thus reduce the harm that follows from it.”²

2. Intervening quickly when it does occur, ensuring people can access the crisis services they need when sleeping on the streets:

“I was unsure about what was going to happen next – who to contact for help - and where I was going to go.”³

“I found help extremely difficult to come by. I was experiencing alcohol and non-alcohol related psychosis and I had resided myself to the fact I would probably die outside.”⁴

3. Supporting people who have slept rough to ensure they never have to go through that again, and can rebuild their life with stable accommodation:

² Individual with direct experience of homelessness who responded to the APPGEH’s call for testimony

³ Individual with direct experience of homelessness who responded to the APPGEH’s call for testimony

⁴ Individual with direct experience of homelessness who responded to the APPGEH’s call for testimony

“So, now I’m housed. I was, and I have been housed for a while and I’m not chaotic. I’m working with a therapist and I’m getting better. But I’ve got complex PTSD as a result of child abuse and trauma. So, it’s, life is difficult. But I’m managing because I’ve got help.”⁵

Taken with the policy recommendations outlined in this report, which are based on the experiences of people facing homelessness and people working tirelessly to end the homelessness of their clients, we are optimistic that, with this approach, the Westminster Government would be able to deliver on its manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024, as well as putting in place important and valuable plans to make this sustainable and address wider forms of homelessness.

People with experience of homelessness told us why they thought it was imperative this Government meets its manifesto commitment of ending rough sleeping by 2024:

“[It will] prevent unnecessary death on the streets and get people back into a healthy working society. And just on a purely humanitarian level. We are a first world country and having people still living on the streets is just disgraceful.”

“Homelessness is an extremely traumatic experience which is difficult to escape from without support from government and council services. Nobody who has found themselves in that situation should be abandoned by society and the homeless should be more of a priority.”

“Homelessness degrades anybody who has the misfortune to experience it. Given a certain set of circumstances, anyone can find themselves in that situation and it is not always easy to restore someone’s life to its former state....I have known many homeless people during my time in that situation and there are many good people who just need assistance so they can rehabilitate their lives to some semblance of normality without excessive judgment or pressure.”

Alongside them, we urge Liz Truss, the new prime minister, to deliver on this manifesto promise and ensure no one across England has to face a night sleeping on the streets. We know that it is possible, and this Government can end rough sleeping in England, but they cannot do it without tackling the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping head on. It must also take the right action to mitigate the pressures cost-of-living crisis which too many of our constituents face now and will continue to face in the coming months. We urge

this Government to make tackling rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness a priority under Liz Truss’ premiership, and implement robust policies recommended in this report in addition to the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy. These additional steps will provide the most comprehensive and sustainable way to end rough sleeping and ensure our constituents, or any across England, do not have to experience street homelessness.

As Co-Chairs, we welcome the report’s recommendations and very much look forward to campaigning towards their implementation. We would like to pay tribute to the countless individuals and organisations who have attended our inquiry evidence sessions and taken the time to submit evidence to our consultations. We would particularly like to say thank you to the people with direct experience of homelessness who shared their powerful testimonies with us. We appreciate the difficulties of sharing personal testimony but it is crucial that policy-makers and parliamentarians can hear their experiences so we can stop it happening to anyone else.

We now look forward to working with our Vice-Chairs, Officers, and all members of the APPG for Ending Homelessness, using our collective voice to make a compelling case to this Government that they must meet this manifesto commitment and “end the blight of rough sleeping by 2024.”

We urge this Government to take forward the recommendations in this report with immediate effect, and we ask Members of both Houses from across the political spectrum to support the Government in doing so. Working together to end all forms of homelessness in this country ought to be our utmost priority up to 2024 and beyond.



Bob Blackman MP



Florence Eshalomi MP

Co-Chairs of the APPG for Ending Homelessness

⁵ Individual with direct experience of homelessness who responded to the APPGEH’s call for testimony

Top recommendations

1. Government should establish a new inter-ministerial working group or cabinet committee on homelessness and rough sleeping, as set out in the Kerlake Commission, to establish a clear vision and implementation plan for ending rough sleeping and, crucially, preventing and ending other forms of homelessness such as sofa surfing and those who are stuck in temporary accommodation.

This should be chaired by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with membership including the Ministry of Justice, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Home Office, Department of Education and Department for Work and Pensions and all relevant agencies. The group would publish a cross-government national strategy with expectations and engagement with key agencies. This strategy should be accompanied by a published annual review of performance, no later than three months after the annual rough sleeping count.

A Homelessness Prevention Taskforce could be established to define departmental outcomes and a related strategy for preventing homelessness, and a joint Health and Homelessness Unit could be established in DHSC to ensure cross-departmental focus on improving health outcomes, collaborating closely with the new inter-ministerial working group and Prevention Taskforce.

2. Government must urgently deliver improved access to genuinely affordable housing, to relieve the acute lack of accommodation options for people facing or experiencing homelessness.

Organisations that contributed to the inquiry stated the lack of truly affordable housing is a “fundamental challenge” to delivering services and ending their clients’ homelessness.

“There is a lack of accommodation options for people at each step of the pathway, beginning at the crisis stage with a lack of emergency bedspaces, and continuing into the pathway...with a lack of capacity.”⁶

Government must:

- Set a national target for building homes at social rent levels and deliver the sector-recommended target of building 90,000 social rented homes a year.
- Facilitate this by increasing grant funding delivered through the Affordable Homes Programme.
- Issue new guidance to local authorities which explicitly extends existing exemptions in social housing allocations guidance to people with a history of rough sleeping.
- Explore options for landlord incentives in order for them to accept people who are on Universal Credit or Housing Benefit and ensure they have access to advice workers who are able to mediate any issues between landlord and tenant.
- Ensure welcome plans to legislate for the abolition of Section 21 evictions through the Renters Reform Bill are brought forward in this Parliament.

3. Government should strengthen preventative welfare policies to help more people keep their homes as the cost-of-living crisis worsens and pushes people to the brink of destitution and homelessness.

- Government should review the operation of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates with a view to return them to the 30th percentile of local rents as they did in response to the pandemic, which provided a lifeline to those on the brink of destitution.
- Given the rate of inflation in all costs, the case has never been stronger for a review of the benefit cap, and consideration of an exemption from the cap for those sleeping rough or stuck in emergency accommodation.
- As other living costs rise, financial support should be sufficient to meet the rising financial pressures that people are experiencing whether through Universal Credit, cost-of-living payments, bill reductions or reversing the cuts to Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Deductions to benefits should be tailored to people’s circumstances, so that they are able to afford their living costs whilst managing their debts. This should include options for people to: reduce repayment rates if they are facing homelessness, deprioritise repaying debts to government if they are repaying debts to others, and access token payment plans if they are in severe financial difficulty.

4. Government should urgently review existing criteria of priority need, intentionality and local connection in homelessness legislation in England, to ensure that people who are rough sleeping get the help they need.

These tests create gaps in provision of support, particularly for people classified as ‘single homeless’ or those without dependent children, who then cannot access vital assistance to end their homelessness, potentially entrenching poverty, mental or physical ill-health or substance addiction, and exposing them to criminality as a means of survival. This was outlined by multiple people with direct experience of facing these tests when homeless who contributed to the APPGEH inquiry:

“I was told repeatedly that I was not high priority which is not very helpful when you are facing another cold night on the streets.”

“After being homeless for a year, I tried the council again and they gave me the details of a night shelter which I was able to stay at for a couple of months. They acknowledged that I was homeless... However, I was always told that I was low priority need.”

“[Support] was almost non-existent and did nothing but damage to my already dire situation. No borough or area were willing to take responsibility for me and all claimed ‘no connection’. This was inconsolable to me.”

Not being able to access the vital support they needed when they faced rough sleeping was devastating for these individuals and forced them to sleep rough for long periods of time. Government should take action to prevent this entrenchment at the earliest opportunity.

12 Is the Westminster Government on track to “end rough sleeping” in England?

5. Government must ensure that the right support is available to sustain an end to someone’s homelessness. For people with multiple, entrenched needs this is Housing First.

“More people in situations like mine should go to Housing First instead of homeless hostels.”⁷

“Housing First has been a godsend for me.”⁸

“I am currently living in my own council flat in Southwark. I have now lived here for just under one year. I have had two surgeries, physiotherapy, talking therapies, and changes to my medication. I live independently and still get help from my Housing First worker.”⁹

Government should nationally roll-out Housing First for all who would benefit, with a dedicated funding stream, cross-departmental oversight, a national fidelity assurance framework and targeted welfare reform measures specific to Housing First tenants to make better use of privately rented housing. This should include provision tailored for groups who would benefit significantly from the scheme, including women, care leavers and prison leavers.

⁷ Individual with direct experience of homelessness who responded to the APPGEH’s call for testimony

⁸ Individual with direct experience of homelessness who responded to the APPGEH’s call for testimony

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Without a renewed commitment and the right policies in place, the goal to end rough sleeping by 2024 will not be met.

Reviewing the commitment to end rough sleeping in England by 2024: Where are we now?

Since the general election in 2019, when the welcome manifesto commitment to ‘end the blight of rough sleeping’ was made, the homelessness landscape in England has transformed beyond imagination. It was clear to those submitting evidence to the APPGEH that considerable progress has been made towards this commitment. **However, the consensus from submissions to the APPGEH’s inquiry concluded that without urgent and immediate action this Government will not meet its commitment to end rough sleeping in England by 2024.**

Crisis’ research into the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 showed that people who sleep rough often have the worst experiences when approaching their local authority for support. One third (33%) of people sleeping rough were turned away by their local authority without any help (compared to 14% of those in other living situations), while two thirds (67%) remained in this situation after seeking help (compared to 40% among others). The research also showed the positive impact of the Everyone In initiative, fewer people sleeping rough (11%) were turned away during this period and the number of people sleeping rough who saw an improvement in their living situation at this time increased from 42% to 67%.¹⁰

All organisations in this consultation welcomed the Government’s ambition in committing to end rough sleeping – the most devastating and damaging form of homelessness – and the policies which have undoubtedly saved lives and helped many to recover and rebuild a life away from rough sleeping. They were in absolute consensus that the most impactful policies government has enacted since 2019 were the series of measures implemented during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic to protect people facing or experiencing homelessness, which provided people with vital financial lifelines during an unprecedented crisis.

Respondents were clear that the Everyone In initiative was a watershed moment in efforts to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness. On 26 March 2020 the then Minister for Local Government and Homelessness Luke Hall MP wrote to all local authorities in England instructing them to “bring everyone in... on the street to protect their health and stop wider transmission” of coronavirus, to mirror the action to lock down the wider population.¹¹ Baroness Louise Casey who led government’s pandemic response to protect people sleeping rough until August 2020 said: “We just went for it, went for it. We had to get everybody in, we cannot have people dying on the streets.”¹² By bringing people

off the streets into emergency secure and safe accommodation, government saved lives and reduced avoidable pressure on our NHS at a critical time. As of December 2021, an estimated 40,240 people had been supported through the Everyone In scheme,¹³ and the Lancet Journal found that 266 deaths were avoided in the homeless population in England during the first wave of COVID-19, owing to the action taken during this time.¹⁴ The Greater London Authority estimated that, within London alone, the initiative prevented approximately 7,000 infections, 90 deaths, 390 hospital and 115 Intensive Care Unit admissions.¹⁵

The APPGEH heard from many people sleeping rough about how Everyone In and the pandemic were a turning point for them in being able to access stable accommodation and begin to rebuild their lives:

“Covid and lockdown was the turning point for me. It seemed to galvanise the government to deal with this issue seriously... It seemed to me that it took that health crisis to focus minds on more serious issues... As I said before, having nice, settled accommodation in the hotel was a great experience after the chaos and uncertainty that preceded it.”

“I was placed in a hotel as part of the Everybody In initiative with the assistance of Glass Door and St Mungo’s... Everything was provided for and it also allowed homeless organisations (St Mungo’s in my case) to work with councils and agencies to move people on to more long-term accommodation.”

“My experience of Everybody In was far better than my experience before that because I had settled hotel accommodation for that period which was the first time since I was made homeless. As stated earlier, in addition to the accommodation itself, the assistance offered by the hotel and St Mungo’s / Glass Door was very important to me.”

Alongside this initiative, government implemented a series of vital policies to prevent people on the brink of destitution from becoming homelessness and rough

What organisations told the APPGEH about the Everyone In initiative

“Undoubtedly the biggest single impact on rough sleeping since 2019”

“Everyone In on the whole was a great success and proved that where there is a genuine will to end homelessness it can be done”

“The Everyone In partnership across local and national government has shown that with appropriate funding and willpower, government can indeed come close to eliminating rough sleeping in a very short period”

“Everyone In proved that what had previously been seen as impossible was doable”

“The Everyone In programme has, without doubt, been a seismic moment in the battle against rough sleeping”

10 Data drawn from Sutton-Hamilton, C., Allard, M., Stroud, R., and Albanese, F. (2022) *‘I hoped there’d be more options:’ Experiences of the Homelessness Reduction Act, 2018-2021*. London: Crisis.

11 Correspondence from Luke Hall MP, Minister for Local Government and Homelessness, to local authorities on plans to protect rough sleepers – 26 March 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-minister-hall-to-local-authorities>

12 The Big Issue (2020) *Homelessness tsar Dame Louise Casey awarded a peerage* <https://www.bigissue.com/news/housing/homelessness-tsar-dame-louise-casey-awarded-a-peerage/>

13 Letter from Eddie Hughes MP, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, to local authorities on annual rough sleeping snapshot statistics and vision to end rough sleeping – 3 March 2022 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1059213/Letter_from_Minister_Eddie_Hughes_re_the_rough_sleeping_snapshot_and_the_vision_to_end_rough_sleeping.pdf

14 The Lancet (2020) *Covid-19 among people experiencing homelessness in England: a modelling study* – [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(20\)30396-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(20)30396-9/fulltext)

15 The Greater London Authority (2021) *Health Inequalities Strategy Implementation Plan 2021-24* <https://www.london.gov.uk/publications/health-inequalities-strategy-implementation-plan-2021-24>

One third (33%) of people sleeping rough were turned away by their local authority without any help.

sleeping. These measures included the realignment of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates so they covered the cheapest third of private rents in a local area, a £20 weekly increase to Universal Credit, a pause on deductions to benefits, and the much welcomed furlough scheme, which protected people in employment from sudden income loss. Government also introduced a ban on evictions for private and social tenants during the pandemic which remained in place until June 2021, and extended eviction notice periods from two to four months, to protect people who were at risk of losing their home during the pandemic. Respondents told the APPGEH that the impact of these measures was significant, giving people crucial support in a period of economic and financial uncertainty. Respondents particularly welcomed these policies' preventative impact, which aimed to stem the flow of people facing rough sleeping or other forms of homelessness, such as sofa surfing. Given that the lockdown measures would have likely resulted in the breakdown of people's informal living arrangements, and people who were typically reliant on staying temporarily with friends or family to avoid sleeping rough would be left without these options, respondents warmly welcomed government's focus on impactful preventative measures and providing financial help for those on the brink of all forms of homelessness.

Looking towards the manifesto commitment, there are clear and important lessons this Government must learn from this initiative and accompanying preventative measures, and they should ensure this learning is embedded into future policy, particularly as we look to tackle a worsening cost-of-living crisis in the coming months.

In particular, regarding Everyone In, which specifically focused on providing immediate support into accommodation for people sleeping rough or imminently at risk, submissions to the inquiry highlighted several

key lessons they wanted to bring to this Government's attention.

1. The first lesson is that the Everyone In initiative proved that **ending rough sleeping and homelessness in England is possible** through bold and ambitious government policy.

Many organisations echoed this sentiment of the National Housing Federation:

"Rough sleeping essentially temporarily ended overnight with the government's emergency accommodation measures during the first national lockdown. This shows what is possible with leadership and funding."

By bringing 'everyone' in from the streets into safe and secure accommodation, respondents told the APPGEH that unthinkable progress to tackle rough sleeping was made in some local areas. For example, in Watford and Southwark, there were days during the first wave of the pandemic when not a single person was sleeping rough, an unimaginable scenario without bold policy from government. Everyone In has changed perceptions of what is possible, as outlined by one person with direct experience of homelessness who told the APPGEH:

"And that's, I mean, that's amazing that everybody was in, and I just wonder why that can't continue. Why can't we have everybody in all the time? Because we proved, the government have proved it's possible to do it, so why stop?"

Matt Downie, Chief Executive of Crisis, told an APPGEH evidence session that the Everyone In initiative achieved the best progress on ending rough sleeping for many years and will now act as a benchmark for future policy. Looking ahead to their manifesto commitment, this

Government must remember the power of bold and ambitious policy, and the importance of providing people with safe accommodation.

2. The second lesson of Everyone In is the efficacy of **clear leadership and direction from national government.**

“The Everyone In initiative was a fantastic example of what can be achieved...over a short timescale when a clear directive is received.”

Directing local authorities to help ‘everyone’ at risk of rough sleeping, on the public health principle of saving lives, galvanised national and local government, charities and the third sector. At national level, government departments coordinated and collaborated, helping the Government to begin to realise its ambition set out in the Rough Sleeping Strategy of 2018 for departments to work together “seamlessly” in order to protect people at risk from the virus.¹⁶ At a local level, this focus on saving lives drove partnership working and removed former bureaucracies and barriers to supporting people out of homelessness. Fitzpatrick et al. stated in their analysis of the COVID-19 response that collaboration between sectors and organisations was a defining characteristic of the crisis response.¹⁷ This was reiterated in submissions to the APPGEH with one organisation stating, during the initiative – “Everyone’s work crystallised around the same issue, rather than dealing with myriad pressures.” Encouragingly, this Government’s updated Rough Sleeping Strategy published in September 2022 recognised the importance of a “clear and defined vision of ending rough sleeping” which they hoped would unite government and local partners to the same end of making this a reality in England.¹⁸

The Everyone In initiative also demonstrated the detrimental impact to policy when there is an absence of clear direction to all those involved in its delivery. While direction from government was evident at the beginning of the pandemic, many respondents told the APPGEH that, as the months went on, there was an acute lack of communication and mixed messaging, as to whether the scheme had continued, was being phased out or had concluded. Government continued to state publicly that the scheme continued, including via the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Eddie Hughes in the House of Commons, but a huge amount of uncertainty remained around local provision.¹⁹ For example, it was unclear whether to continue using emergency accommodation to accommodate people throughout the different lockdowns, and whether this would be funded. Crisis’ frontline services reported that confusion around the ending of the scheme and the cliff-edge of support caused stress for staff who were unaware of when the scheme was ending, or if it had already, which made it harder to advise service users and certainly inhibited efforts to support people out of homelessness.

There were also reports of confusion around whether Everyone In truly meant supporting everyone who faced homelessness, with people from Black, Asian and other minoritised groups, women and people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) conditions attached to their immigration status particularly facing barriers to accessing help. In their submission to the APPGEH, Crisis frontline services spoke of patchy and inconsistent provision of support for non-UK nationals who were often excluded from support. The National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group also stated

in their submission that women’s access to help could have been increased with clearer guidance from government on the provision of women-only hotels, which remained limited throughout the pandemic.

3. Another key lesson from the pandemic was the **clear positive impact of treating homelessness as a public health emergency, and integrating support to find accommodation and access health services.**

The treatment of homelessness as a health emergency resulted in an acute focus on protecting and saving the lives of people sleeping rough, and consequently some of the barriers accessing services normally faced by some groups of people facing rough sleeping were temporarily lifted. For example, people were able to access emergency accommodation regardless of their immigration status or connection to a local area, giving a glimpse of a system where support was based on need alone. People’s access to and engagement with drug and alcohol addiction services was considered by St Mungo’s as one of the “clearest areas of improvement” they identified in the COVID-19 response, a consequence of the unprecedented focus on homelessness in the parts of the government responsible for health, and the resulting integration and collaboration between housing and health services in the support provided to people.²⁰ The APPGEH heard that the public health implications of the pandemic led to people who had slept rough for many years being inside and accessing support, many for the first time. Examples included key health support services being delivered on-site or easily reached, swift and accessible assessment and referral processes for health and substance addictions, and easier and more flexible access to drug treatment

prescriptions. Government’s updated Rough Sleeping Strategy of September 2022 also recognised that close working between local authorities, homelessness and health sectors during the pandemic led to “transformative change” to deliver services “where they were needed most.”²¹ Respondents were keen that this should be a legacy of the pandemic, with Helen Berresford, Director of External Engagement at Nacro telling an APPGEH evidence session that this twin focus on homelessness and health needed to be sustained.

4. Finally, Everyone In also **exposed the scale of the unmet housing need in England and the inaccuracies of the national street count used to record and measure rough sleeping in England.**

The Rough Sleeping Snapshot

The rough sleeping snapshot figures are calculated using a methodology introduced in 2010. The methodology involves counts and estimates from local authorities of the number of people thought to be sleeping rough in a local authority area on a ‘typical night’. More recently the methodology has also included local authorities conducting a combination of an estimation and a spotlight count. This night is a single date chosen by the local authority between 1 October and 30 November. It is a snapshot and will not include everyone in the area with a history of rough sleeping. In 2021, 250 local authorities (81%) used an evidence-based estimate meeting or an evidence-based estimate meeting including a spotlight count for their rough sleeping snapshot and 59 local authorities (19%) used a count-based estimate.²²

¹⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) *Rough Sleeping Strategy* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf

¹⁷ Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P., Pawson, H., Watts, B., Wood, J. (2021) *The COVID-19 Crisis Response to Homelessness in Great Britain: Interim Report* <https://housingevidence.ac.uk/publications/the-covid-19-crisis-response-to-homelessness-in-great-britain/>

¹⁸ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

¹⁹ HC Deb 8 September 2021 Vol 700 cc 133WH <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2021-09-08/debates/8AD033DF-8D91-4915-B5E1-9B87F2518B27/RoughSleeping?highlight=everyone#contribution-1F039B05-E051-4831-9DA4-4BEAE0480A9>

²⁰ St Mungo’s (2021) *Housing and health: working together to respond to rough sleeping during Covid-19* <https://www.mungos.org/publication/housing-and-health-working-together-to-respond-to-rough-sleeping-during-covid-19/>

²¹ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

²² Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2021* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2021/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2021>

20 Is the Westminster Government on track to “end rough sleeping” in England?

While government’s own data gathering methodology counted 4,266 people sleeping rough on any given night in 2019,²³ as of December 2021, an estimated 40,240 people had been supported through the Everyone In initiative since March 2020.²⁴ Respondents to the APPGEH’s inquiry acknowledged the difficulties in measuring rough sleeping, but the scale of this underestimation concerned many, particularly in regard to meeting the manifesto commitment and truly ending rough sleeping in England.

This is not a new criticism for government – in 2015, the UK Statistics Authority, who oversees the validity of official government data, investigated homelessness statistics and concluded government data on rough sleeping does not meet standards required to be considered “national statistics”, and that the data falls short in “trustworthiness, quality, and value.”²⁵ Government itself admitted to the flaws of its methodology with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities pointing to the “inherent” difficulties of estimating the number of people sleeping rough within a local authority.²⁶ However, respondents were clear that to credibly claim to make progress or end rough sleeping in England it is essential that government uses the most accurate measuring, monitoring and data recording methods that corresponds to the true scale of homelessness and rough sleeping, and tailor the solutions to local needs to ensure this progressed is sustained. Respondents urged this Government to reinstate its commitments in the Rough Sleeping Strategy of 2018 to “improve our evidence base” around rough sleeping and expand the use

of CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network system) methodology, currently used in London to the rest of the country. Respondents also highlighted gaps in evidence with regards to homelessness prevention, for LGBTQI+, Black, Asian and other minoritised backgrounds, and older homelessness which need to be uncovered to truly understand national trends. In its updated Rough Sleeping Strategy of 2022 this Government made a welcome commitment to data improvement, including working with the Centre for Homelessness Impact on a national data-led framework to track progress on their vision and commitment on addressing rough sleeping.²⁷ This includes looking at the role case level data might play in understanding needs and outcomes. It is an important step in understanding scale and local need but should go further and link to data on other forms of homelessness and tracking progress at an individual case level.²⁸

As well as looking at improving data collection on rough sleeping, there should be an ambition to link data on rough sleeping to other forms of homelessness to understand long term outcomes (including repeat homelessness) of people who receive advice, help and support from local services. A methodology that has been gaining more traction in the US, Canada and Australia is a ‘by name list’ approach where local areas collect real time data on people experiencing homelessness which includes their support and housing needs and helps design tailored solutions to address the problem in each community.

In 2015, the UK Statistics Authority, concluded government data on rough sleeping does not meet standards required to be considered national statistics, and that the data falls short in trustworthiness, quality, and value.

23 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) *Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019>

24 Letter from Eddie Hughes MP, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, to local authorities on annual rough sleeping snapshot statistics and vision to end rough sleeping - 3 March 2022 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1059213/Letter_from_Minister_Eddie_Hughes_re_the_rough_sleeping_snapshot_and_the_vision_to_end_rough_sleeping.pdf

25 UK Statistics Authority (2015) *Statistics on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in England*. London: UK Statistics Authority.

26 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2021* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2021/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2021>

27 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

28 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) *Rough Sleeping Strategy* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf

How we can continue progress to reduce rough sleeping

Reflecting on the pandemic, and the aftermath of Everyone In, respondents were disappointed by this Government, believing they had so far missed an unprecedented opportunity to continue the momentum of the initiative and make permanent progress towards the commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024, including missing the opportunity to embed this approach as part of local authority responses to rough sleeping in the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy. Many local authorities and services reported to the APPGEH they had recorded dramatic reductions in rough sleeping during Everyone In, but in the aftermath, as emergency provisions wound up, and in the absence of a similar intervention with national direction and funding, many have seen numbers of people sleeping rough locally rise. Respondents were extremely concerned that numbers will only continue to rise with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and economic downturn anticipated in the coming months.

Aside from the Everyone In initiative, respondents warmly welcomed several other government policies and initiatives introduced since 2019 which have helped them to make progress towards ending rough sleeping in England. Many respondents stated the fantastic impact of funding provided by the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) on local efforts to end rough sleeping and homelessness:

“RSI has been a vital and proven initiative in reducing rough sleeping”

“RSI makes an invaluable contribution to meeting some of the costs of rough sleeping”

The impact of RSI at a local level has been welcome - since its introduction in 2018, its funding has enabled local authorities to design and tailor homelessness services and projects to local needs, recognising that different areas face different challenges, gaps of provision and emerging needs. Government’s own analysis found it had reduced rough sleeping by almost a third compared to areas that have not taken part in the programme,²⁹ and in its updated Rough Sleeping Strategy recommitted to providing £500million funding over three years.³⁰ One organisation that delivers frontline homelessness services told the APPGEH:

“The development of RSI has enabled closer working relationships with district and boroughs in the county. This has meant that providers can add resources to areas. For example, in one district we have workers that specialise in supporting clients with complex needs, substance use, and housing led services. As a provider we have added specific women’s services and a rapid rehousing scheme.”

Respondents also welcomed the change from one-year to three-year funding cycles to allow for longer-term strategic planning and continuity for projects. However, they were clear that progress to end rough sleeping through RSI was still restricted by the short-term nature of the financial settlement, which limits the viability and delivery of crucial projects:

“The short termism of the money proved to be frustrating, new projects would barely be off the ground when new funding applications would be needed.”

Some pointed to the mismatch between three-year funding cycles and the demand to fund genuine progress towards ending rough sleeping, which one organisation told the APPGEH: “Can only be achieved through funding streams that extend beyond the short term.” One health service provider told the APPGEH - “It can take years to create successful and sustainable services through ongoing reviews and improvement work.”

These funding pressures force service providers to focus on funding emergency interventions and crisis responses, as opposed to genuinely addressing the drivers of rough sleeping locally. Many respondents also added that the process to decide these settlements is too rushed and resource-intensive. Constantly bidding for various funding pots and the lengthy monitoring requirements preoccupies staff and inhibits strategic delivery. For example, 13 funding streams were announced during the pandemic alone, and respondents said they would be able to be more effective in their efforts to end rough sleeping if these streams were simplified and reduced. Some also recommended that the bidding processes for homelessness funding provision be removed, as the complex and rushed processes deterred bids, and often encouraged the quickest rather than the most effective solutions being put forward. Importantly, these additional pressures on local authorities come after successive years of successive cuts to reduced budgets and increased demand for services. Research commissioned by Homeless Link and St Mungo’s in 2020 showed that the homelessness sector already faced a spending shortfall of nearly £1billion each year to support single homeless people.³¹ As Homeless Link outlined in their submission to the APPGEH:

“While the launch of the RSI introduced a welcome boost in 2018/19, spending was still 40% down on 2008/09. In roughly the same period, rough sleeping in England more than doubled and temporary accommodation placements increased by 91%.”

The submission continued: “The upcoming 3-year settlement was welcome although the total settlement remains below what Homeless Link feels was necessary to meet the scale of demand.”

Overall, the RSI and other programmes initiated as part of the 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy, and recommitted to in the 2022 Rough Sleeping Strategy, demonstrate support for providing emergency support to people who are sleeping rough. Respondents spoke of the great value of other programmes such as the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) which have helped them secure units of accommodation and commission support programmes which assist people sleeping rough to get into safe and secure housing, most recently as move-on accommodation from the Everyone In initiative. These initiatives have enabled local authorities, working in partnership with service providers, to scale up services such as street outreach, emergency accommodation, assessment and rapid rehousing services, including No Second Night Out and Somewhere Safe to Stay, tenancy support and Housing First services, all to the benefit of the rough sleeping commitment. However, there was clear demand from respondents for expansion of these programmes, to ensure that everyone housed in emergency housing can access secure housing and support to make sure they can move on from rough sleeping and homelessness for good.

29 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) *Impact evaluation of the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831133/RSI_Impact_Evaluation.pdf

30 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

31 WPI Economics, St Mungo’s and Homeless Link (2020) *Local authority spending on homelessness* <https://www.mungos.org/app/uploads/2020/02/Local-authority-spending-on-homelessness%E2%80%93WPI-Economics-research-report%E2%80%93February-2020-update.pdf>

While the government's own data gathering methodology counted 4,266 people sleeping rough on any given night in 2019, as of December 2021, an estimated 40,240 people had been supported through the Everyone In initiative since March 2020.

In its updated Rough Sleeping Strategy of September 2022 this Government announced an expansion of the provision of longer-term supported housing in the form of a new scheme called the Single Homelessness Accommodation Project (SHAP). SHAP commits to delivering 2,400 homes by March 2025 with wrap-around support for tenants for up to three years, and is backed by £200million funding. At the time of writing it is currently unclear whether this will be completely new funding, but this is certainly a welcome step forward, and it will be critical that government reviews the scheme's successful delivery. Further, it is likely there will be gaps in the housing and support needed to the scale revealed by the pandemic, so longer-term a clear strategy to deliver genuinely affordable housing to meet need, and the funding for support services, is vital to achieving success.

More broadly the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy made many other welcome commitments which will help to support people facing and experiencing rough sleeping and homelessness, including key focuses on prevention, intervention, recovery and a joined-up systems approach to tackling rough sleeping by 2024. Government committed to ensuring no one is released from a public institution to the streets, establishing a new advisory group for people with direct experience of homelessness, and reiterating this Government's support for repealing the Vagrancy Act, and abolishing 'no fault' Section 21 evictions. However, it falls short of truly addressing the scale of homelessness in England and tackling the fundamental drivers of homelessness, particularly failing to commit to providing the emergency support needed to prevent a rise in rough sleeping amidst a worsening cost-of-living crisis.

In conclusion, respondents were clear that these current programmes and initiatives, while necessary to help end rough sleeping, were insufficient in themselves to meet the scale of need and the welcome commitment by 2024. They urged this Government to embed the lessons of the Everyone In initiative, and accompanying policies from the pandemic, into clear ambitious homelessness policy towards 2024.

Recommendations:

- **1a.** Government should establish a new inter-ministerial working group or cabinet committee on homelessness and rough sleeping, as recommended in the Kerlake Commission, which should be chaired by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and publish a cross-government national strategy with clear expectations and strategic engagement with key agencies.³²
- **1b.** In the absence of continuing the lauded Everyone In initiative, respondents were clear that there is currently a level of direct housing support missing after initial intervention for many people sleeping rough. Government should commit to providing rapid access to safe emergency accommodation for everyone in England who needs it, and require local authorities to produce plans for moving people into settled housing as soon as possible.
- **1c.** Reduce and simplify the number of different funding streams at a national level, and provide funding through longer-term settlements. Respondents working in service delivery were in consensus that the number of different complex funding streams inhibited their ability to end homelessness and rough sleeping in their local area. They urged this Government to:

³² Kerlake Commission (2021) *The Kerlake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: a new way of working: ending rough sleeping together. Final report – September 2021* https://usercontent.one/wp/www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/KRSC_Final_Report_29_11.pdf

- Provide RSI on a firmer, longer-term footing to support the maintenance of staff and commissioning of contracts.
 - Monitor and review the delivery of RSAP and SHAP to ensure it meets the true scale of need. If it doesn't, government must take further steps to provide the necessary accommodation and support.
 - Consider longer term financial settlements – ideally for five years.
 - Consider removing bidding processes for homelessness funding provision.
- **1d.** Building on the commitment for data improvement in the 2022 Rough Sleeping Strategy, this should include expanding the CHAIN database in England but should also consider the implementation of real time databases such as a ‘by-name list’ approach to support local areas to track if they are making progress on ending homelessness. Government must also fill any gaps in evidence on homelessness prevention, as well as solutions for certain homelessness groups. These will include gaps in evidence for LGBTQI+ people, people groups, and older homeless people. Government should commission and carry out research to fill these gaps.

Meeting the needs of everyone sleeping rough

All respondents were keen to stress that people’s experiences of rough sleeping vary enormously and the revised rough sleeping strategy must address the full range of specific needs and support required for all people sleeping rough or at risk. While sleeping rough is a devastating experience for anyone, respondents stated that certain groups are at higher risk of street homelessness or face additional dangers and vulnerabilities when sleeping rough. A disproportionate number of people sleeping rough have experienced institutional life, for example through contact with the criminal justice system, being in hospital or local authority care. Encouragingly, the Government’s updated Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises this and made an explicit commitment: *“To ensure that those leaving a public institution - whether it’s prison, hospital or care - don’t find themselves out on the streets with no place to go,”* outlining various targeted interventions for these groups who face an acute risk of homelessness when leaving these public institutions.³³

This is welcome as respondents made clear that treating people who sleep rough as a homogeneous group is ineffective policy - to truly end rough sleeping by 2024, Government must understand and address gaps in existing provisions for different cohorts, so that no-one is left behind in their efforts.

Women

During this inquiry the APPGEH repeatedly heard evidence on the importance of government recognising, understanding and addressing the differing needs of women sleeping rough to meet this commitment by 2024.

There is a very well-established link between violence against women and girls (VAWG) and homelessness. Almost all women rough sleeping have experienced gendered violence in their lives prior to, during, or after their experience of rough sleeping, with a 2018 evidence review by the University of York reporting that: “Experience of domestic violence and abuse is near-universal among women who become homeless.”³⁴ Jess Eagelton, Policy and Public Affairs Manager at Refuge, told an APPGEH evidence session that domestic abuse is the leading cause of homelessness among women. Yet, as set out in Amnesty International’s *An Obstacle Course* report, homelessness among women has received less attention from policy makers, the media, and in some cases service providers, causing a huge gap between women’s needs and existing service provision.³⁵ This has been often attributed to women’s invisibility in what is typically seen as the most dangerous and most visible form of homelessness – rough sleeping. Women made up only 13% (320) of the number of people recorded in the rough sleeping count for 2021 and a fifth (21%) of people using St Mungo’s housing related support services.³⁶

³³ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

³⁴ St Mungo’s (2018) *Women and Rough Sleeping: A Critical Review of Current Research and Methodology* <https://www.mungos.org/publication/womenand-rough-sleeping-a-critical-review/>

³⁵ Amnesty International (2022) *An Obstacle Course: Homelessness assistance and the right to housing in England* Homelessness report England_EUR 0353432022[1].pdf (amnesty.org.uk)

³⁶ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2021* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2021/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2021>

28 Is the Westminster Government on track to “end rough sleeping” in England?

Respondents emphasised that instead of indicating a significantly lower rate of rough sleeping, they said this low count is due to women’s different experiences of homelessness, with many women resorting to sofa surfing, staying with relatives, friends or strangers, cycling in and out of rough sleeping, and when rough sleeping or street homeless, using strategies and spaces which minimise risk to themselves. Women too often face prolonged periods of potentially unsafe arrangements just to keep a roof over their head, including being exploited for sex in exchange for accommodation. The APPGEH heard from Laura³⁷ during an evidence session, who explained she resorted to being a street-based sex worker so that she could sleep on the sofas of those buying sex, or pay others to stay on their sofas. She told attendees:

“I was trapped in a vicious cycle with no way to escape.”

Respondents were clear that too often women need to manage their own personal safety throughout their homelessness journey. Consequently, they are also often rendered statistically invisible as they use different spaces which they deem safer, even on the streets, and therefore remain invisible from traditional support services. This was emphasised throughout this inquiry, where the APPGEH heard from several women who had tried to avoid homelessness services, because they had felt threatened or unsafe in temporary or supported housing, emergency accommodation or other services for single adults experiencing homelessness. Women are often required to present as homeless alongside men in mixed housing option centres, which can deter them from approaching local authorities for help. Women reported being stigmatised, verbally and physically assaulted, and at high risk of violence and sexual abuse they

faced. To avoid this and keep safe, women reported changing their appearance, making themselves “look male”, keeping moving at night, and avoiding mixed gender homelessness accommodation. One woman told the APPGEH:

“Being female I found I never felt comfortable or safe in any of the homeless hostels or environments. It can be quite a predatory space and also there is a lot of other issues which are ignored such as drug use and drug dealing.”

As Ellie Greenhalgh, Women’s Development Unit Manager at Solace Women’s Aid recounted the thoughts of one of its members in an APPGEH evidence session:

“The phrase hidden homelessness is not accurate as she was not hidden but services were not looking in the right area.”

As a result, respondents were keen to stress that provision of homelessness services and the verification process should not be tied to street counts that exclude women or visible rough sleeping, but instead should be based on risk, and on their actual need. To form a better and more accurate picture of women’s rough sleeping and the development of gender responsive approaches to ending rough sleeping by 2024, respondents recommended the government used a gender-informed count/census, replicating existing good practice which is being developed in this area. For example, Solace Women’s Aid is delivering a gender-informed count in London later this year, and Fulfilling Lives Islington and Camden (FLIC), the London Borough of Camden and the University of York’s ‘Women’s Homelessness in Camden’ research published in December 2021.³⁸

Only 10% of accommodation services are female-only.

61% of all local authorities in England and most of Wales were reported to have no homelessness services specifically for women.

³⁷ Not her real name

³⁸ University of York, Fulfilling Lives in Islington and Camden, and SHP (2021) *Women’s Homelessness in Camden: Improving Data, Strategy and Outcomes* <https://www.shp.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=5fee2c27-c387-4a68-b574-8d00a6ce7e76>

To meet its target of ending rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament, this Government must go further than recognising the distinct and “different” needs of women experiencing homelessness, and eliminate the gender-blind approach that has dominated traditional service provision, which has often, albeit unintentionally, hidden women from services and discouraged women from accessing them.³⁹ These services often do not support women effectively, and will see females recovering at a slower rate than their male equivalents and being less likely to sustain their pathway to recovery.

Respondents emphasised that to end the homelessness of women with the most complex or entrenched needs, they must have access to specialist trauma-informed women-only services. However, successive cuts to local authority budgets have impacted the commissioning of such services, with organisations stating in their submissions to the APPGEH that the percentage of homelessness accommodation projects offering women-only specialist provision has decreased significantly in their local areas in recent years.

Government action in this area is made even more urgent by the fact that women’s homelessness is rising; according to a December 2021 report by Shelter, in the last 10 years the number of women in England who are experiencing homelessness and are living in temporary accommodation has increased by 88%.⁴⁰ New Horizon Youth Centre’s submission to the APPGEH supported this by stating the number of young women they supported sleeping rough had doubled between 2019 and 2021; 31% of all 16–24-year-olds sleeping rough they supported last year were women.

Many respondents spoke of how they are encouraged that women’s experiences of homelessness and rough sleeping have increasingly been recognised by government and across the homelessness sector with funding becoming available, for example in the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy of 2022, and through the Ending Women’s Homelessness Fund. Respondents also welcomed the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), which includes various measures to tackle domestic abuse and homelessness – including the introduction of a statutory definition of domestic abuse, amendments to homelessness legislation to give domestic abuse survivors automatic priority need when approaching their local authority for housing assistance. Government’s Respite Rooms also provide safe accommodation with an explicit focus on collaboration between local domestic abuse and homelessness teams. In September 2022 welcome investment into the Respite Rooms programme between 2021 and 2023 was announced in the Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy, but there remains an overall shortfall in funding for refuge and community services, which Solace Women’s Aid estimated in 2021 to be £200million.

Respondents told the APPGEH the pace of action is too slow, and there remain large gaps in provision of women-specific, gender-informed homelessness services across many areas of England:

- Only 10% of accommodation services provide female-only accommodation.⁴¹
- 61% of all local authorities in England and most of Wales were reported to have no

homelessness services specifically for women.⁴²

Furthermore, for existing specialist services, funding remains inadequate, insecure and on a short-term basis, a consequence of shrinking local authority budgets. At the time of its report in 2021, Women’s Aid found that nearly one in five refuge services do not receive any local authority commissioned funding.⁴³

This highlights wider shortages of suitable housing options, refuge spaces and safe move-on accommodation for domestic abuse survivors, which leaves them too often stuck in unsafe, inappropriate or unstable forms of accommodation, facing homelessness or staying with a perpetrator. Access to housing is critical for the safety and security of domestic abuse survivors, but as Jess Eagelton told an APPGEH evidence session access to housing often acts as the primary barrier for survivors attempting to leave a perpetrator. There is a real need for increased provision of women-only emergency temporary accommodation to facilitate a clear route to safety, especially with specialist support for those with multiple needs.

One of the successful examples given by the National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group in their submission on how best to support women facing homelessness as a result of domestic abuse is a Whole Housing Approach. A Whole Housing Approach is a framework for addressing the housing and safety needs of survivors in a local area by bringing all main types of housing tenures alongside housing options and support initiatives needed to either ensure or maintain a survivor’s access to safe and stable housing. Other respondents recommended a Whole Housing Approach so that survivors could

have appropriate housing options available to them, all with specialist support.

Respondents were clear that for local authorities to be able to support those fleeing domestic abuse and to fulfil their statutory duties, they must have sufficient resource to provide adequate and appropriate accommodation options including refuge beds, specialist support and stable accommodation, which will make a real and lasting difference to those fleeing violence and abuse.

Recommendations:

- **2a.** Government should aim to make “rough sleeping for women should be rare, brief and non-recurrent,” a sub-indicator of their current measure, as set out in the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy.. Recognising women as a specific cohort within the wider rough sleeping cohort will ensure that women’s rough sleeping is adequately explored and resourced within the larger attempt to end rough sleeping.
- **2b.** To better understand the scale and diversity within women’s rough sleeping and hidden homelessness, local authorities should be encouraged to undertake a gender-informed count/census, and ensure that domestic abuse survivors’ experiences of homelessness are captured in existing homelessness statistics. Many women experiencing homelessness remain uncaptured as they often have no option but to resort to sofa surfing, staying with relatives, friends or strangers. But rather than this speaking to a lower rate of homelessness amongst women, it speaks to unidentified need. Women’s experiences of homelessness are hidden, for example the experiences of sex workers, women

³⁹ Mayock, P. & Bretherton, J. (Eds) (2016) *Women’s homelessness in Europe*, London: Palgrave MacMillan.

⁴⁰ Shelter (2021) *Fobbed Off: The barriers preventing women accessing housing and homelessness support, and the women-centred approach needed to overcome them* https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/fobbed_off_the_barriers_preventing_women_accessing_housing_and_homelessness_support#:~:text=In%20the%20last%2010%20years,and%20living%20in%20temporary%20accommodation

⁴¹ Homeless Link (2019) *Support for people experiencing single homeless in England: Annual Review 2019* <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Single%20Homelessness%20Support%20in%20England%20-%20Annual%20Review%202019.pdf>

⁴² Holly, J. (2017) *Mapping the Maze* <https://weareagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Mapping-the-Maze-final-report-for-publication.pdf>

⁴³ Women’s Aid (2021) *Fragile funding landscape* <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Fragile-funding-landscape-the-extent-of-local-authority-commissioning-in-the-domestic-abuse-refuge-sector-in-England-2020.pdf>

In the last 10 years the number of women in England who are experiencing homelessness and are living in temporary accommodation has increased by 88%.

walking or using transport at night and sleeping in the day, women occupying less exposed areas when rough sleeping, women moving quickly between precarious situations or women feeling unsafe in their existing accommodation. In London there is current work taking place to conduct a women's rough sleeping census and this should be replicated in other areas of the country.

- **2c.** Provide sufficient funding for survivors fleeing domestic abuse so they can access safe spaces including for:
 - Specialist, gender and trauma-informed services with gender-specific beds available in mixed homelessness services⁴⁴
 - Continuing to invest in Respite Rooms
 - Refuges - Solace Women's Aid estimates that a total annual investment of £181million is needed to fund a national network of refuge services which meets the needs of women and children, and a further £228million to fund community-based support services – at a total investment of £409million a year. In 2021, the shortfall in funding for refuge and community services was £200million.⁴⁵
- **2d.** Ensure each local authority in England has a trained domestic abuse specialist in their housing team, and pursues a Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.
- **2e.** Encourage providers of support services to implement best practice in their approaches, such as a Whole Housing approach so that survivors of domestic abuse have appropriate housing options available to them.
- **2f.** Recognise the different cohorts of women who will need specific, targeted support to enable them to move away from the streets:
 - Women who have children removed from their care – there is no statutory duty to housing or emotional support after children have been removed. Respondents urged this Government to recognise and reference this as a vulnerability.⁴⁶
 - Increase funding of specialist support for people who are Black, Asian and from other minoritised backgrounds whose provision has been particularly hard hit by falling local authority spending - research by Agenda and AVA found only a small number of services specifically for women from these groups who face multiple disadvantages.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Some examples of good practice around this include Keeping Us Safer, Women's Development Unit women's spaces guidelines and the Safe Space approach.

⁴⁵ Solace Women's Aid (2021) *Spending Review Submission* https://www.solacewomensaid.org/sites/default/files/solace_spending_review_submission_final.pdf

⁴⁶ For more information please see Ava (2022) *Staying Mum: Findings from peer research with mothers surviving domestic abuse & child removal* [Staying-Mum-Final-1.pdf \(avaproject.org.uk\)](https://www.avaproject.org.uk)

⁴⁷ Holly (2017) *Mapping the Maze: Services for women experiencing multiple disadvantage in England and Wales* <https://www.mappingthemaze.org.uk/resources/>

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Non-UK nationals

Respondents were clear that without further action to tackle rough sleeping amongst this group, this Government's manifesto commitment will be in serious jeopardy.

Non-UK nationals are disproportionately represented in rough sleeping figures – they were estimated to amount to a quarter of people sleeping rough on any given night in England, and increases to half of people sleeping rough in London.⁴⁸ Respondents stated a huge barrier to ending rough sleeping amongst this group was the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition attached to some people's right to remain in the UK, which leaves people facing a higher risk of rough sleeping simultaneously with more limited access to services to help support them out of homelessness. Respondents also expressed concern around people living in Britain facing homelessness from the European Economic Area (EEA). Crisis research into homelessness amongst this group found that EEA citizens living in Britain are almost twice as likely to experience the most acute forms of homelessness, and nearly three times as likely to experience rough sleeping in comparison to the general adult population, as their experiences of homelessness are compounded by barriers to accessing support due to their immigration status, which worsens and prolongs their housing difficulties.⁴⁹

During the pandemic there was a unique opportunity to offer accommodation, advice and employment support to this group, as eligibility criteria for support was lifted temporarily at the beginning of the first wave as part of the Everyone In initiative. Subsequently many local authorities and

homelessness providers reported to the APPGEH that they had made fantastic progress in regularising the immigration status of people who were sleeping rough, and supporting them to pursue employment and move away from sleeping rough. Jennie Corbett, Senior Policy Manager at Homeless Link told an APPGEH evidence session that their research showed that when local authorities can bring non-UK nationals, regardless of their immigration status, under the umbrella of mainstream homelessness provision: "We could really achieve results where it was previously thought impossible." But Corbett and others were clear that local authorities require government action to facilitate efforts to end rough sleeping for this group by 2024.

Respondents welcomed new guidance circulated by government to local authorities in December 2021 which explicitly stated that funding provided through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022-25 could be used to support people with restricted eligibility due to their immigration status so long as local authorities continued to act within the law when doing so. This also followed the case law clarification that local authorities retain the power to accommodate those with NRPF while the COVID-19 public health emergency is ongoing. However, confusion over the support options for this group remain, with local authorities unable to resolve many cases of homelessness amongst this group. For example, at the time of submission over 50 people who were helped under the Everyone In initiative remain in emergency accommodation provided by Redbridge council with no clear route to moving on, as their immigration status

⁴⁸ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2021* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2021/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2021>

⁴⁹ Crisis (2021) *Home For All: why EU citizens are more likely to experience homelessness – and why it matters* crs_085-hfa-eea-main-report_a4_v5.pdf (crisis.org.uk)

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prevents the council from moving them into long term housing. This amounts to an unsustainable cost for local authorities. Respondents told the APPGEH that some frontline staff are confused as to who is and isn't entitled to benefits, and which benefits they are entitled to. For example, two of the women supported by Women's Aid's No Woman Turned Away (NwTA) project across England, who were referred to the service on the basis of challenges related to them having NRPF, were subsequently found by the NwTA caseworkers to be entitled to receive support.⁵⁰ An acute lack of clarity on the support options available for this group puts the manifesto commitment in serious doubt and demonstrates the importance of clear and consistent guidance from Government to clarify the legal powers and expectations on local authorities to accommodate and support non-UK nationals with undetermined or restricted eligibility. This will enable local authorities to be held to account, to make sure they act to support people when they can.

Respondents told the APPGEH that critical to ending rough sleeping by 2024 was the provision of free, specialist, independent immigration advice and support. However, the impact of cuts to independent immigration advice following the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 will certainly make achieving this commitment harder. Research by Justice Together in London found that there was a gulf between supply of and demand for immigration advice and that: “Those who kept such data reported turning away up to five times as many prospective clients as they took on.”⁵¹ Respondents urged this Government to improve access to immigration advice, by investing in legal aid,

with some recommending a full review of the legal aid system to ensure it is fit for purpose.

For survivors of domestic abuse who are non-UK nationals this lack of access to support is particularly dangerous as it leaves them with the impossible choice between staying with their perpetrator or facing destitution or homelessness. This is especially worrying given that some evidence suggests that people with insecure immigration status experience higher rates of domestic abuse than the national average, and that survivors with NRPF are regularly refused bed spaces at refuges, as many are funded by Housing Benefit.⁵² Submissions to the APPGEH made clear that as it stands, thousands of non-UK nationals experience domestic abuse, exploitation and homelessness, yet remain disconnected from vital services. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner Office's *Safety Before Status* report recommended the Home Office ensured that victims had access to appropriate support, including safe emergency accommodation and immigration advice.⁵³ Both of these recommendations – which would have reduced levels of rough sleeping and destitution amongst non-UK national survivors of domestic abuse in line with the manifesto commitment – were rejected by the Home Office.⁵⁴

It was evident from the submissions that this Government's manifesto commitment would unlikely be met without targeted policy action for this group, a point emphasised by the cross-party House of Commons' Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee in 2021:

Non-UK nationals are disproportionately represented in rough sleeping figures – they were estimated to amount to a quarter of people sleeping rough on any given night in England, and increases to half in London.

50 Women's Aid (2022) *Nowhere To Turn* <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/NwTA-2022-Final-A.pdf>

51 Justice Together (2021) *A Huge Gulf: demand and supply for immigration legal advice in London* PHF_LondonImmigrationReport.indd (justice-together.org.uk)

52 Gardner, Z., Patel, C. (2021) *We Are Here: Routes to Regularisation for the UK's Undocumented Population* <https://www.jcwi.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=5467543a-6e30-4e28-a39f-db48ffad6d3a>

53 Domestic Abuse Commissioner (2021) *Safety Before Status* <https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Safety-Before-Status-Report-2021.pdf>

54 Home Office (2022) *Domestic Abuse Commissioner's 'Safety Before Status' report: government response* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-the-safety-before-status-report/domestic-abuse-commissioners-safety-before-status-report-government-response-accessible-version>

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“No Recourse to Public Funds has been an obstacle to reducing rough sleeping for a long time...If the Government is serious about meeting its manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024, it must reform the no recourse to public funds policy. It is not sufficient for Ministers to say it is a long-standing immigration policy when it is in their power to change it, especially when it will prevent the Government from meeting its goal to end rough sleeping. Where two Government policies internally conflict, Ministers must work together to find a way forward.⁵⁵”

Some respondents highlighted a conflict between government policy to end rough sleeping by 2024, and Home Office immigration policy, which could render this manifesto commitment implausible. Concern was expressed about changes to the Immigration Rules that came into force in April 2021, which mean that non-UK nationals sleeping rough may have their permission to remain in the UK refused or cancelled.⁵⁶ There are serious concerns amongst the sector that the rules will deter people from engaging with outreach and other homelessness services for fear of losing their permission to stay in the UK. To avoid detection, people are more likely to stay in unsafe situations, and the risk of exploitation and modern slavery is likely to increase.

Concerns were also raised about the potential impact of the changes introduced by the Nationality and Borders Act (2022), in particular the creation of a two-tier system that means refugees will be treated differently on the basis of how they arrived in the UK. This risks exposing 3,100 additional people fleeing conflict to poverty, destitution and homelessness on an annual basis by not allowing them access to the welfare safety net.⁵⁷

While it is welcome government are continuing to encourage local authorities to “exhaust all options” to support non-UK nationals in the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy, further steps are needed to actually tackle rough sleeping amongst this cohort.⁵⁸ Tailored support must be made available to meet the needs of people who are excluded from mainstream homelessness services because of their immigration status, and wherever possible this must include support to prevent people from being pushed into homelessness in the first place. Without this there is a very real possibility that the number of non-UK nationals sleeping rough in England will rise, rather than fall in the run up to 2024, especially as the cost-of-living crisis intensifies.

For survivors of domestic abuse who are non-UK nationals this lack of access to support is particularly dangerous as it leaves them with the impossible choice between staying with their perpetrator or facing destitution or homelessness. This is especially worrying given that some evidence suggests that people with insecure immigration status experience higher rates of domestic abuse than the national average, and that survivors with NRPF are regularly refused bed spaces at refuges, as many are funded by Housing Benefit.

55 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee (2021) *Protecting the homeless and the private rented sector: MHCLG's response to Covid-19*, House of Commons, Sixth Report of Session 2019-21 <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/5342/documents/53217/default/>

56 Home Office (2021) *Grounds for refusal – rough sleeping in the UK* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033950/Rough_sleeping.pdf

57 Refugee Council (2021) *The Impact of the New Plan for Immigration Proposals on Asylum New-Plan-for-Immigration-Impact-Analysis-June-2021.pdf* (refugeecouncil.org.uk)

58 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

Recommendations:

- **3a.** Guidelines provided are often subject to interpretation by local authorities, and in some cases have led to legal challenge. In order to avoid this, the Government should further clarify the legal powers and expectations on local authorities to support non-UK nationals with undetermined or restricted eligibility. This should include clear guidance that focuses on identifying suitable solutions to resolving their homelessness and working closely with the immigration advice and employment support sectors.
- **3b.** Halt NRPf conditions for survivors fleeing domestic abuse who approach homelessness services for assistance and work with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s Office to implement recommendations from its *Safety Before Status* report.
- **3c.** Gather comprehensive data and evidence on the number of individuals with no or limited access to public funds experiencing homelessness, which will help identify what resources are needed to assist this group out of homelessness. In particular, gather evidence on the intersection between modern slavery and/or trafficking and the rough sleeping population.
- **3d.** Consider ensuring that local authorities with high numbers of people facing homelessness subject to NRPf conditions have a trained NRPf specialist in their housing team.
- **3e.** Ensure that homelessness funding provides for the long-term provision of quality independent immigration advice for non-UK nationals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and need help to resolve issues with their status.

Young people and care leavers

Young people are another key cohort that respondents stated could not currently access the necessary support to prevent or end their rough sleeping. Respondents felt this group was too often overlooked in existing policy and provision as, similarly to women, they are less immediately visible to services and in data. Consequently, their needs are too often not sufficiently addressed in some generic services or they struggle to access any support at all.

Available data indicates there is a growing homelessness crisis for people under 25, and that they have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic because they are particularly susceptible to job losses, breakdown of informal and familial living arrangements, and the cost-of-living crisis.⁵⁹

Respondents told the APPGEH that young people they supported were currently struggling to access homelessness assistance from their local authorities when they desperately needed it. New Horizon’s research found 65% of young people sleeping rough approaching its London service in 2021/22 had sought support from their local authority first, but had not received preventative or relief support to solve or prevent them sleeping rough; an increase from 42% in 2019/20. They recommended a dedicated chapter about 18-25 years old in the Homelessness Code of Guidance to improve prevention outcomes by improving understanding of, and responses to, their

specific circumstances and needs at local authority level. Additionally respondents pointed to welfare policies under which under-25s received less assistance – for example, lower rates of Universal Credit – as barriers for young people trying to prevent or move on from rough sleeping. As we face an ongoing cost-of-living crisis, tackling these challenges will be crucial to reducing rough sleeping amongst under-25s is ended in time for 2024.

Tackling youth homelessness should also be a priority for government given its enormous preventative potential – people recorded in rough sleeping statistics are likely to have first experienced homelessness when younger: 13% of the target 1000 cohort of people in London whose rough sleeping is most entrenched first slept on the streets when they were under 25.⁶⁰

Young people leaving care

Although a relatively small group, the risk of young people leaving care experiencing homelessness is shamefully high - one third of care leavers become homeless in the first two years immediately after they leave care, with many ending up sleeping rough.⁶¹

The APPGEH spoke to a former care leaver who said:

⁵⁹ See Young Minds (2020) *Coronavirus: Impact on young people with mental health needs coronavirus-report-autumn.pdf* (youngminds.org.uk); Resolution Foundation (2021) *Uneven Steps: Changes in youth unemployment and study since the onset of Covid-19* Uneven steps • Resolution Foundation; Sutton Trust (2022) *Social Mobility – Past, Present and Future* Converted document (suttontrust.com)

⁶⁰ Statistics quoted in London Councils submission to the APPGEH

⁶¹ M. Stein and M. Morris (2010) *Increasing the Number of Care Leavers in ‘Settled, Safe Accommodation*, London: C4EO.

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“I was living in the care system before I was first made homeless at the age of 16. Thereafter, I experienced rough sleeping, lived in hostels and was in shared accommodation. When living in shared accommodation I became heavily involved in taking and dealing drugs and then went to prison. I have since been in and out of prison for the past 30 years.”

Respondents welcomed the Government’s increased focus on improving the support available for young people leaving care, including its focus on their specific needs in its Rough Sleeping Strategy published in 2022. The strategy included commitments to employ more specialist personal advisors for care leavers and outlining funding for existing schemes such as ‘Staying Put’ and ‘Staying Close.’ However, it is not clear whether this funding is new, and whether it is sufficient to improve the patchy and uneven practice at local authority which leaves too many care leavers bouncing between services and left to navigate the lack of options available to them while suffering from destitution.⁶² This was supported by one young person leaving care the APPGEH spoke to, who said:

“Between the ages of 16-18 there was no support available. No housing, employment and other opportunities were provided.”

One service provider agreed on the varying provision of support:

“Although in 2018 the Department of Education extended councils duty of care for care leavers up to the age of 25 this is not reflected in several policies.”

Another said:

“Care leavers should have support up until age 25 however in reality support after age 18/19 is patchy.”

Too often, young people leaving care approach their local authority as homeless for support and are not able to access it. Respondents told the APPGEH about specific challenges with people leaving care experience, for example, being deemed intentionally homeless even when they left accommodation as they felt unsafe, or being told they lacked a local connection despite having been placed out of area by care services. Additionally the cut-off age of 21 for automatic priority need is often applied to people leaving care, despite the Children and Social Work Act 2017 extending support up to the age of 25. Government must act to ensure critical opportunities to prevent and relieve care leavers’ homelessness, such as these examples, are addressed in order to reach its commitment by 2024, and these gaps in the provision of support are discussed further later in the report.

Oldham Council - In 2019, Oldham Council pledged that it would always provide a home for looked after children and care leavers. Its Housing Department agreed never to class a young person leaving care as intentionally homeless and to increase the age in which care leavers are given automatic priority need to 25. This has helped to tackle the number of care leavers experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

New Horizon’s research found 65% of young people sleeping rough approaching its London service in 2021/22 had sought support from their local authority first, but had not received preventative or relief support to solve or prevent them sleeping rough; an increase from 42% in 2019/20.

⁶² Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

Recommendations:

- **4a.** Gather evidence on the different cohorts of young people experiencing homelessness. Existing data shows that specific cohorts within this age group are more likely to be sleeping rough - including those identifying as LGBTQ+ and Black African, Black British or Black Caribbean.
- **4b.** Introduce a dedicated chapter on 18–25 year olds in the Homelessness Code of Guidance – which acknowledges and addresses the barriers young people face including evidencing their homelessness (especially where it concerns parental eviction), proving local connection, and age-appropriate personal housing plans.
- **4c.** Local authorities should provide all care leavers with a personalised plan for housing and support/tenancy maintenance on release from care and produce a strategy for housing care leavers. Crucially local authorities must be provided with adequate resources for this.
- **4d.** Government should deliver on their commitment to ensure all local authorities develop a joint housing protocol for care leavers with the Department for Education as set out in Government’s updated Rough Sleeping Strategy of September 2022 and in guidance published in October 2020, as respondents were clear that not all local authorities have these in place.⁶³

LGBTQI+ people

Consensus amongst respondents was that there are limited appropriate housing or support options for LGBTQI+ people, and that there was an acute gap in knowledge around their specific needs at national and local level.

As with young people more widely, family rejection is the most common cause of homelessness amongst people identifying as LGBTQI+. The Albert Kennedy Trust (akt) found that 77% of young people experiencing homelessness told that family rejection and abuse after coming out was the primary cause.⁶⁴ Furthermore, akt found that the likelihood of this happening is increased in some non-white ethnic groups. 61% of people from these groups had felt threatened or experienced violence by their family before becoming homeless.⁶⁵

Additionally when accessing services, LGBTQI+ people face discrimination around accessing housing and homelessness services, and are at disproportionate risk of rough sleeping. For instance, more than half of LGBTQ+ young people reported discrimination or harassment when accessing services.⁶⁶ Personal safety is a key concern for them. One person with direct experience told the APPGEH:

“What didn’t work well was my time at [a hostel]. This was counter-productive, with many men sharing a crowded space - I identify as a gay male so sharing a floor with many men proved unsafe and very stressful.”

People who are LGBTQI+ are also more likely to experience harm or violence when sleeping rough or in uncertain accommodation arrangements: 17% of LGBTQ+ young people experiencing homelessness had engaged in casual sex in order to have somewhere to stay.⁶⁷ There is also a lower awareness of the support services available to them – akt found that less than half of LGBTQ+ young people were not aware of housing support services when they last experienced homelessness.⁶⁸

While this Government has committed to some welcome action in this area, for example to: “Setting up roundtables to identify and share good practice to support local authorities in discharging their duties” for this cohort, respondents told the APPGEH this is a growing problem which necessitates greater focus from this Government ahead of 2024.⁶⁹ New Horizon Youth Centre told the APPGEH that 13.2% of young people sleeping rough in 2021 identified as LGBTQI+, up from 8.4% in 2019. The APPGEH also received a submission from Waltham Forest council who said that:

“LGBTQI+ residents at risk of rough sleeping have been a growing trend in Waltham Forest, particularly as a friend of family member no longer being willing or able to accommodate the household has emerged as a significant cause of homelessness.”

63 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

64 The Albert Kennedy Trust (2014) *LGBT Youth Homelessness: A UK National Scoping of Cause, Prevalence, Response and Outcome* <https://www.akt.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c0f29272-512a-45e8-9f9b-0b76e477baf1>

65 The Albert Kennedy Trust (2021) *the lgbtq+ youth homelessness report* [Download.ashx](https://www.akt.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c0f29272-512a-45e8-9f9b-0b76e477baf1) (akt.org.uk)

66 The Albert Kennedy Trust (2021) *the lgbtq+ youth homelessness report* [Download.ashx](https://www.akt.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c0f29272-512a-45e8-9f9b-0b76e477baf1) (akt.org.uk)

67 The Albert Kennedy Trust (2021) *the lgbtq+ youth homelessness report* [Download.ashx](https://www.akt.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c0f29272-512a-45e8-9f9b-0b76e477baf1) (akt.org.uk)

68 The Albert Kennedy Trust (2021) *the lgbtq+ youth homelessness report* [Download.ashx](https://www.akt.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c0f29272-512a-45e8-9f9b-0b76e477baf1) (akt.org.uk)

69 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

13.2% of young people sleeping rough in 2021 identified as LGBTQ+, up from 8.4% in 2019.

However, at many services, including local authorities and outreach providers, data about LGBTQI+ people is lacking as this is often not recorded or systemically captured. One respondent told us:

“There remains a very poor understanding and response to the needs of all LGBTQI+ people affected by homelessness, in particular for trans and non-binary who rarely fit...single sex services.”

Recommendations:

- **5a.** Improve the data available on the sexuality and gender identity of people experiencing or facing homelessness in national data collection, particularly the intersection with other groups at risk of homelessness such as LGBTQI+ migrants and domestic abuse survivors.
- **5b.** Improve specialist support and tailored accommodation options for this group, particularly tailored emergency support, and support for those affected by domestic abuse who are often placed in single sex services.
- **5c.** Government should introduce a dedicated chapter on LGBTQI+ people in the Homelessness Code of Guidance and work with specialist services, such as akt, to produce this guidance.

People leaving prison

Homelessness amongst people leaving prison

- A Ministry of Justice survey found that nearly two in five prisoners stated that they would need help finding a place to live when they were released.⁷⁰
- The Prison Reform Trust reports that six in ten female prisoners have no home to go to upon release.⁷¹
- According to the Prison Reform Trust, Ministry of Justice data shows that only 48% of people released from prison in 2020-21 had settled accommodation or a secure place of residence on release, and around 12% experienced homelessness or sleeping rough.⁷²

People leaving prison were identified as a clear cohort that faced a high risk of rough sleeping and homelessness, and for whom targeted further government action was needed in order for them to meet their commitment by 2024.

It is unclear how many people leaving prison experience homelessness upon release. However, existing evidence shows that spending time in prison increases the risk of homelessness and a lack of secure

accommodation then increases the risk of reoffending.⁷³ Helen Berresford, Director of External Engagement at Nacro told an APPGEH meeting that 53% of people sleeping rough have been in contact with the criminal justice system either in prison or in wider contact with the justice system, and that pre-pandemic almost 1,000 people a month were released directly into rough sleeping or homelessness from prison.

Despite this, prison leavers do not always receive the support they need, with some people provided with tents and sleeping bags on release from prison. During this inquiry the APPGEH heard from several people with direct experience of rough sleeping on release from prison who confirmed this absence of support:

“I’ve been in prison three or four times and every time I’ve been out without any money, without any help, without any support.”

“I’ve got a lot of friends in [prison] who are worried because they know they’re going to be let out without a bloody bus ticket, no money and nowhere to live, and it’s happening every day. My friend’s getting out and she’s stressing now because she knows she’s lost her house, she’s lost everything. She’s coming out to nothing.”

Respondents welcomed this Government’s increasing focus on supporting prison leavers, for example, committing to nationally rolling out 12 weeks of transitional accommodation upon release in its updated Rough Sleeping Strategy of 2022, ending unplanned Friday releases from prison, and publishing best practice guidance for prison release protocols.⁷⁴ This guidance requires prisons to assess the person’s housing situation and officers are tasked with providing people with advice and guidance on state benefits, training, education, work experience and other general support, including on housing, before release. However, a report by the Inspectorate of Probation found that this work was completed in only about one-third of relevant cases. According to Homeless Link, these housing plans are not adequately investigated, fall through or fail, creating an “acute risk of homelessness and also re-offending.”

During an APPGEH evidence session Co-Chair, Bob Blackman MP, said he had:

“Been questioning successive Justice Ministers on the fact that the Homelessness Reduction Act requires prison governors to prepare people leaving prison for a life outside. Instead they keep dumping them on the streets and saying goodbye, good luck, do not come back, instead of preparing them which is their legal duty.”

Indeed this Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy of September 2022 conceded: “Too many people are currently released from prison homeless,” making an encouraging commitment to employ more Housing Specialists across England and Wales to improve accommodation outcomes for people leaving prisons.⁷⁵

However, respondents told the APPGEH it was clear government is yet to offer a full solution for this group, and instead risk perpetuating the vicious cycle of homelessness and experience of the criminal justice system. This was confirmed by several people with direct experience who spoke to the APPGEH:

“[I’ve] been in and out of prison, in between have been in hostels and sofa surfing, drug houses with other substance users.”

One urged Government to improve the support offered to prison leavers before they are released:

“The support needs to start before people leave prison and continue afterwards. As for many it is easier to just re-offend because it is safer to be in prison than be on the streets.”

⁷⁰ As quoted in Kerslake Commission (2021) *The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: a new way of working: ending rough sleeping together. Final report – September 2021* https://usercontent.one/wp/www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/KRSC_Final_Report_29_11.pdf

⁷¹ Beresford, S., Earle, J. and Litchfield, Z. (2016) *Home truths: housing for women in the criminal justice system*. London: Prison Reform Trust.

⁷² Prison Reform Trust (2022) Bromley Briefings, Prison Factfile, Winter 2022 <https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Winter-2022-Factfile.pdf>.

⁷³ Kerslake Commission (2021) *The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: a new way of working: ending rough sleeping together. Final report – September 2021* https://usercontent.one/wp/www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/KRSC_Final_Report_29_11.pdf

⁷⁴ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

⁷⁵ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

Paul’s experience of homelessness after leaving prison:

Was there anything that can have been done by yourself or by support services to have prevented you from homelessness in the first place? For example, help from work, council, landlord, friends or family.

Help from prison services

What were your immediate feelings and reactions to homelessness?

It is terrible to be without a place

What impact did homelessness have on your life? For example, were you able to continue working in a job, or what impact did it have on your physical or mental health?

Physically my health is not good and I feel very down

What support did not work well?

Being cut off from income, if I can work I could find a place to stay, it’s a vicious cycle because I have no safe space I cannot work

When asked what support they would like to have received one person said:

“Support for women when they’re getting out of prison because it’s not acceptable in 2022 to be letting people out of prison with no medication, no money and nowhere to live. And if you think how many people are in the prison system and they’re doing this. And I’m getting more support off Crisis than I have off any probation or any other agency I’ve been involved with.”

Another said:

“Stable accommodation arranged before being released from prison.”

Crisis is currently running Critical Time Intervention (CTI) projects with four prisons in Merseyside and South Wales. CTI is a time limited, evidence-based practice that supports people at points of transition, such as leaving prison or hospital. Whist still new in the UK, it has been widely adopted in the US and Denmark and international evaluations have shown a tenancy sustainment rate of 95%. CTI is a housing-led approach providing rapid access to settled accommodation with three time limited phases to provide tailored support to transition back into a community, and expanding its provision was recommended by several respondents in this inquiry.

Ultimately, there remains no established central or national approach in England to address the housing options of people leaving prison, and without this, government will not stem the flow of people leaving prison and being forced to sleep rough, and break the cycle of experience of the criminal justice system and homelessness. Evidence suggests that having stable accommodation on release from prison can reduce the risk of re-offending by 20%.⁷⁶ As reoffending

can cost the economy £13.5 billion annually there is a significant cost saving to be made in investing in preventing homelessness amongst people leaving prison.⁷⁷

Recommendations:

- **6a.** Government must provide sufficient funding to ensure that prisons and probation services are able to support those threatened with homelessness upon release to make homelessness applications where relevant, 56 days before their release date, as set out in Amnesty International’s *An Obstacle Course* report. People leaving prison should have access to support and housing relevant for their needs before release to ensure homelessness is prevented where possible. This should include greater investment in programmes like CTI as well as face-to-face housing advice within prisons.
- **6b.** Government has made a welcome commitment in the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy published in 2022 to nationally roll-out Ministry of Justice pilots around Tier 3 Community Accommodation which will make emergency accommodation available to prisoners who are homeless on release for up to 12 weeks of appropriate and safe accommodation.⁷⁸ Government must ensure the roll-out of this scheme is adequately funded, monitored closely and reviewed to ensure prison leavers do not fall through gaps of provision and face homelessness, particularly after the 12 week stay in transitional accommodation has concluded.

- **6c.** Government should ensure that prison and probation services sit on local authorities prevention taskforces (recommendation 7b) and can plan for the housing needs of people leaving prison.

Changes to the wider system to sustain an end to rough sleeping and reduce the flow of people sleeping rough, through addressing wider forms of homelessness: prevention, early intervention and sustained support

Throughout submissions to the APPGEH organisations emphasised that the commitment to end rough sleeping was welcome but implausible without measures to stem the flow of rough sleeping, and tackling other forms of homelessness, like sofa surfing which often leads to rough sleeping. Respondents were clear that intrinsic to tackling rough sleeping was tackling wider forms of homelessness – rough sleeping is not usually the first or only form of homelessness people experience. People who are experiencing homelessness can also move between different types of homelessness, from sofa surfing to rough sleeping when they have exhausted their options, to night shelters to temporary accommodation. This is outlined by the following people with direct experience who the APPGEH spoke to:

“I was living with my ex-husband and his mother before I was forced to leave after experiencing domestic abuse. I was sofa surfing with a friend, sleeping on night buses and rough sleeping occasionally.”

“I was living with my best friend’s mum for 3 years. I suffered abuse at home from a young age. I mainly stayed on friend’s sofas or slept on a bench, and I even found a little hut that wasn’t being used that I stayed in.”

“Long story, but I was once engaged. And I lived with her...And we broke up, and I attempted to go back to my parents’ house. There was no space for me. So, I started sofa surfing...I started sleeping in my car. I was doing that for a while and going to work, but,

obviously, homelessness caught up. I went off sick from work. And everything just fell on top of me, basically. So, I’ve been, it’s been about eight months now that I’ve been sleeping in my car.”

Though respondents understood why ending rough sleeping was this Government’s focus, they stressed there was an acute need to address other forms of homelessness, otherwise there is a serious risk that the progress made to end rough sleeping will only be temporary and unsustainable up to and beyond 2024. This was particularly a worry for respondents given the continuing crisis which is likely to worsen in the coming months, pushing people to the brink of destitution and homelessness.

Respondents were in consensus that there are three crucial building blocks for successfully ending rough sleeping and, crucially, sustaining this in the run-up to 2024 and beyond:

- **Preventing** rough sleeping and homelessness wherever possible.
- **Intervening** as quickly as you can when it does occur, ensuring people can access the crisis services they need when sleeping on the streets.
- **Supporting** people who have slept rough to ensure they never have to again and can rebuild their life with stable accommodation.

A robust preventative agenda

Absolutely critical to this Government being able to end rough sleeping in England by 2024 is a comprehensive and robust set of policies that will effectively prevent rough sleeping as much as possible. Organisations told the APPGEH there was an urgent need for the Government action to prevent homelessness in order to meet their welcome commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024. One person with direct experience of homelessness said:

“Prevent it from happening before it does. There is no need for homelessness to happen. There are plenty of...indicators that show when and where people are risk of becoming homeless. Awareness of these factors can help to prevent it before it happens and thus reduce the harm that follows from it.”

As it stands, legal responsibility for preventing homelessness sits with local authority housing teams in England, with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 aiming to put prevention “at the heart” of local housing authority responses.⁷⁹ Local housing authorities are now required to produce a strategy that outlines how they will prevent and reduce homelessness, and provide support to people on the brink of homelessness. However, while some local housing authorities across the country have developed good quality strategies, unfortunately respondents told the APPGEH that this was not universal, and some strategies do not effectively outline how they plan to prevent and tackle rough sleeping in their local area. Respondents were keen to stress this as an area to improve in the future, particularly in light of the 2024 target, and their commitment in their 2019 manifesto to “fully” enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) *Rough Sleeping Strategy* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf

⁸⁰ The Conservative Party (2019) *Get Brexit Done, Unleash Britain’s Potential – the Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019* <https://www.conservatives.com/our-plan/conservative-party-manifesto-2019>

The most recent CHAIN statistics in London recorded a 16% rise in rough sleeping between April-June 2022.

Respondents also stated that by the time a household approaches a local authority for help, it is very likely that opportunities would have already been missed to resolve their problems and prevent their homelessness. They wanted the Government to act on this unmet need, and to implement recommendations which recognise that people sleeping rough do not, as one organisation told the APPGEH:

“Appear fully formed out of thin air.”

By failing to intervene and provide support at an earlier stage, many vulnerable or marginalised individuals find themselves losing the roof over their head. Evidence shows that preventing this in the first instance is a far more effective approach than providing a crisis response. This will also provide significant cost savings to public spending - research found it would fall by £370 million if 40,000 people were prevented from experiencing a year of homelessness.⁸¹

An increased focus on prevention will be critical to Government successfully ending rough sleeping by 2024, particularly as we face an ongoing cost-of-living crisis which will mean more people are pushed to the brink of poverty, destitution and could face homelessness. Their welcome progress towards the manifesto commitment is not secure, and is at risk of being overwhelmed, as Liz McCulloch, Policy and Research Manager at St Mungo's, told an APPGEH evidence session, as the number of people sleeping rough is likely to rise. At the same session, Pippa Heylings, a councillor for South Cambridgeshire District Council and Deputy Chair of the LGA Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board, told the APPGEH that she was seeing people in Cambridge who have never been in debt before facing struggles due to the cost-of-

living crisis. Indeed, the most recent CHAIN statistics in London record a 16% rise in rough sleeping between April-June 2022, and recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation research found that 1.9million private renters are pushed into poverty by their housing costs.⁸² This is deeply concerning given poverty is the central driver of homelessness. Respondents urged the Government to make prevention a priority in the upcoming months as we face economic uncertainty and higher living costs.⁸³

To reflect this urgent need for preventative action respondents urged the Government to introduce a cross-departmental Prevention Taskforce as a sub-group of the inter-ministerial unit which will set clear outcomes for preventing rough sleeping for each relevant government department. This taskforce must include the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice. This commitment to prevention must also be replicated at a local level where local authorities set up Prevention Taskforces to identify those at risk of sleeping rough, develop links with existing homelessness and non-housing related services and develop contact points to reach and help this cohort at the point of need.

Respondents stressed that financial support is absolutely critical to preventing rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness, as it enables low-income households access to vital assistance to keep their homes or access more affordable forms of housing to help avoid homelessness. Respondents said that people on the brink of rough sleeping currently face a fragmented and eroded safety net, which as rents rise, means they are forced to pay more of their income on rent, pushing them into destitution. According to Rightmove, rents have risen by 11.8% on average outside London, while in London the

⁸¹ Pleace, N. and Culhane, D. P. (2016) Better than cure? Testing the case for Enhancing Prevention of Single Homelessness in England. London: Crisis.

⁸² Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022) UK Poverty 2022: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2022>

⁸³ Johnsen, S & Watts, B (2014) Homelessness and poverty: reviewing the links https://pure.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/7467281/Homelessness_Poverty_FullReport.pdf

average rent has increased by 15% since last year, and yet no immediate support has been put in place to help renters with these growing costs.⁸⁴ The most recent homelessness statistics suggest that these costs are beginning to lead to a rise in homelessness – they showed the highest number of households living in private or social rented tenancies seeking homelessness assistance since data collection began in 2018.⁸⁵

Respondents welcomed the Government’s promise to abolish section 21 ‘no fault’ evictions through the Renters Reform Bill, another commitment from their 2019 manifesto, and also restated in the Rough Sleeping Strategy of September 2022, and hoped Boris Johnson’s successor, Liz Truss, would immediately push through these legislative reforms.⁸⁶ This is particularly urgent given the most recent Ministry of Justice statistics that covered April–June 2022 recorded 1,651 no fault evictions – a 52% increase in just three months – and continues to highlight the growing turbulence for renters in the private sector.⁸⁷

Additionally, respondents told the APPGEH how aspects of the welfare system can contribute towards pushing people into destitution and homelessness. The combined effect of real-terms cuts in Local Housing Allowance (LHA), the halving of funding for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), the removal of the weekly £20 Universal Credit uplift and the benefit cap create financial pressures that push people towards the brink of homelessness, and in the worst cases result in homelessness. What’s more, these cuts also make it harder to leave homelessness behind as they create barriers to accessing a settled home in the private rented sector. It

was welcome to hear that government will be looking to refresh jobcentre best practice to better support people who risk facing homelessness or rough sleeping, including establishing designated homelessness leads offering tailored support in these centres and committing to launching a new employer covenant to prevent employee homelessness with Crisis.⁸⁸

Respondents welcomed the changes the Government made in response to the pandemic, investing in LHA rates so they covered the cheapest third of local rents; and the weekly £20 Universal Credit uplift, which all had a significant positive impact on people who were on the brink of destitution during the economic disruption of the pandemic. Crisis frontline services reported that these changes made it possible to support people into secure private rent accommodation at a time where this was vital to stay safe from the virus and the additional harm this caused in addition to homelessness.

Respondents are now extremely concerned that these crucial sources of support have been withdrawn at a time when people are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. For example, St Mungo’s stated the following in their submission:

“We are also facing the significant challenge of a cost-of-living crisis taking place at the same time as Local Housing Allowance rates are being frozen, benefits are not rising in line with inflation, and Discretionary Housing Payment budgets are being cut. These new developments could easily set back our progress towards ending rough sleeping if the Government does not take further action to combat them.”

Many recommended that a quick and effective way for this Government to make the private rented sector more affordable at a time of record rent increases is to uprate LHA rates so they continue to meet the cheapest 30% of rents in a local area. It was also noted that while the Government had committed to uprating other means-tested benefits in line with September’s inflation, to provide some relief to the financial pressures families are facing with soaring costs, LHA rates were not included in this announcement despite being a means-tested benefit. With shortfalls between LHA rates and the cost of renting, people are having to draw on their reduced Universal Credit standard allowance payment, while often facing high deductions from these payments to address debts, all while their bills and food are getting more expensive.

Joint research by Crisis and Zoopla has also demonstrated the shortfall between LHA and the cost of private renting which will continue to cause significant financial pressure on households across the UK. They found that since the start of the pandemic, rents in the UK have risen on average by 12%, yet Housing Benefit has remained frozen and based on private rents from 2018–2019. This shortfall between rents and Housing Benefit is more than double what the most recent government figures suggest – with low-income renters being forced to find, on average, an additional £648 for a one-bed home, £1,052 for a two-bed home and £1,6554 for a three-bed home a year, compared to LHA rates of £313, £371 and £498, respectively. This research also found that this financial pressure is not isolated to small pockets of the country. In Sunderland just 8% of one-bed properties

The impact of Local Housing Allowance shortfalls on Crisis frontline services:

Crisis frontline services have always worked to support people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, into homes in the private rented sector as social housing is often simply not an option for them. But the increasing pressures mean this is becoming harder and harder to do, leaving many people they support with little to no option of finding a settled home of their own:

- In Coventry, the lowest income renters living in the cheapest homes are facing a shortfall of nearly £600 a year (£598.52). The Crisis Skylight in Coventry is finding that the private rented sector isn’t at all affordable on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and is no longer an option for rehousing people.

- Clients in Crisis’ Birmingham Skylights are facing similar shortfalls (£598.52), while the Crisis Skylight in Oxford is supporting people to find accommodation, but are facing shortfalls of £448.76.
- The Merseyside Skylight confirms some of these challenges, saying that although clients would previously have been able to be housed sustainably if they were able to negotiate a rent reduction, and top up the shortfall with the rest of their benefit payment, this is no longer an option. They cannot secure tenancies for people who would face certain arrears and eviction.

84 Rightmove (2022) The Rightmove Rental Trends Tracker <https://hub.rightmove.co.uk/content/uploads/2022/07/Rental-Trends-Tracker-Q2-2022.pdf>
 85 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) Live tables on homelessness <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>
 86 The Conservative Party (2019) Get Brexit Done, Unleash Britain’s Potential – the Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019 <https://www.conservatives.com/our-plan/conservative-party-manifesto-2019>
 87 Ministry of Justice (2022) Mortgage and landlord possession statistics: April to June 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-april-to-june-2022#landlord-possession-timeliness3>
 88 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

Since the start of the pandemic rents in the UK have risen on average by 12%, yet housing benefit has remained frozen and based on private rents from 2018-2019.

listed would be covered in full by Housing Benefit, this rises slightly to 9% in Cornwall while in Salford, where rental increases have been sharpest, just 4% of properties are affordable to struggling households.⁸⁹ When rent becomes unaffordable, it leaves families in impossible situations – cutting back on food and energy, including skipping meals to ensure their children can eat; being forced to leave tenancies to avoid getting into debt; and eventually at risk of eviction and losing their home if rent arrears mount up.

Additionally, respondents pointed to the fact that the benefit cap has been set at the same level since 2016, and hasn't been reviewed for six years. Without action to help those in desperate need, affordable housing options for people facing destitution and homelessness will continue to be too scarce, and will be a cause of homelessness, as well as inhibiting attempts to end it by reducing the affordable options for people to move into when they are trying move on from rough sleeping.

Many submissions described a lack of social housing as being a significant barrier to ending rough sleeping, with people unable to access affordable forms of accommodation. For those in desperate need of accessing affordable housing, social housing has become an improbable option - research by the National Housing Federation on the scale of need for social housing in England in 2020 found the number to be 1.6million households.⁹⁰ However, in the year to March 2020, there were only 306,000 new social housing lettings, a decrease of 8,000 lets from the previous year.⁹¹ The vast majority of these homes were old stock, which came up

for rent as people moved out of their homes. As pointed out in reporting by Inside Housing, this meant that just one social home was delivered for every 175 families on council housing waiting lists across the country.⁹² Local authorities therefore ration their social housing by restricting who can qualify to go onto housing waiting lists. The restrictions have a disproportionate impact on people with experience of homelessness and rough sleeping – official data quoted in St Mungo's *Home for Good* report shows that 58% of local authorities in England prevented some people with a history of rent arrears from joining their social housing waiting list. This increased to 66% in the local authorities with the top 50 highest levels of rough sleeping recorded in 2019, and 70% amongst the top ten areas.⁹³ There is a further challenge that housing associations – which own 60% of social housing – have concerns about supporting tenants with high or complex needs.⁹⁴

It is crucial that an increased amount of social housing is seen as one of the primary solutions for ending rough sleeping in the long term, as it is nearly impossible for people living in or on the edge of poverty to obtain forms of genuinely affordable housing. There is significant consensus in the housing and homelessness sector that the target to meet is at least 90,000 social rent homes to be delivered per year for 15 years.⁹⁵ The chronic undersupply of social rent homes also creates a huge obstacle in finding move-on accommodation for people sleeping rough. Homeless Link found that 34% of accommodation projects in England cited lack of available

89 Crisis and Zoopla (2022) *Falling short: Housing benefit and the rising cost of renting in England* https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/247716/zoopla_briefingv6.pdf

90 National Housing Federation (2021) *People in Housing Need: the scale and shape of housing need in England* <https://www.housing.org.uk/globalassets/files/people-in-housing-need/people-in-housing-need-2021.pdf>

91 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) *Social Housing Lettings: April 2019 to March 2020, England – April 2021 Update* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/social-housing-lettings-in-englandapril-2019-to-march-2020-april-2021-update>

92 Heath, L. (2020) 'Just one social home delivered for every 175 households on waiting lists' *Inside Housing* <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/just-one-social-home-delivered-for-every-175-households-on-waiting-lists-69035>

93 St Mungo's (2020) *Home for Good: The report of social housing in ending rough sleeping* <https://www.mungos.org/publication/home-for-good-the-role-of-social-housing-in-ending-rough-sleeping-summary-report/>

94 As quoted in the Kerslake Commission (2021) *The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: a new way of working: ending rough sleeping together. Final report – September 2021* https://usercontent.one/wp/www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/KRSC_Final_Report_29_11.pdf

95 For more information please see Bramley, G (2018) 'Housing supply requirements across Great Britain: for low-income households and homeless people' *Crisis and the National Housing Federation* [crisis_housing_supply_requirements_across_great_britain_2018.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/247716/zoopla_briefingv6.pdf)

60 Is the Westminster Government on track to “end rough sleeping” in England?

accommodation as the main barrier to their clients moving on.⁹⁶ The majority of frontline workers who spoke to Homeless Link found specialist accommodation, private rented accommodation and social housing difficult to obtain for the people they supported, with particular issues experienced trying to find private landlords willing to let to LHA claimants and accommodation within the LHA rate.

Without a sufficient supply of move-on accommodation, homelessness services face a bottleneck of people who are ready to move on but are stuck in other forms of unsuitable or unsafe accommodation, or accommodation that is only designed for short-term use, to protect people from the immediate dangers of sleeping rough. The APPGEH heard from countless people who had experience of this:

“This time round I’ve been in temporary accommodation for a year next month.”

“There isn’t enough accommodation to go around, enough social housing to go around, you stay in the property despite the fact that you’re getting harassed.”

“I’ve seen staff attacked, fights, countless people being arrested and taken out of hostel, people have been evicted for setting fires in their rooms etc. So safest thing is to keep yourself to yourself. Maybe this is why some people prefer life on the streets.”

“In that temporary accommodation, the nightman was trying to abuse me and my friend, we had to barricade the door with a single bed. So you can imagine this time around, I was very dubious of being put in somewhere like a temporary accommodation because I was scared of certain things happening again.”

This was also evident in organisations’ submissions to the APPGEH:

“There is a lack of accommodation options for people at each step of the pathway, beginning at the crisis stage with a lack of emergency bedspaces, and continuing into the pathway... with a lack of capacity.”

“The fundamental challenge of the availability and quality of housing... continues to have a huge impact on what any service can do.”

“Unfortunately, we do not currently have access to sufficient stock of emergency, assessment or move-on units to meet the growing demand and a placement into less suitable accommodation may be unavoidable.”

Indeed, in a focus group, staff from Crisis’ Skylight frontline centres in attendance ranked “Building Affordable Housing” as the most important policy ask to enable this Government to tackle rough sleeping.

Respondents welcomed this Government’s commitment to house building, having previously stated: “Ending rough sleeping starts with secure and affordable housing.” They committed in their 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy to changing the broken housing market by delivering affordable homes, and in their 2022 Rough Sleeping Strategy stated:

“Provision of more good quality social housing is a priority for this Government... The ambition is to deliver more social and affordable rented housing, including new social housing.”⁹⁷

However, respondents were in agreement that progress in this area was too little and

Only 6,000 social homes were built in England last year.

Research by the National Housing Federation on the scale of need for social housing in England in 2020 found the number to be 1.6 million households.

⁹⁶ Homeless Link (2017) *Support for single homeless people in England: Annual review 2016*. London: Homeless Link.

⁹⁷ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

There is significant consensus in the housing and homelessness sector that the target to meet is at least 90,000 social rent homes to be delivered per year for 15 years.

too slow, and a step change in the delivery of social housing was desperately needed – only 6,000 social homes were built in England last year.⁹⁸ Further, while the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy published in September 2022 explicitly recognised that the lack of genuinely affordable housing is a key cause of homelessness, the strategy did not commit to any action to address this challenge. Without action to meet the growing demand for genuinely affordable housing, which must include building more social housing, alongside implementing the right policies to ensure people can keep their homes, rough sleeping will not be ended by 2024, a point that was emphasised in many of the submissions to the inquiry.

Recommendations:

- **7a.** Introduce a cross-departmental Homelessness Prevention Taskforce as a sub-group of the inter-ministerial unit (Recommendation 1a) which will set clear outcomes for preventing rough sleeping for each relevant government department.
- **7b.** Instruct local authorities in England to set up Homelessness Prevention Taskforces which will identify those at risk of sleeping rough, develop links with existing housing and non-housing related services and develop contact points to reach and help this cohort at need. Importantly local authorities must be provided with sufficient funding and resources to deliver this as part of the national Government commitment.
- **7c.** Increase supply and access to genuinely affordable housing:
 - Set a national target for building homes at social rent levels at the sector-recommended target of 90,000 social rented homes a year, and set out a plan of how to meet this target.
- Facilitate this by increasing grant funding delivered through the Affordable Homes Programme towards providing social rent homes.
- Issue new guidance to local authorities which explicitly extends existing exemptions in social housing allocations guidance to people with a history of rough sleeping.
- Explore options for landlord incentives in order for them to be happy to accept people who are on Universal Credit or Housing Benefit and ensure they have access to advice workers who are able to mediate any issues between landlord and tenant.
- Ensure welcome plans to legislate for the abolition of Section 21 evictions through the Renters Reform Bill are brought forward in this Parliament.
- **7d.** Help people to keep their homes as the cost-of-living crisis continues:
 - Government should review the operation of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates with a view to return them to the 30th percentile of local rents as they did in response to the pandemic, which provided a lifeline to those on the brink of destitution.
 - Given the rate of inflation in all costs, the case has never been stronger for a review of the benefit cap, and consider an exemption from the cap for those sleeping rough or stuck in emergency accommodation.
 - As other living costs rise, financial support should be sufficient to meet the rising financial pressures that people are experiencing whether

⁹⁸ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Live tables on affordable housing supply* <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>

through Universal Credit, cost-of-living payments, bill reductions or reversing the cuts to Discretionary Housing Payments.

- Deductions to benefits should be tailored to people’s circumstances, so that they are able to afford their living costs whilst managing their debts. This should include options for people to: reduce repayment rates if they are facing homelessness, deprioritise repaying debts to government if they are repaying debts to others, and access token payment plans if they are in severe financial difficulty.

Early intervention

When people find themselves facing a night on the street, it is imperative the support system ensures they can access the right help and support services available quickly and easily. The longer people sleep rough, the more likely they are to develop support needs. Sleeping rough is a traumatising experience and represents a ‘rock bottom’ for those who go through it. Asked what their immediate feelings and reactions to homelessness were, one person told the APPGEH:

“[I was] feeling devastated, vulnerable, very emotionally painful, stressed generally, traumatised, anxious, lack of energy, depressed and helpless.”

The majority of people with direct experience of homelessness who submitted testimony to the APPGEH stated they found support services inaccessible and hard to reach when they first faced homelessness:

“I was unsure about what was going to happen next – who to contact for help - and where I was going to go.”

“I found help extremely difficult to come by. I was experiencing alcohol and non-alcohol related psychosis and I had resided myself to the fact I would probably die outside.”

Amnesty International’s *An Obstacle Course* report:

“The lack of information about homelessness and housing services, both public and charity-led, emerged as a major barrier to access to adequate housing in Amnesty International’s

interviews with people experiencing homelessness. When asked how they found out about homelessness services, the most frequent answer was, from other people who were in the same situation...The lack of easily available information means that some people go for weeks and months without any support, potentially entrenching harmful ill-health or poverty.”⁹⁹

One person told the APPGEH they had only found help by chance, reiterating a need for improved signposting of services:

“I managed to escape homelessness purely by running into an ex-colleague who knew somebody who owned supported housing in Liverpool. This was a gateway to support once I had an address, getting on the right benefits and then receiving help for my addiction and plethora of mental health issues. I believe had it not been for this I would have died either through the conditions of living outside or by suicide.”

Several people told the APPGEH of the acute importance of early intervention, assertive outreach and advocacy, and how they could not have ‘recovered’ and started to rebuild a life away from homelessness without this help from key workers:

“Homelessness is an extremely traumatic experience which is difficult to escape from without support from government and council services. Nobody who has found themselves in that situation should be abandoned by society.”

⁹⁹ Amnesty International (2022) *An Obstacle Course: Homelessness assistance and the right to housing in England Homelessness report* England_EUR 0353432022[1].pdf (amnesty.org.uk)

“At this time, due to both physical and mental health issues, I was unable to find help. I needed someone to act on my behalf and represent my interests. Advocacy was provided by Whitechapel and they helped greatly.”

Respondents told the APPGEH that crucial information on where to find help when you are suddenly homeless should be disseminated using posters and flyers, in schools, hospitals, supermarkets and GP practices, in a manner that would be accessible to all, including people with disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language.

One person recommended local authorities and services should have:

“An idiots guide single side piece of paper with who to call and what they can offer. DWP have this information and even though my job coach was great, she did not pass on information until very last minute. So even good people make mistakes. It’s a lottery really.”

Amnesty International in research for their report, *An Obstacle Course*, raised the issue of inaccessible crucial information with local authorities, who responded by saying this information was easily available on their website.¹⁰⁰ However, the APPGEH also heard how with increasing numbers of services going online, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic, it was difficult for people to access the critical services they needed for support. One person told the APPGEH in learning how to bid on social housing she realised:

“You need a computer, internet access and email. It’s taken me two years to get them, and there’s an expected

2-3 year wait until I’ll get something, making a likely total of five years homelessness.”

Another told the APPGEH their own problems accessing help from the council:

“I needed more help from the council. For example, I didn’t understand the terminology they used.”

This demonstrates a huge unmet need in getting the basics right in frontline outreach services, and a huge area of potential for this Government to make impactful policy changes to help them meet their manifesto commitment.

Many organisations told the APPGEH that outreach services are stretched, having suffered from successive cuts to budgets and capacity. Research by St Mungo’s and Homeless Link in 2020 found that £1 billion less is being spent per year on homelessness services compared to in 2007-08.¹⁰¹ Despite targeted funding provided by the RSI, respondents told the APPGEH there was a need to restore this lost funding so that everyone who needs it can access a safe place to be assessed and access a route away from rough sleeping. This was described by respondents as a crucial way for homelessness services to work more effectively – many people who sleep rough are hidden from local authorities and outreach services, and therefore cannot be assessed and provided with critical assertive help they need to recover.

A further recommendation by respondents was to remove the need for verification which is the requirement for people to be seen and recorded as rough sleeping by outreach workers in order to access the many services and accommodation. Our inquiry heard

Research by St Mungo’s and Homeless Link in 2020 found that £1 billion less is being spent per year on homelessness services compared to in 2007-08.

¹⁰⁰ Amnesty International (2022) *An Obstacle Course: Homelessness assistance and the right to housing in England Homelessness report England_EUR 0353432022[1].pdf* (amnesty.org.uk)

¹⁰¹ WPI Economics, St Mungo’s and Homeless Link (2020) *Local authority spending on homelessness* <https://www.mungos.org/app/uploads/2020/02/Local-authority-spending-on-homelessness%E2%80%93WPI-Economics-research-report%E2%80%93February-2020-update.pdf>

several testimonies describing verification as a significant barrier to delivering rough sleeping support. One organisation told the APPGEH one local authority in their local area would not accommodate someone until they have been verified three times. They went on to say:

“The areas where verification is not required have a rapid response to rough sleeping...[this] prevents people from feeling isolated and that no one cares, which then leads to them becoming entrenched.”

Instead, several respondents recommended that verification should be incorporated as part of the outreach assessment process, in order to determine the appropriate offer of support more quickly. Their aspiration was that taken with preventative measures, local areas will have increased capacity to proactively respond to the needs of the people at risk of or experiencing rough sleeping in their communities.

People with direct experience of homelessness told the APPGEH they did come into contact with the police when they were living or sleeping on the street, but that the support they received was either non-existent or didn't meet their needs:

“I have been stopped by plenty of police because I have been sleeping in my car in the middle of nowhere...when you turn around to a police officer and say, I'm homeless, surely the police officer has the right to turn around to you and say, hey, here's some information, or do you want us to call someone for you?”

“I ended up leaving...and so reported as a missing person, hounded by the police who then were also unable to help bar suggesting I should commit

a crime to get arrested, and thus be helped to get free of alcohol and possible housed. It's no wonder I gave up searching for hope.”

In a focus group for the inquiry one person told the APPGEH:

“Police seen us sleeping rough and they just told us to move on. Tell an average adult that maybe, which I still think is heartless, but when you see two children, because that's what we were, children, how can you just tell them, move on, you can't be sleeping rough here.

So they didn't try and signpost you or refer you to any other services?

No.”

Respondents stated police can have a potentially positive role in supporting people's recovery moving away from rough sleeping but were clear that the Vagrancy Act of 1824 which criminalises rough sleeping is a key obstacle to this, as it drives people away from the support they need through fear of arrest, stigmatisation and losing trust in the police and other public services. Aside from being representative of a punitive approach, criminalising rough sleeping is ineffective – there is robust evidence showing that enforcement is not an effective way to either engage people sleeping rough, or to resolve their problems.¹⁰² Respondents wanted to see this Government truly repeal the Vagrancy Act, and urgently clarify that homelessness will not be recriminalised through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill currently going through Parliament.

People with direct experience of homelessness were resounding about the positive impact of support services when they were able to access them:

“Homelessness had never crossed my mind but my eyes are now well and truly opened now. Without [service] I would not have known where to turn or what processes were. Help has been invaluable.”

“Homeless charities such as Crisis and Glass Door night shelter were extremely helpful and supportive. They were both fantastic and did all they could to make life more manageable for me... The casework help, advice, help with laundry, storage and showers, clothing and activities made a real difference and I do not know what we would have done without their assistance. The organisation, Shelter, was also helpful regarding legal advice, particularly during my eviction.”

“Crisis have literally saved my life and provided similar help to so many others. You really make a difference.”

“Shelley has been an absolute diamond helping us getting the right support I need. I've been coming to cooking and identifying, getting confidence with coming off the drugs, anxiety, panic attacks. Miriam's, and the help here, the lady who does the cooking, Chris, she's absolutely fantastic. They're all really nice here. I know it's a safe place to be.”

Crucially, some people told the APPGEH that they weren't sure other people in similar circumstances knew about these support services and further reiterated their call for improved signposting, particularly from local authorities and on discharge from statutory services like hospital and prison:

“I've got a chance, because the rest of them, I feel, they're putting needles in themselves, Valium, because they just, there's nothing out there. They don't know about this place. This should be linked in with the prison to help them girls.”

This demonstrates another failure to get the basics right in the frontline engagement with people sleeping rough, and another area where this Government could make impactful policy changes to help them meet their manifesto commitment.

Many organisations who submitted testimony to the APPGEH were in consensus that homelessness legislation in England locked vulnerable people out of accessing vital support when they needed it most. Currently local authorities have a legal duty to provide housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness if they meet three criteria:

- they are not subject to immigration restrictions;
- they are recognised as being in priority need for housing; and
- they have not ‘made themselves homeless’.

These tests create gaps in provision and support, particularly for people classified as ‘single homeless’ or those without dependent children, who then cannot access vital assistance to end their homelessness, potentially entrenching poverty, mental or physical ill-health or substance addiction, and exposing them to criminality as a means of survival.

During the Everyone In initiative, as already discussed, these legal eligibility tests were circumvented, enabling people to access crucial help from their local authority and their partner services, sometimes for the first time in years. Respondents told the APPGEH that the impact of this was phenomenal, and gave a glimpse of a system that allowed them to provide support on the basis of need alone and with funding for local authorities to place people in accommodation. One organisation, echoing the sentiment of others, told the APPGEH that this enabled:

¹⁰² Sanders, B. and Albanese, F. (2017) *An examination of the scale and impact of enforcement interventions on street homeless people in England and Wales*. London: Crisis; Mackie, P., Johnsen, S., and Wood, J. (2017) *Ending rough sleeping: what works? An international evidence review*. London: Crisis.

“extremely positive outcomes for the large group of rough sleepers we have taken off the street. These outcomes go beyond a mere roof over their head and the provision of warm food. They include the commissioning of support to work with complex individuals, many of whom had not engaged with off the street options previously, given the suspicion that many regard statutory services with.”

At an APPGEH evidence session, Malavika Vartak, Research and Policy Advisor at Amnesty International, described the homelessness legislation in England as a gruelling obstacle course, with these tests forming a triple barrier which effectively locks out some of the most disadvantaged and at-risk groups within our societies.

In Amnesty International’s report *An Obstacle Course*, at least six women had their children taken into care by social services and then were deemed ‘single homeless’ and therefore not in priority need, showing the illogicality of the tests.¹⁰³ As a result, people too often have no choice but to sleep rough or live in precarious and inadequate housing, often at great risk to their health and personal safety.

Vartak went on to conclude that it is unclear how this Government will achieve its target of ending rough sleeping without removing the eligibility criteria.

Ian Swift, Director of Housing Needs and Strategy at Islington Council, in an APPGEH evidence session told attendees he “passionately” believed that homelessness legislation in England needed to change, and that the three legal tests of intentionality, local connection and priority need act as barriers to accessing help for those in need. This was also demonstrated in countless lived experience testimonies submitted to the APPGEH:

“I was told repeatedly that I was not high priority which is not very helpful when you are facing another cold night on the streets.”

“After being homeless for a year, I tried the council again and they gave me the details of a night shelter which I was able to stay at for a couple of months. They acknowledged that I was homeless... However, I was always told that I was low priority need.”

“[Support] was almost non-existent and did nothing but damage to my already dire situation. No borough or area were willing to take responsibility for me and all claimed ‘no connection’. This was inconsolable to me.”

“I found rules around rough sleeping to be horrible to navigate in terms of being noticed in the same place multiple nights, and with language like ‘made himself intentionally homeless’.”

“Even temporary accommodation would have helped as I could have built from there but that was never offered as I was told I didn’t qualify.”

“The council advised that I stay at the property until the court issued the final eviction notice as they would consider my leaving any earlier as making myself ‘voluntarily homeless’. When I was evicted the council didn’t help me. They said that, as I was a single male, I was considered ‘low priority need’ in their words. I had a period of sofa surfing and ended up living in my 20 year old Ford Fiesta (without any heating) for 9 months until staying in a night shelter from January until March 2019. I was sofa surfing, sleeping on night buses and rough sleeping with

my new partner, Maria, until we went to Crisis Skylight for help in November 2019. They contacted the Glass Door homeless charity who placed us in their night shelter until the Covid pandemic resulted in us being put in a hotel in March 2020.”

“The contact number Universal Credit provided me with was for a night shelter which I didn’t qualify to stay at as I was sofa surfing at the time.”

“After living and working in London for 10 years no borough would offer me help and all claimed no connection.”

Jack¹⁰⁴ told an APPGEH evidence session that he:

“Was told many times I was not a priority, but my number one need was just somewhere to sleep and a place that was safe, with clean facilities to shower and do laundry. Without this chance I would have never overcome homelessness.”

Respondents were keen to stress that while these tests in eligibility remain, there will always be people who are not eligible for homelessness support, and who will be forced to rough sleep. For example, the APPGEH received strong evidence that too often care leavers are considered ‘intentionally’ homeless when leaving care or leaving unsafe accommodation, with organisations calling for the Government to abolish the intentionality test for people between 18–25 leaving care, which could drastically cut down the amount of care leavers who are rough sleeping. This recommendation was included in the APPG for Ending Homelessness’ 2017 report on homelessness prevention and in the recently published report of the Independent Review

of Children’s Social Care (2022). Other groups of people sleeping rough who the APPGEH heard faced similar barriers included people leaving prison, single men, LGBTQI+ people and women. Given this evidence of this criteria acting as a vital barrier to help, which puts the manifesto commitment in serious doubt, the APPGEH urges Government to review existing criteria of priority need, eligibility and intentionality in English homelessness legislation and assess its effectiveness in facilitating access to support.

Recommendations:

- **8a.** More practical help from the local authorities, to help understand the processes and services available to them, and improved signposting of care, support, substance addiction services which can be easily accessible to people facing rough sleeping in their local area and specific signposting from statutory services. This was particularly evident with regards to specific cohorts such as women, prison leavers, LGBTQI+ groups and non-UK nationals.
- **8b.** Government should remove the need for verification for people sleeping rough to access services, and instead incorporate it as part of the outreach assessment process.
- **8c.** Truly Scrap the Vagrancy Act - Government must ensure people sleeping rough are not locked out of support, do not face discrimination, and ensure that homelessness is not recriminalised through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

¹⁰³ Amnesty International (2022) *An Obstacle Course: Homelessness assistance and the right to housing in England Homelessness report England_EUR 0353432022[1].pdf* (amnesty.org.uk)

¹⁰⁴ Not his real name

- **8d.** Review the existing criteria of priority need, intentionality and local connection in English homelessness legislation to ensure people who are rough sleeping and homeless can access it. At a minimum the Government must assess the impact of this eligibility criteria on certain cohorts of people sleeping rough, including people leaving care being considered ‘intentionally’ homeless.

Sustained support

Critical to achieving and sustaining an end to rough sleeping in England by 2024 is people being able to access the support they need to rebuild their lives, and, vitally, receiving it while living in stable housing. This gives people the headspace to think beyond their survival and truly recover and resolve their issues, to avoid returning to a life on the streets. The type and level of support needed for each person will depend on their individual needs and challenges, but all will require a safe home to live in and receive this support. One organisation told the APPGEH:

“The right accommodation with the right support at the right time plays a huge part in supporting an individual to recover from homelessness.”

Evident amongst all who had experienced homelessness was the strong desire to access stable housing alongside any floating support they need, particularly at the start as they initially transition from rough sleeping. When asked what support they would have liked or would have helped them, they told the APPGEH:

“To have my own home and find suitable employment.”

“I would have liked to have been offered stable accommodation and to have been given the opportunity to gain employment and life skills.”

“To be offered a roof over my head, mental health support and training and opportunities.”

The importance of stable housing:

The necessity of safe and stable accommodation was reiterated throughout the lived experience testimony submitted:

“All I’ve ever wanted was somewhere safe and secure.”

“I wanted to be housed. I wanted to be safe.”

“If the Government were to offer people accommodation, then that will open doors for them to gain life skills and contribute back into their communities.”

“I am begging for help if I can get somewhere to stay I can get my life back on track.”

“Worst 9 months of my life but also 9 months to reflect and rebuild. Could not do this on streets but could in my own room with a roof over my head.”

Respondents emphasised that at this crucial time in their lives, facing the devastation of homelessness and destitution, an offer of support and accommodation is essential for them to be able to recover:

“I have known many homeless people during my time in that situation and there are many good people who just need assistance so they can rehabilitate their lives to some semblance of normality.”

Ian Swift, Director of Housing Needs and Strategy at Islington Council, emphasised this in his contributions to an APPGEH evidence session:

“Many including today’s testimonies have shown how housing has the ability of turning someone’s life around and it’s our duty to ensure this takes place.”

Indeed this Government has recognised the critical importance of accessing accommodation, stating in the Rough Sleeping Strategy of September 2022 that it supported housing-led approaches:

“Being housed in their own accommodation is crucial in helping achieve stability, mental and physical safety, which can also improve feelings of self-worth and relationships with others.”¹⁰⁵

The importance of appropriate support

For people with multiple needs or disadvantage safe housing is absolutely necessary but not sufficient to ending their homelessness, and critically sustain it so they never return to sleeping on the streets. One person told the APPGEH:

“Homelessness does not end when a roof over your head is provided. That is just the beginning of trying to get a sense of normality and re-join society in a positive and productive manner.”

An organisation reiterated this in their submission to the APPGEH:

“Housing or temporary accommodation alone will not address a person’s needs longer term or enable recovery from the factors that lead to repeat recurrence of rough sleeping, and so to be effective it is essential that it is accompanied by sufficient wraparound primary care, mental health and addiction support through community multidisciplinary teams.”

Many organisations emphasised the importance of offering appropriate support, including health services and the imperative that housing and health systems work better together to provide specialist support to people who face rough sleeping who often have multiple health needs. They stated how helping people to recover from their ill-health was crucial to sustaining a life away from the streets. The Salvation Army told the APPGEH in their submission:

“For many people simply getting accommodation is not enough to break the cycle of homelessness, and challenges like addictions and mental health problems can soon lead to individuals returning to the streets.”

One person with direct experience told the APPGEH also emphasised the importance of support:

“So, now I’m housed. I was, and I have been housed for a while and I’m not chaotic. I’m working with a therapist and I’m getting better. But I’ve got complex PTSD as a result of child abuse and trauma. So, it’s, life is difficult. But I’m managing because I’ve got help.”

And that absence of the right support in other forms of accommodation is detrimental to their recovery processes, as evident in this testimony:

“The shelter I stayed in...had loads of crack-heads in it and they would just wander through my room in the night as it was a connecting room. This didn’t help my mental health. I needed somewhere to stay that was dry and not cold. I needed somewhere safe to stay that was catered more to my needs, especially my mental health because of the abuse I suffered when I was younger.”

Housing First

For people with multiple, entrenched needs that have compounded someone’s homelessness, Housing First was recommended by respondents as the best solution, and urged Government to nationally roll-out Housing First for all who would benefit, to ensure they meet their target of ending rough sleeping by 2024.

What is Housing First?

Housing First is an internationally recognised method of ending homelessness for people with interlocking, multiple and serious needs who experience homelessness. Instead of prioritising proof of ‘tenancy readiness’, Housing First provides rapid access to stable, ordinary (private or social) rented housing. From this point, other support needs are addressed through coordinated and intensive support on an open-ended basis. These needs can include entrenched street homelessness, mental, psychological or emotional ill-health, drug and/or alcohol dependency, contact with the criminal justice system, experience of trauma, physical ill-health, or experience of domestic violence and abuse.

Evidence shows that Housing First ends the homelessness of around 80% of its clients who have high, interlocking support needs and is consequently considered one of the most important innovations in the homelessness sector of the last few decades.¹⁰⁶ Significantly, government’s second evaluation of the three regional pilots

shows a remarkable 87% tenancy sustainment rate for the 534 people housed so far.¹⁰⁷ This success was also confirmed by people with direct experience of using Housing First services who told the APPGEH:

“More people in situations like mine should go to Housing First instead of homeless hostels.”

“Housing First has been a godsend for me.”

Respondents welcomed this Government’s support for the Housing First model, which was reiterated in the recently published Rough Sleeping Strategy in September 2022. This strategy outlined how funding would continue for the three existing city-region Housing First pilots and further funding would be available to enable the expansion of the scheme across England.¹⁰⁸ However respondents to the inquiry urged the Government to nationally roll-out Housing First across England for all who would benefit (estimated to be at least 16,500 places) as soon as possible in order to meet their manifesto commitment:

“We believe that, in order for the Government to achieve their manifesto commitment, they should move towards making Housing First the default model for rough sleepers with complex and multiple needs. While Housing First currently only makes up a small number of the council’s normal methods of homelessness intervention, Southwark’s experience shows how effective it is. Since 2018, Southwark Council has housed 28 former rough sleepers under Housing First, with 96% of tenancies sustained.”

¹⁰⁶ Mackie, P., Johnsen, S., and Wood, J. (2017) *Ending rough sleeping: what works? An international evidence review*, London: Crisis.

¹⁰⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) *Evaluation of the Housing First Pilots Second Process Evaluation Report*. London: MHCLG.

¹⁰⁸ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

¹⁰⁵ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

“Housing First is essential to ending rough sleeping and along with Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, which we locally developed along the Housing First principles, has proved invaluable to us in ending the revolving door for many of our most entrenched clients.”

“Housing First is crucial to plans to end rough sleeping as it provides an effective solution for people facing the most complex support needs... it catalyses the system...that people facing the most acute multiple disadvantage require.”

The APPGEH’s previous inquiry into Housing First found there were huge potential cost savings to scaling up services across England with the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) estimating that every £1 spent by government on such a programme would save £1.56 across health, criminal justice and the homelessness system.¹⁰⁹ While the greatest savings inevitably are found in homelessness services at £8,650 per person per year, the CSJ research estimates savings of £4,350 per person per year to the NHS; £250 to drug and alcohol per person per year and £165 to mental health per person per year.¹¹⁰

Exempt accommodation

For other people who had previously slept rough and had high support needs, supported housing was considered an ideal move-on accommodation, as it provides accommodation and support simultaneously.

What is exempt accommodation?

There are many people experiencing homelessness who live in housing that comes with support services to help them recover from trauma and rebuild their lives, which is known as supported housing. Some supported housing provides long term accommodation, often as part of a care contract with a local authority or health service. Due to the added help and support people living in this accommodation require, it is often exempt from the caps on local housing allowance rates. This exempt status was set up to recognise that landlords who provide residents with care, support or supervision will incur additional costs compared to landlords renting to people without support needs. Subsequently they can charge rents that may be far higher than levels set by housing benefit for private renters.

When delivered well, exempt accommodation can play a vital role in providing transitional housing and support for people who have experienced homelessness. However, respondents told the APPGEH increasingly they were seeing rogue landlords enter the exempt accommodation sector to exploit gaps in regulation to claim higher levels of housing benefit, without providing support. The APPGEH heard that poor

quality exempt accommodation had been cramped, mouldy and damp, and unsafe to live in. Some residents have been abused and intimidated by landlords, and had even returned to homelessness to escape inadequate and even dangerous living conditions. People have even died in the care of some of the worst landlords.

While much exempt accommodation is of an acceptable quality, respondents were clear that inadequate protections are in place where this is not the case. They welcomed the successive investigations and reviews into the sector, and the introduction by the Government of a National Statement of Expectations for Supported Housing. However, respondents emphasised there is no statutory or regulatory requirement to adhere to this guidance. They urged this Government to support legislative efforts by Bob Blackman MP and other parliamentarians across the House to strengthen the regulatory system governing supported exempt accommodation and help to end the scandal in this sector.¹¹¹ Improved regulation will improve standards of the accommodation and support provided to vulnerable people trying to transition away from homelessness, helping the Government to meet its manifesto commitment by 2024.

Bob Blackman MP’s Private Members’ Bill: Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill - Private Members’ Bills are a unique opportunity for MPs who are not in Government to try to pass legislation of their choice. Bob Blackman, the APPGEH’s Co-Chair, was successful in this ballot and presented his Private Members’ Bill to improve the regulation of exempt accommodation to the House on 17 June 2022. This follows campaigning efforts from organisations across the housing and homelessness sector to improve the regulation of the provision of exempt accommodation, and close loopholes of bad practice with the APPG for Ending Homelessness holding a one-off meeting and the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities committee holding an inquiry into this topic. The Bill is expected to return to the House for debate and scrutiny in Autumn 2022.

Homelessness and health

We will also end the blight of rough sleeping by the end of the next Parliament...by working to bring together local services to meet the health and housing needs of people sleeping on the streets.¹¹²

Urgent action by this Government is needed to better support people the health needs of people sleeping rough and experiencing other forms of homelessness. Encouragingly the Government’s updated Rough Sleeping Strategy of September 2022 acknowledges the significant health impact of sleeping rough, and committed to an integrated system where health and housing work closely to respond to homeless.¹¹³ Respondents were

¹¹¹ For more information please see <https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/regulate-the-rogues/>

¹¹² The Conservative Party (2019) *Get Brexit Done, Unleash Britain’s Potential – the Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019* <https://www.conservatives.com/our-plan/conservative-party-manifesto-2019>

¹¹³ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

¹⁰⁹ For more information see APPG for Ending Homelessness (2021) “It’s like a dream come true” An inquiry into scaling up Housing First in England <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/245348/appg-housing-first-report-2021.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Centre for Social Justice (2021) *Close to Home* <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CSJ-Close-to-Home-2021.pdf>

unanimous that better support to achieve both mental and physical wellbeing is critical to prevent, relieve and crucially, sustain an end to an individual’s homelessness. Evidence is resounding on the health inequalities faced by people experiencing homelessness and the staggering high prevalence of health conditions amongst them.

People who are homeless are...

- **34x more likely to have tuberculosis**
- **50x more likely to have Hepatitis C**
- **12x more likely to have epilepsy**
- **6x more likely to have heart disease,**
- **5x more likely to have a stroke**
- **2.5x more likely to have asthma.**¹¹⁴

A recent study found that residents of a hostel in London had the levels of frailty comparable to 89-year-olds in the general population. Participants had an average of seven long-term health conditions, far higher than people in their 90s.¹¹⁵ Evidence also demonstrates that sleeping rough often means people have poorer diets, find it more difficult to maintain personal hygiene, have poorer sleep patterns, and are often more exposed to extreme weather conditions -

all of which contribute to poor health.¹¹⁶ Tragically, the average age of death among people experiencing homelessness is 46 for a man and 42 for a woman.¹¹⁷

One person told the APPGEH:

“When I was sleeping rough, my weight went down from 12stone to just over 9stone. I started drinking heavily and my mental health issues worsened considerably at this time. In the hostel, a doctor visited every couple of months and when I was tested and certain health checks were done, it was found that my cholesterol levels had increased to alarming levels. This was attributed to having a diet of only pies and pasties that were donated to the hostel at the end of the day by Greggs the bakers and eating the food that was provided at mobile food kitchens locally.”

Mental health issues are also incredibly widespread with 45% of people experiencing homelessness having been diagnosed with a mental health issue.¹¹⁸ This rises to eight out of 10 people who are sleeping rough.¹¹⁹ People who are homeless are over nine times more likely to take their own life than general population.¹²⁰

Countless testimonies submitted to the APPGEH described their mental ill-health prompting and prolonging their experiences of homelessness:

Gareth¹²¹ told an APPGEH evidence session that his homelessness was **“mentally draining to an extreme level”** and the mental health challenges and traumatic experiences of being homeless are still with him. For him, **“everyday was a constant mental battle, even for basic hygiene.”**

Other submitted testimonies include the following, on the impact of their homelessness on their health:

“Homelessness had a significant impact on my mental health. Relationships broke down and I became isolated. I felt like I was in survival mode and could be aggressive towards people I encountered.”

“It affected my physical and mental health. I experienced feelings of abandonment, anxiety and isolation which were all made worse by receiving no financial support and little help from council or government.”

Furthermore, the longer people sleep rough, the greater their health needs become as these needs are entrenched by their traumatic experiences on the streets. Research by St Mungo’s found that people who sleep rough for longer are more likely to have drug and alcohol problems.¹²²

Susan¹²³ told an APPGEH evidence session that she had spent a long time being homeless sleeping on friends’ sofas from time to time, but eventually ran out of friends and became street homeless. She had received no mental health support and eventually became too unwell to work. This resulted in a decline in her health, life and career (she had trained as a lawyer), and she was eventually left homeless.

Florence Eshalomi MP, an APPGEH Co-Chair, noted after hearing several testimonies of people with direct experience of homelessness, the underlining theme of a lack of mental health support before, during and after their time facing rough sleeping.

Respondents and people with direct experience of homelessness were in consensus that poor health is both a cause and a consequence of homelessness, and that it also results in the prolongation of homelessness. Therefore, to end rough sleeping, the Government must consider homelessness from a public health angle, and facilitate people’s access to critical mental and physical health services.

Some respondents suggested that the lack of accommodation options aside from hostels for those sleeping rough make it difficult to recover from ill-health, surrounded by other people with complex needs and addictions:

“When I was in a...night-shelter. I was grateful for having a place to sleep at night but it was very uncomfortable sleeping on the floor with 15 strangers who I didn’t know. There was violence, sickness, substance and alcohol misuse. I can understand why people choose to stay on the streets rather than stay there as sometimes the streets can seem safer.”

To meet their manifesto commitment by 2024, the respondents urged government to work with Dame Carol Black to implement the recommendations from her welcome Independent Review of Drugs including recommendations to remove siloes between mental health and substance addiction treatments. One organisation told the APPGEH in their submissions that:

114 Beijer, Ulla et al. (2012) ‘Prevalence of tuberculosis, hepatitis C virus, and HIV in homeless people: a systematic review and meta-analysis,’ *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, Volume 12, Issue 11, 859 – 870; Story, A. (2013) ‘Slopes and cliffs: comparative morbidity of housed and homeless people,’ *The Lancet*, Volume 382, Special issue. S1-S105.

115 Raphael Rogans-Watson et al. (2020) ‘Premature frailty, geriatric conditions and multimorbidity among people experiencing homelessness: a cross-sectional observational study in a London hostel,’ *Housing, Care and Support*, Volume 23, No. 3/4, pp.77-91.

116 Story A. (2019) *Findings from a cross-sectional nutritional study of homeless people in London* http://www.homelessnessandhealth.co.uk/events/wp-downloads/2019/presentations/Pathways_from_Homelessness_2019_Plenary_Dr_AL_Story.pdf; Sprake E., Russell J., Barker M. (2013) *Food choice and nutrient intake amongst homeless people* <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jhn.12130>; Pathway (2014) *Mental Health Service Interventions for Rough Sleepers Tools and Guidance* <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Mental%20Health%20Interventions%20for%20People%20Who%20Sleep%20Rough%20-%20v2.pdf>; St Mungo’s (2021) *Housing and health: working together to respond to rough sleeping during Covid-19* <https://www.mungos.org/publication/housing-and-health-working-together-to-respond-to-rough-sleeping-during-covid-19/>

117 Office for National Statistics (2021) *Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathsofhomelesspeopleinenglandandwales>

118 Mental Health Foundation, *Homelessness Statistics* <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/statistics/homelessness-statistics>

119 Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (2020) *Understanding the Multiple Vulnerabilities, Support Needs and Experiences of People who Sleep Rough in England Initial findings from the Rough Sleeping Questionnaire*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-questionnaire-initial-findings>

120 Thomas, B. (2011) *Homelessness: a silent killer. A research briefing on mortality amongst homeless people*. London: Crisis.

121 Not his real name

122 St Mungo’s (2020) *Knocked Back: Failing to support people sleeping rough with drug and alcohol problems is costing lives* https://www.mungos.org/app/uploads/2020/01/StM_Knocked_Back_DA_Research_Report_Final_2901.pdf

123 Not her real name

“NHS mental health teams are unlikely to engage with a client who is actively using drugs.”

Countless research has pointed to these siloes between interrelating issues acting as significant barriers in accessing support for people. This includes Amnesty International’s *An Obstacle Course* report, and the Groundswell’s *Women, Homelessness and Health* report,¹²⁴ the latter finding that one of the reasons that women found it difficult to access mental health support was that they were told that “they needed to sort out their housing issue and/or addiction before they could receive support.”¹²⁵

Given that one person with direct experience also told the APPGEH – “No one seemed to be able to support people with addiction and mental health issues. It hard to come by a homeless person who is healthy and not addicted to a substance” – these siloes act as a significant barrier to providing the support needed to end someone’s homelessness.

While respondents welcomed the Government’s commitment to integrating these services in their most recent Drug Strategy, implementation of the Review of Drugs recommendations would be highly beneficial in ensuring access to both mental health and substance misuse services for people who are homeless. It is welcome that the Government has committed to considering rough sleeping as part of the forthcoming Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan and urge them to ensure that resolving the gap between mental health and drug treatment forms part of it. Alongside this, the Government’s new Rough Sleeping Strategy committed to increased funding for the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Grant and continued funding beyond 2023/24 for specialist rough sleeping mental health

services. Going forward, this Government must ensure that the mental health and substance misuse needs of all people sleeping rough are adequately addressed.

Action in this area is particularly urgent given that as The Salvation Army stated in their submission:

“Official data shows local authority investment in mental health and substance use support has decreased in the last decade. However, during this time, the number of homeless people dying of drug poisoning as well as the general number of homeless people with these substance needs has increased.”

Testimony of Emma, speaking at an APPGEH evidence session:¹²⁶

Living with any disadvantage can be incredibly difficult. Disadvantages such as childhood trauma, poverty, domestic abuse and violence, mental ill-health, addiction, coercion, exploitation, street prostitution, losing custody of children, homelessness, sexual violence, been involved in the criminal justice system and imprisonment.

When disadvantages become laid on top of each other becoming multiple disadvantage they can become suffocating. Each disadvantage ricocheting off the next until it becomes impossible to escape them.

I know what it’s like to try and survive multiple disadvantages because of the list of disadvantages I’ve just read out are my disadvantages.

A popular recommendation amongst contributors was extending the Duty to Refer to a strengthened Duty to Collaborate on public agencies such as health bodies, jobcentres, prisons, probation services. Crucially this must include those not currently in the scope of the Duty to Refer, including GPs. This would ensure cooperation between health and housing services which goes beyond a referral process, encouraging services to meet the needs of someone whose homelessness is compounded by health issues. While the new Rough Sleeping Strategy commits to fully embedding the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), including Duty to Refer, respondents were keen to see the Duty to Refer expanded to a Duty to Collaborate so that efforts to prevent homelessness are holistic and well-integrated across various parts of the system.

Respondents told the APPGEH that increased provision of specialist Inclusion Health teams would also help to improve the health treatment of people facing homelessness. Despite numbers of teams growing in recent years, it remains a postcode lottery – King’s College London found that 56.5% of homelessness projects in England do not have specialist primary care (GP) health services in their area.¹²⁷ Consistent evidence over the past decade shows that specialist health interventions for people experiencing homelessness make a significant difference to health outcomes and can resolve homelessness, leading to decreased costs across health and housing.¹²⁸ This approach has been recently outlined in the new National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline on integrated health and care for people experiencing homelessness, which must be implemented by all new systems.¹²⁹

Current and impending NHS reforms offer major opportunities for this Government to realise this vision of tackling health inequalities amongst people experiencing homelessness. However, as they stand, they are missing crucial foundations which will not produce success – for example, the lack of data collection across the healthcare system. Housing status is not routinely captured in NHS service datasets, making it impossible for services and commissioners to see this population, measure their outcomes, and commission services for them. Respondents also recommended the Government rolled out COVID-19 Homeless Rapid Integrated Screening Protocol (CHRISP) from London to other urban areas in England to capture invaluable information, such as COVID-19 risks, physical health, mental health, frailty, drug and alcohol use, bloodborne virus risk and other vulnerabilities. Further, they encouraged the Government to publish the delayed Health Disparities White Paper which should include a commitment to tackling the health inequalities faced by people who are homeless.

Government made welcome commitments in the new Rough Sleeping Strategy that they will strive to embed the principles from the new NICE guidelines in everything they do. However, respondents urge the Government to ensure that all Integrated Care Systems have the funds and resources needed to fully implement the new NICE guidelines, coupled with a commitment to ensuring the culture change needed on homeless health across the NHS. Changes are needed, for example, to prevent people who are homeless from being discharged from hospital on to the street. A Homeless Link report found in 2014 that more than 36% of homeless people were discharged without underlying health

124 Amnesty International (2022) *An Obstacle Course: Homelessness assistance and the right to housing in England Homelessness report* England_EUR 0353432022[1].pdf (amnesty.org.uk)

125 Groundswell (2020) *Women, Homelessness and Health: a Peer Research Project* <https://groundswell.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Womens-Health-Research-Report.pdf>

126 Not real name

127 Crane, M., Cetrano, G., Joly, L., Coward, S., Daly, B., Ford, C., Gage, H., Manthorpe, J., & Williams, P. (2018) Mapping of specialist primary health care services in England for people who are homeless. London: Social Care Workforce Research Unit, King’s College London.

128 See Wyatt L. (2017) ‘Positive outcomes for homeless patients in UCLH Pathway programme,’ *British Journal of Healthcare Management*, Volume 23, No. 8, pp.367-371; Dorney-Smith S et al. (2016) ‘Integrating health care for homeless people: the experience of the KHP Pathway Homeless Team,’ *Br J Healthc Manag*, 22(4), pp.225-34; Hewett, N., Buchman, P., Musariri, J., Sargeant, C. et al. (2016). ‘Randomised controlled trial of GP-led in-hospital management of homeless people (‘Pathway’),’ *Clinical Medicine*, Volume 16, No. 3, pp.223-229.

129 NICE (2022) *Integrated health and social care for people experiencing homelessness – NICE guidelines* <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng214>

or housing problems being addressed, and that some NHS staff had inadequate understanding of how to address the housing needs of patients facing homelessness. In their updated Rough Sleeping Strategy the Government made a commitment to evaluate the Out-Of-Hospital Care pilots that currently operate in 17 hospital sites in 2023 and a welcome statement that “no one” should be faced with “the prospect of having nowhere to go following a stay in hospital.” To coordinate efforts to deliver, monitor and review these commitments at a central level, a joint Health and Homelessness Unit should be established in the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure cross-departmental focus on improving health outcomes, collaborating closely with the new inter-ministerial unit (Recommendation 1b) and the cross-departmental Homelessness Prevention Taskforce (Recommendation 7a).

“Existing programmes must continue and funding must be provided to ensure services can reach people in every part of the country, not just some areas.”¹³⁰

Respondents’ submissions were full of recommendations to improve the provision of health support available to people experiencing homelessness, all underlining the need to continue considering homelessness as a public health issue in order to successfully improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness, and to end rough sleeping by 2024. They urged the Government to implement these recommendations to meet their manifesto commitment which aimed to “bring together local services to meet the health and housing needs of people sleeping on the streets.”¹³¹

Recommendations:

- **9a.** Government should support Bob Blackman MP’s Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill, which seeks to strengthen the regulatory system governing supported exempt accommodation and help to end the scandal in this sector.
- **9b.** Government should nationally roll-out Housing First for all who would benefit, and commit to implementing the recommendations of the APPG for Ending Homelessness’ inquiry report into scaling up Housing First, including establishing a dedicated funding stream, cross-departmental oversight, a national fidelity assurance framework and targeted welfare reform measures specific to Housing First tenants to make better use of privately rented housing. This should include provision tailored for groups who would benefit significantly from the scheme, including women, care leavers and prison leavers.
- **9c.** Improve the health of people sleeping rough and experiencing homelessness:
 - i. To improve the integration and collaboration of health and housing systems, Government should extend the Duty to Refer to a Duty to Collaborate with relevant public agencies including those not currently in scope of Duty of Refer, such as GPs.
 - ii. Work with Dame Carol Black to implement the recommendations from her welcome Independent Review of Drugs including those on removing siloes of treatments between mental health and substance addictions, which should form part of this Government’s forthcoming Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- iii. Ensure the forthcoming Inclusion Health Duty to Cooperate guidance for Integrated Care Systems stipulates that Integrated Care Boards, Integrated Care Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards has a dedicated focus on tackling health inequalities for inclusion health populations, and ensure inclusion health is featured in all Integrated Care System strategies as recommended in statutory guidance.
- iv. Government must ensure that all Integrated Care Systems have the funds and resources to fully implement the new NICE guidelines, which will improve the provision of Multi-Disciplinary Teams across England.
- v. Commit to rolling out CHRISP to urban areas across England.
- vi. A joint Health and Homelessness Unit should be established in DHSC to ensure cross-departmental focus on improving health outcomes, collaborating closely with the new inter-Ministerial unit (Recommendation 1a) and the cross-departmental Homelessness Prevention Taskforce (Recommendation 7a).

¹³⁰ St Mungo’s (2021) *Housing and health: working together to respond to rough sleeping during Covid-19* <https://www.mungos.org/publication/housing-and-health-working-together-to-respond-to-rough-sleeping-during-covid-19/>

¹³¹ The Conservative Party (2019) *Get Brexit Done, Unleash Britain’s Potential – the Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019* <https://www.conservatives.com/our-plan/conservative-party-manifesto-2019>

Conclusion

Evidence received throughout the course of this inquiry has made clear the devastating and damaging impact rough sleeping can have on the people who are forced to sleep on the streets. From being isolated, experiencing abuse, discrimination, mental and physical ill-health, hunger, deprivation and extreme weather conditions, to losing relationships, friends, pets and facing a high risk of violence, exploitation and criminality, and developing substance addictions.

Yet respondents stressed to the APPGEH that it was entirely within this Government’s ability to end rough sleeping in England, and crucially sustain this up to 2024, and beyond, given that there has never been more evidence on how to tackle it.

The APPGEH heard repeatedly how this is implausible without a comprehensive preventative agenda which addresses the flow of people onto the streets, and understands the interrelated relationship between rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness, for example sofa surfing and those stuck in temporary accommodation. Very often people in these other forms of homelessness are on the cusp of rough sleeping, and people often move between different types of homelessness to exhaust all of their options before resorting to sleeping rough. While these forms of homelessness may be less visible than sleeping on the streets, they can also be incredibly dangerous, unsafe and detrimental to people’s lives and wellbeing, and can often result in them sleeping rough at a later stage.

Without looking beyond rough sleeping to these wider forms of homelessness, the welcome progress the Government has made on its manifesto commitment risks being temporary and overwhelmed before 2024, particularly in light of the cost-of-living

crisis which is anticipated to worsen in the coming months. Respondents were clear that urgent action by this Government to prevent homelessness and help people keep their homes is imperative or else they risk their commitment being in serious jeopardy.

Alongside a robust preventative agenda the Government must also ensure intervention, guidance and assistance is delivered at the earliest opportunity to prevent potentially entrenching people’s poverty, mental or physical ill-health, substance addiction and avoid exposing them to criminality as a means of survival. This will also prevent people from experiencing the trauma which those with direct experience of rough sleeping outlined during the inquiry so powerfully. These people also told the APPGEH of the transformational power of support, advocacy and help from key workers when they were able to access it, and insisted that people facing homelessness must also be able to access the right support for as long as they need it, whether that be through intensive initial support, ongoing mental or physical health services, supported housing or Housing First.

Underpinning all recommendations to the APPGEH was the crucial need for people to have access to stable housing, and acute shortage of affordable housing we currently face. This stunts the system, preventing people from accessing affordable housing before they are homeless when they can’t afford to keep their homes, and from moving on from short-term accommodation to safe and stable long-term housing after experiencing homelessness.

Speaking to the APPGEH about their hopes and plans for the future people who had experienced homelessness hoped to be able contribute to society, shared their career

aspirations and their desires to integrate back into their communities. One woman told the APPGEH all she wanted was to plan to have a family, get a dog and be happy. This progress is incredible, and demonstrates the transformational power of stability, security and support to have a second chance at a life away from homelessness.

Government’s continued focus on meeting the commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024 is welcome, particularly their publishing their updated Rough Sleeping Strategy in September 2022. While much in the strategy is to be lauded it falls short of addressing the drivers of rough sleeping and homelessness, particularly providing the urgent support needed to prevent a rise in rough sleeping amidst the cost-of-living crisis.

Government under Liz Truss’ premiership now face an opportunity in the run up to 2024: to continue the progress made in the last few years, and make the necessary changes to deliver on the commitment to end rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament, to create an impressive legacy that is within reach, to save lives, and to enable people to realise the life they’ve hoped to live.

Annex: all recommendations

- **1a.** Government should establish a new inter-ministerial working group or cabinet committee on homelessness and rough sleeping, as recommended by the Kerlake Commission, which should be chaired by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and publish a cross-government national strategy with clear expectations and strategic engagement with key agencies.¹³²
- **1b.** In the absence of continuing the lauded Everyone In initiative, respondents were clear that there is currently a level of direct housing support missing after initial intervention for many people sleeping rough. Government should commit to providing rapid access to safe emergency accommodation for everyone in England who needs it, and require local authorities to produce plans for moving people into settled housing as soon as possible.
- **1c.** Reduce and simplify the number of different funding streams at a national level, and provide funding through longer-term settlements. Respondents working in service delivery were in consensus that the number of different complex funding streams inhibited their ability to end homelessness and rough sleeping in their local area. They urged this Government to:
 - Provide RSI on a firmer, longer-term footing to support the maintenance of staff and commissioning of contracts.
 - Monitor and review the delivery of RSAP and SHAP to ensure it meets the true scale of need. If it doesn't, government must take further steps to provide the necessary accommodation and support.
 - Consider longer term financial settlements – ideally for five years.
 - Consider removing bidding processes for homelessness funding provision.
- **1d.** Improve data collection on all forms of homelessness to better understand the scale and local need. Building on the commitment for data improvement in the 2022 Rough Sleeping Strategy, this should include expanding the CHAIN database in England but should also consider the implementation of real time databases such as a 'by-name list' approach to support local areas to track if they are making progress on ending homelessness. Government must also fill any gaps in evidence on homelessness prevention, as well as solutions for certain homelessness groups. These will include gaps in evidence for LGBTQI+ people, people groups, and older homeless people. Government should commission and carry out research to fill these gaps.

Meeting the needs of everyone sleeping rough

Women

- **2a.** Government should aim to make “rough sleeping for women should be rare, brief and non-recurrent,” a sub-indicator

of their current measure, as set out in the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy. Recognising women as a specific cohort within the wider rough sleeping cohort will ensure that women's rough sleeping is adequately explored and resourced within the larger attempt to end rough sleeping.

- **2b.** To better understand the scale and diversity within women's rough sleeping and hidden homelessness, local authorities should be encouraged to undertake a gender-informed count/census, and ensure that domestic abuse survivors' experiences of homelessness are captured in existing homelessness statistics. Many women experiencing homelessness remain uncounted as they often have no option but to resort to sofa surfing, staying with relatives, friends or strangers. But rather than this speaking to a lower rate of homelessness amongst women, it speaks to unidentified need. Women's experiences of homelessness are hidden, for example the experience of sex workers, women walking or using transport at night and sleeping in the day, women occupying less exposed areas when rough sleeping, women moving quickly between precarious situations or women feeling unsafe in their existing accommodation. In London there is current work taking place to conduct a women's rough sleeping census and this should be replicated in other areas of the country.
- **2c.** Provide sufficient funding for survivors fleeing domestic abuse so they can access safe spaces including for:
 - Specialist, gender and trauma-informed services with gender-specific beds available in mixed homelessness services¹³³
 - Continuing to invest in the expansion of Respite Rooms
 - Refuges – Solace Women's Aid estimates that a total annual investment of £181million is needed to fund a national network of refuge services which meets the needs of women and children, and a further £228million to fund community-based support services – at a total investment of £409million a year. In 2021, the shortfall in funding for refuge and community services was £200million.¹³⁴
- **2d.** Ensure each local authority in England has a trained domestic abuse specialist in their housing team, and pursues a Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.
- **2e.** Encourage providers of support services to implement best practice in their approaches, such as a Whole Housing approach so that survivors of domestic abuse have appropriate housing options available to them.
- **2f.** Recognise the different cohorts of women who will need specific, targeted support to enable them to move away from the streets:
 - Women who have children removed from their care – there is no statutory duty to housing or emotional support after children have been removed. Respondents urged this Government to recognise and reference this as a vulnerability.¹³⁵
 - Increase funding of specialist support for people who are Black, Asian and from other minoritised backgrounds whose provision has been particularly hard hit by falling local authority spending - research by Agenda and AVA found only a small number of services specifically for women from these groups who face multiple disadvantages.¹³⁶

¹³² Kerlake Commission (2021) *The Kerlake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: a new way of working: ending rough sleeping together. Final report – September 2021* https://usercontent.one/wp/www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/KRSC_Final_Report_29_11.pdf

¹³³ Some examples of good practice around this include Keeping Us Safer, Women's Development Unit women's spaces guidelines and the Safe Space approach.

¹³⁴ Solace Women's Aid (2021) Spending Review Submission https://www.solacewomensaid.org/sites/default/files/solace_spending_review_submission_final.pdf

¹³⁵ For more information please see Ava (2022) Staying Mum: Findings from peer research with mothers surviving domestic abuse & child removal Staying-Mum-Final-1.pdf (avaproject.org.uk)

¹³⁶ Holly (2017) *Mapping the Maze: Services for women experiencing multiple disadvantage in England and Wales* <https://www.mappingthemaze.org.uk/resources/>

Non-UK nationals

- **3a.** Guidelines provided are often subject to interpretation by local authorities, and in some cases have led to legal challenge. In order to avoid this, the Government should further clarify the legal powers and expectations on local authorities to support non-UK nationals with undetermined or restricted eligibility. This should include clear guidance that focuses on identifying suitable solutions to resolving their homelessness and working closely with the immigration advice and employment support sectors.
- **3b.** Halt NRPF conditions for survivors fleeing domestic abuse who approach homelessness services for assistance and work with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s Office to implement recommendations from its *Safety Before Status* report.
- **3c.** Gather comprehensive data and evidence on the number of individuals with no or limited access to public funds experiencing homelessness, which will help identify what resources are needed to assist this group out of homelessness. In particular, gather evidence on the intersection between modern slavery and/or trafficking and the rough sleeping population.
- **3d.** Consider ensuring that local authorities with high numbers of people facing homelessness subject to NRPF conditions have a trained NRPF specialist in their housing team.
- **3e.** Ensure that homelessness funding provides for the long-term provision of quality independent immigration advice for non-UK nationals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and need help to resolve issues with their status.

Young people and care leavers

- **4a.** Gather evidence on the different cohorts of young people experiencing homelessness. Existing data shows that specific cohorts within this age group are more likely to be sleeping rough - including those identifying as LGBTQ+ and Black African, Black British or Black Caribbean.
- **4b.** Introduce a dedicated chapter on 18–25 year olds in the Homelessness Code of Guidance – which acknowledges and addresses the barriers young people face including evidencing their homelessness (especially where it concerns parental eviction), proving local connection, and age-appropriate personal housing plans.
- **4c.** Local authorities should provide all care leavers with a personalised plan for housing and support/tenancy maintenance on release from care and produce a strategy for housing care leavers. Crucially local authorities must be provided with adequate resources for this.
- **4d.** Government should deliver on their commitment to ensure all local authorities develop a joint housing protocol for care leavers with the Department for Education as set out in Government’s updated Rough Sleeping Strategy of September 2022 and in guidance published in October 2020, as respondents were clear that not all local authorities have these in place.¹³⁷

LGBTQI+ people

- **5a.** Improve the data available on the sexuality and gender identity of people experiencing or facing homelessness in national data collection, particularly the intersection with other groups at risk of homelessness such as LGBTQI+ migrants and domestic abuse survivors.
- **5b.** Improve specialist support and tailored accommodation options for this group, particularly tailored emergency support, and support for those affected by domestic abuse who are often placed in single sex services.
- **5c.** Government should introduce a dedicated chapter on LGBTQI+ people in the Homelessness Code of Guidance and work with specialist services, such as akt, to produce this guidance.

People leaving prison

- **6a.** Government must provide sufficient funding to ensure that prisons and probation services are able to support those threatened with homelessness upon release to make homelessness applications where relevant, 56 days before their release date, as set out in Amnesty International’s *An Obstacle Course* report. People leaving prison should have access to support and housing relevant for their needs before release to ensure homelessness is prevented where possible. This should include greater investment in programmes like CTI as well as face-to-face housing advice within prisons.

- **6b.** Government has made a welcome commitment in the updated Rough Sleeping Strategy published in 2022 to nationally roll-out Ministry of Justice pilots around Tier 3 Community Accommodation which will make emergency accommodation available to prisoners who are homeless on release for up to 12 weeks of appropriate and safe accommodation.¹³⁸ Government must ensure the roll-out of this scheme is adequately funded, monitored closely and reviewed to ensure prison leavers do not fall through gaps of provision and face homelessness, particularly after the 12 week stay in transitional accommodation has concluded.
- **6c.** Government should ensure that prison and probation services sit on local authorities Prevention Taskforces (recommendation 7b) and can plan for the housing needs of people leaving prison.

¹³⁷ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

¹³⁸ Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022) *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102408/20220903_Ending_rough_sleeping_for_good.pdf

Changes to the wider system to sustain an end to rough sleeping and reduce the flow of people sleeping rough, through addressing wider forms of homelessness:

Robust prevention

- **7a.** Introduce a cross-departmental Homelessness Prevention Taskforce as a sub-group of the inter-Ministerial unit (Recommendation 1a) which will set clear outcomes for preventing rough sleeping for each relevant government department.
- **7b.** Instruct local authorities in England to set up Homelessness Prevention Taskforces which will identify those at risk of sleeping rough, develop links with existing housing and non-housing related services and develop contact points to reach and help this cohort at need. Importantly local authorities must be provided with sufficient funding and resources to deliver this as part of the national Government commitment.
- **7c.** Increase supply and access to genuinely affordable housing:
 - Set a national target for building homes at social rent levels at the sector-recommended target of 90,000 social rented homes a year, and set out a plan of how to meet this target
 - Facilitate this by increasing grant funding delivered through the Affordable Homes Programme towards providing social rent homes.
 - Issue new guidance to local authorities which explicitly extends existing exemptions in social housing allocations guidance to people with a history of rough sleeping.
- Explore options for landlord incentives in order for them to be happy to accept people who are on Universal Credit or Housing Benefit and ensure they have access to advice workers who are able to mediate any issues between landlord and tenant.
- Ensure welcome plans to legislate for the abolition of Section 21 evictions through the Renters Reform Bill are brought forward in this Parliament.
- **7d.** Help people to keep their homes as the cost-of-living crisis continues:
 - Government should review the operation of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates with a view to return them to the 30th percentile of local rents as they did in response to the pandemic, which provided a lifeline to those on the brink of destitution.
 - Given the rate of inflation in all costs, the case has never been stronger for a review of the benefit cap, and consider an exemption from the cap for those sleeping rough or stuck in emergency accommodation.
 - As other living costs rise, financial support should be sufficient to meet the rising financial pressures that people are experiencing whether through Universal Credit, cost-of-living payments, bill reductions or reversing the cuts to Discretionary Housing Payments.
 - Deductions to benefits should be tailored to people’s circumstances, so that they are able to afford their living costs whilst managing their debts. This should include options for people to: reduce repayment rates if they are facing homelessness, deprioritise repaying debts to government if they are repaying debts to others, and

access token payment plans if they are in severe financial difficulty.

Early intervention

- **8a.** More practical help from the local authorities, to help understand the processes and services available to them, and improved signposting of care, support, substance addiction services which can be easily accessible to people facing rough sleeping in their local area and specific signposting from statutory services. This was particularly evident with regards to specific cohorts such as women, prison leavers, LGBTQI+ groups and non-UK nationals.
- **8b.** Government should remove the need for verification for people sleeping rough to access services, and instead incorporate it as part of the outreach assessment process.
- **8c.** Truly Scrap the Vagrancy Act - Government must ensure people sleeping rough are not locked out of support, do not face discrimination, and ensure that homelessness is not recriminalised through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.
- **8d.** Review the existing criteria of priority need, intentionality and local connection in homelessness legislation in England to ensure people who are rough sleeping and homeless can access it. At a minimum the Government must assess the impact of this eligibility criteria on certain cohorts of people sleeping rough, including people leaving care being considered ‘intentionally’ homeless.

Sustained support

- **9a.** Government should support Bob Blackman MP’s Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Bill, which seeks to strengthen the regulatory system governing supported exempt accommodation and help to end the scandal in this sector.
- **9b.** Government should nationally roll-out Housing First for all who would benefit, and commit to implementing the recommendations of the APPG for Ending Homelessness’ inquiry report into scaling up Housing First, including establishing a dedicated funding stream, cross-departmental oversight, a national fidelity assurance framework and targeted welfare reform measures specific to Housing First tenants to make better use of privately rented housing. This should include provision tailored for groups who would benefit significantly from the scheme, including women, care leavers and prison leavers.
- **9c.** Improve the health of people sleeping rough and experiencing homelessness:
 - i. To improve the integration and collaboration of health and housing systems, Government should extend the Duty to Refer to a Duty to Collaborate with relevant public agencies including those not currently in scope of Duty of Refer, such as GPs.
 - ii. Work with Dame Carol Black to implement the recommendations from her welcome Independent Review of Drugs including those on removing siloes of treatments between mental health and substance addictions, which should form part of the Government’s forthcoming Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan.

- iii. Ensure the forthcoming Inclusion Health Duty to Cooperate guidance for Integrated Care Systems stipulates that Integrated Care Boards, Integrated Care Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards has a dedicated focus on tackling health inequalities for inclusion health populations, and ensure inclusion health is featured in all Integrated Care System strategies as recommended in statutory guidance.
- iv. Government must ensure that all Integrated Care Systems have the funds and resources to fully implement the new NICE guidelines, which will improve the provision of Multi-Disciplinary Teams across England.
- v. Commit to rolling out CHRISP to urban areas across England.
- vi. A joint Health and Homelessness Unit should be established in DHSC to ensure cross-departmental focus on improving health outcomes, collaborating closely with the new inter-Ministerial unit (Recommendation 1a) and the cross-departmental Homelessness Prevention Taskforce (Recommendation 7a).

Glossary:

The benefit cap - limits the total amount of benefits people can receive. It applies to most people aged 16 or over who have not reached State Pension age. It was announced in October 2010 by the Coalition Government and was fully implemented by September 2013. In September 2016, the levels of the benefit cap were set at £23,000 a year for families in London and £15,410 a year for single people; and £20,000 a year for families in the rest of Great Britain or £13,400 a year for single people. It has remained at these levels since 2016.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) – provide financial support to help with rent or housing costs in England and Wales. You can apply for DHP from your local authority if you currently receive Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. DHPs are not benefits – they are separate payments councils make at their discretion, and may be paid in instalments or as a lump sum.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) – LHA rates are used to work out housing benefit and the housing element of Universal Credit for people renting from private landlords. The rate you can receive depends on your age, who you live with, other factors such as disability or caring responsibilities, and the private market rents in the local area which is called the broad rental market area.

Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) – is a government scheme designed to build on the positive effects of the Everyone In initiative – to seek to ensure people sleeping rough brought into emergency accommodation under the scheme do not return to street homelessness.

No Second Night Out (NSNO) - is a homelessness initiative launched in 2011 as a pilot project aimed at ensuring those who find themselves sleeping rough in London do not spend a second night on the streets. It operates as a rapid response service, providing emergency accommodation and support. It has been rolled out across local authorities England in the aim to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the longer term.

Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) – is a central funding initiative first announced in March 2018 to make an immediate impact on the rising levels of people sleeping rough. It was targeted at local authorities in England with high numbers of people recorded people sleeping rough. With broad criteria to apply for funding it allows local authorities to tailor investments to local needs.

Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP) – is a funding initiative announced by Government in 2020 with the aim of supporting 6,000 people sleeping rough into longer term accommodation for local authorities and their local partners.

Somewhere Safe to Stay (SStS) – is a service designed to support people who have no alternative but to sleep rough, by providing emergency short term accommodation. In 2018 Government announced that eleven cities across England would open SStS hubs, and since their provision has spread further. Hubs allow users to access shower and toilet facilities as well as basic facilities to prepare food and drink.

Universal Credit (UC) - is a benefit payment for people who are on a low income. It was introduced in 2013 with the aim of simplifying the welfare system, replacing six ‘legacy’ benefits (Income Support, Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit). How much someone receives is determined and distributed centrally by the Department of Work and Pensions.

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akt
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Justlife
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The Connection at St Martin’s
The Paper Cup Project
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Latin American Women’s Aid
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The Big Issue
The Connection at St Martin’s
The National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group

The Papercup Project
The Salvation Army
Unseen Tours
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YMCA

