



Together
we will end
homelessness

EVERYBODY IN

How to end homelessness in Great Britain

SHORT EDITION



Everybody In

Ending homelessness doesn't mean that no-one will ever lose their home again, but that everyone facing homelessness gets the help they need quickly. It means making sure we all have a place to live, and together doing everything we can to stop people from losing their homes in the first place.








We know homelessness isn't inevitable. But in order to end all forms of homelessness, long-term action, and truly cross-government working, will be needed.

With enough political will and commitment, we can end homelessness once and for all. But we need Everybody In to make it happen.

Are you in?

www.crisis.org.uk/everybodyin

Contents

Endorsements	2	
Chapter 1: Introduction	4	
1.1 Why write a plan to end homelessness?	5	
1.2 Principles	6	
1.3 The limitations of the plan	6	
Chapter 2: Setting the scene	9	
2.1 Defining homelessness ended	9	
2.2 Homelessness projections	13	
Chapter 3 - Solutions to end homelessness	23	
3.1 Homelessness Prevention	23	
3.2 Rapid Rehousing	30	
3.3 Ending Rough Sleeping	39	
Chapter 4 - Wider reforms needed to achieve the solutions to end homelessness	47	
4.1 Homelessness legislation	47	
4.2 Migrant homelessness	59	
4.3 Making welfare work	65	
4.4 Housing solutions	73	
Chapter 5 – Costs and benefits of ending homelessness	84	
Chapter 6 – Conclusion	89	

Endorsements



**The Most Reverend and Right Honourable
Justin Welby**
Archbishop of Canterbury

It is a tragedy that today almost 250,000 people in Great Britain are homeless, leaving too many women, men and children vulnerable on our streets or in inadequate accommodation. Many churches support people who are homeless, befriending them and providing a listening ear, as well as offering food, night shelters and other practical help. But there is so much more that we can, and should, all be doing as a society. This plan to end homelessness provides the evidence-based policies and practical solutions that are needed to help ensure that homelessness becomes a thing of the past, so that everyone has access to the kind of safe and stable housing that is so vital to human dignity and society's flourishing.



Dame Louise Casey
Chair, Institute of Global Homelessness

In the late 2000s we lived in a country where the numbers of human beings forced to sleep on the streets was in the hundreds. It is shocking that in the last decade we have seen that progress reversed, to the tragic situation of thousands now sleeping rough every night. This should be to our national shame. I congratulate Crisis for seizing this important campaign and providing a solution to tackle all forms of homelessness, not only rough sleeping. Countless families are facing destitution and homelessness every minute and hour of the day. The time is right for a new national and political effort to tackle all forms of homelessness. Action must be driven not only by government, but also by communities nationwide. Crisis has provided us not only with the challenge to take up action, but in this plan, the solutions to make lasting change.



Nan Roman
President and CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness

Grounded in an understanding of how the homelessness crisis emerged, and based on data and evidence, Everybody In is an inspiring vision of how to end homelessness in the UK by focusing on housing. If any organization can lead the campaign to make this vision a reality, it is Crisis.



Juha Kaakinen
CEO, Y-Foundation, Finland

Everybody In: How to end homelessness in Great Britain is quite an extraordinary paper. You can read it as a highly ambitious report on the state of the art of homelessness policy. But it is much more: a manifesto and a roadmap to a policy that eventually could end homelessness for good. There is much to admire in this paper: a consistently participatory process of execution, systematic, comprehensive and coherent approach and argumentation but most of all an ethically justified high level of ambition in setting future policy goals. After this no one can say that they don't know what should be done to end homelessness. In this report culminates much of the aspirations and work Crisis has done already for 50 years and it should have the same revolutionary impact as the Beveridge Report had in its own time. It is a powerful call to arms to fight together the one great evil: homelessness.



Tim Richter
President & CEO
Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness

I love the audacity and brilliance of this plan. It's a bold, thoughtful and meticulously researched document that lays out an ambitious and highly achievable plan to end homelessness in the UK. I've studied (and ripped off!) plans, programs and models for ending homelessness from all over the globe for more than a decade now, and this is one of the best – if not the best – I've seen. I fully intend to steal large parts of it to advance our efforts in Canada. Great work Crisis – put this plan to work and an end to homelessness in the UK is not only possible, it's within your reach.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This is a shortened version of the full plan – *Everybody In: How to end homelessness in Great Britain*. It sets out the main elements of the report in an accessible and easy to read format. For more detail on specific policy solutions please refer to the relevant chapters in the full document.

Homelessness is devastating, but it is not inevitable. As a provider of services to thousands of people across Great Britain every year, we know that in most cases homelessness is preventable. We also know that in every case it can be ended permanently.

In late 2016, as we started to consider how to mark our 50th Anniversary the following year, a bold proposal emerged. We wanted to put together in one place all the best evidence for how to end homelessness.

We are proud of our history and achievements over the last

half a century, but we were set up as a temporary project to tackle a temporary issue. We are determined to put ourselves out of business by helping to end homelessness.

Looking back at our formation in 1967, the sense of anger and organised social action to tackle homeless was palpable. This was particularly true of the public response to the landmark television drama *Cathy Come Home*.

Politicians came together across party lines; they formed Crisis, and talked about a 'rivalry of ambition' to tackle

homelessness.¹ That same anger and passion continues today at Crisis and across our society. The time is right to respond to the issue with bold proposals for reform, and to arm politicians in England, Wales and Scotland with detailed and thoughtful solutions.

Ending homelessness will require a different approach than simply tackling it, or attempting to reduce certain elements. It will require holistic and system-wide reforms.

1.1 Why write a plan to end homelessness?

Carrying on as we are is not an option

Today there are almost 160,000 households experiencing homelessness across Great Britain. This includes more than 9,000 people sleeping rough on any given night, and 42,000 living in emergency accommodation like hostels, refuges and night shelters. Thousands are also stuck in temporary accommodation for months or even years.

This is completely unacceptable. Homelessness

ruins lives in many ways, affecting health and wellbeing, family relationships, and employment. For some it is a death sentence.

The prospects for the future are bleak if the current policies on housing, welfare, and homelessness continue. Our research shows that by 2041, there will be more than 310,000 homeless households.² In this context, a plan to end homelessness is urgently needed. We need it to reverse the grim prospects for the coming years, and to lift our aspirations to a future where everyone in Britain has somewhere to live.

Seizing the moment

The increase in homelessness in recent years has attracted political attention. There have been legal changes in Wales and England, the Rough Sleeping Strategy produced in England, and a new strategy under consideration in Scotland. Politicians are rightly switched on to the issue. But will this agenda lead to the reforms we need?

Political choices can end homelessness. This plan sets out our best attempt at providing evidence for positive reform, and specific

¹ Crisis (2017) *Not yet home: A history of Britain's attempts to tackle homelessness*. London: Crisis

² Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis

recommendations to be taken up.

Previous attempts to tackle homelessness in its different forms have made a positive and lasting difference. In the past, political action backed by funding has brought down the numbers of people on the streets and those enduring other forms of homelessness. We have also taken inspiration and evidence from countries around the world where significant progress has been made.

1.2 Principles

In collating the solutions to homelessness, we have been led by a set of principles. These are set out below.

- **A response without discrimination.** Rationing of scarce resources for housing, welfare and other assistance has created a set of arbitrary distinctions between those who are seen to deserve and qualify for help, and others who do not. Our approach is to view all homeless people as entitled to help.
- **Housing-led solutions.** The plan is based on the

principle that everyone can and should be housed; nobody should have to qualify for it or prove they are 'housing-ready'.

- **Following the best evidence.**³ We have sought evidence from at home and abroad, looking at academic studies and speaking to experts in the field. We have heard from people with experience of homelessness about the services that have worked for them. Where there are gaps in evidence we have looked for the best practice available.
- **Looking beyond current policy.** It is important that we work with politicians to present the case for the whole package of solutions, and not just those most palatable today.

1.3 The limitations of the plan

As comprehensive as the plan is, there are some natural limitations, so we state these from the outset.

- **A national rather than placed-based plan.** The

plan covers England, Scotland and Wales, setting out actions for national governments. It does not seek to offer detailed solutions for any one town, city or region within these countries.

- **A political strategy, not an implementation plan.** We have sought to identify the policy changes necessary to end homelessness, but we have not set out exactly how these changes could or should be delivered.
- **The limitations of addressing homelessness alone.** This plan is restricted to homelessness alone. It cannot and does not seek to prescribe solutions to broader social problems such as poverty or low wages. While it is right that these wider issues are addressed, nothing must stand in the way of tackling homelessness.

The dangers and devastation of homelessness are not disputed, but we must change our collective response to an urgent and organised effort to eradicate the problem. The task should not be underestimated, but we know that decisive solutions are on offer. Everybody should have a place to live. We hope that this plan can help achieve a new political consensus behind this simple but powerful aim.

³ In 2017 we ran a consultation process across England, Scotland and Wales about solutions to homelessness; the best academic evidence of homelessness solutions was gathered through two rapid evidence reviews; new research has been commissioned for this report, across a range of subjects.



“If someone had told me that later on in life I would be homeless I would have sworn blind – never.

I came home to London from my mother’s funeral in Barbados in 2000. It took me about six months to get back into work, but within nine months of working I couldn’t afford to live on my salary. It felt like everything had skyrocketed overnight. The house prices and renting had gone up so much that I couldn’t afford to pay rent and keep myself clothed and fed at the same time.

Homelessness is a dog’s life. People scorn you. I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy. People try to adapt to it but I found it hard. I never realised how important a bed was, and sleeping was. Being able to stretch out. You just survive, by any means necessary.”

Saville, Croydon

Chapter 2: Setting the scene

2.1 Defining homelessness ended

Across Great Britain there are a range of different definitions applied to homelessness. This range includes legal definitions that relate to statutory duties,⁴⁵⁶ but there is no consistent or recognised definition of what an end to homelessness looks like. Between any two homelessness charities, or local authority housing teams, there is often no consistent definition of homelessness ended. At national government level there is no such definition in England, Scotland or Wales. This means that at an individual level and across Great Britain there are no

consistent descriptions of the aims for which the different funding, interventions or policy frameworks are striving. The lack of common agreement and application of a shared definition is a fundamental weakness in the fight to end homelessness. An approach using an agreed and consistent definition has a number of benefits:

- **Sharing ambition** - raising our sights to consider a future where homelessness is ended would allow all those participating in efforts to tackle homelessness to share a vision.
- **Agreeing data** - a common definition of

⁴ Homelessness data: notes and definitions <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-data-notes-anddefinitions>

⁵ What is the legal definition of homelessness? <https://sheltercymru.org.uk/get-advice/homelessness/helpfrom-the-council/what-will-the-council-check/what-is-the-legal-definition-of-homelessness/>

⁶ Am I Homeless? http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/advice_topics/homelessness/help_from_the_councils_housing_department/the_councils_homelessness_tests/are_you_homeless

homelessness ended will facilitate a more consistent and reliable approach to agreeing the data we seek, and promote shared methodologies for data collection.

- **Increasing efficiency** - an agreed focus on outcomes would reduce time spent on activities outside those aims, and allow an audit of planned policies and activities to achieve our aims.
- **Challenging interventions** - a shared definition of homelessness ended is a direct challenge to interventions without a robust evidence base, and those without a track record of success.
- **Driving political ownership** - a definition for ending homelessness adopted and promoted by governments in each nation would be a powerful platform for making political choices needed to tackle the problem.

The definition of homelessness ended is in many ways a choice made about the scale of ambition we seek. Within homelessness academia there is a debate about how best to define this ambition, and indeed what the terminology represents. The common discussion is whether to aim for 'Functional Zero' or Absolute Zero?⁷

Functional Zero usually refers to ending or reducing the most acute forms of homelessness. The Functional Zero concept has developed to one where rough sleeping and long-term homelessness has been addressed. An often-cited example is the Canadian city of Medicine Hat, which declared in 2015 that it had ended homelessness.⁸ What this actually meant was that nobody was sleeping rough and that the time people spent in night shelters was going down.⁹ It did not mean that other forms of homelessness were addressed, and crucially was not about reducing the flow of people onto the streets or into night shelters.

7 Turner, A. Albanese, T. and Pakeman, K. (2017) *Discerning 'Functional And Absolute Zero': Defining and Measuring an End To Homelessness In Canada* in School of Public Policy, University of Calgary. Vol. 10 Issue 2.

8 BC Radio Canada (2015) *Medicine Hat becomes the first city in Canada to eliminate homelessness* <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-thursday-edition-1.3074402/medicine-hat-becomes-the-first-city-in-canada-to-eliminate-homelessness-1.3074742>

9 Lawrynuik, S. (2017) *Medicine Hat maintaining homeless-free status 2 years on* CBC News 26 Jan <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/medicine-hat-homeless-free-update-1.3949030>

Absolute Zero refers to a utopian end to homelessness where everybody has access to housing and support and nobody is even at risk of homelessness. This implies the kind of wider structural and societal shifts that are usually outside the scope of homelessness policy, but it is nevertheless useful to consider the broad areas involved.

In a British context, the concepts of Functional and Absolute Zero seem inadequate – one is too narrow and the other unrealistic. Housing sector experts consulted on our definition of homelessness ended emphasised the first goal must be to halt the recent rise in homelessness, which is projected to continue if policies remain unchanged.¹⁰



It has however been useful to use the strengths from both approaches and to see Functional Zero as a staging post of progress towards Absolute Zero.¹¹ Our definition aspires to an end to different forms of homelessness, but it also assumes it is reasonable to aspire to breakthrough success in different forms of homeless prevention.

10 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*, London: Crisis.

11 Turner, A. Albanese, T. and Pakeman, K. (2017) *Discerning 'Functional And Absolute Zero': Defining and Measuring an End To Homelessness In Canada* in School of Public Policy, University of Calgary. Vol. 10 Issue 2.

The following table gives further details about what is meant by each individual element of our definition of homelessness ended, for more information on considerations see the full plan.

Definition	Explanation
 <p>1. No one sleeping rough.</p>	As stated, this represents an absolute end to rough sleeping.
 <p>2. No one forced to live in transient or dangerous accommodation such as tents, squats and non-residential buildings.</p>	This refers to people who are living in vulnerable housing situations outside of the homelessness system. This includes people squatting, living in cars, tents and non-residential buildings. It also includes the 'sofa surfing' group.
 <p>3. No one living in emergency accommodation, such as shelters and hostels, without a plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation.</p>	<p>'Shelters and hostels' refer to those which are specifically homelessness provision.</p> <p>Other forms of emergency accommodation include bed and breakfasts, nightly paid temporary accommodation and other forms of short-term housing. It does not refer to the wider group of people in general, temporary accommodation such as statutory homeless people placed in social housing on a short-term basis.</p> <p>The 'plan' refers to real and urgent move-on arrangements from these forms of emergency accommodation, and nobody whose plan for moving on cannot be delivered.</p> <p>'Affordable, secure and decent' refers to the range of elements that will make for a successful move-on from emergency accommodation.</p>

Definition	Explanation
 <p>4. No one homeless as a result of leaving a state institution such as prison or the care system.</p>	This refers to successful homeless prevention for people who have been the responsibility of the state. This includes previously looked-after children and people who have been released from prison. It should include other groups too – the armed forces, people who have been in NHS care, people who have been the responsibility of the asylum and immigration system.
 <p>5. Everyone at immediate risk of homelessness gets the help that prevents it happening.</p>	This is restricted to those who are at most acute risk, and require a homelessness prevention intervention.

2.2 Homelessness projections

Before a long-term plan for ending homelessness can be established the true extent of the problem and its likely trends over time must be understood. To this end, we commissioned Heriot-Watt University to collate the best

available data on trends and experiences of homelessness. We also asked the researchers to provide the known impacts of policy choices on numbers of homeless people.¹²

To present a more reliable and comprehensive estimate of homelessness across Britain, a model of 'core' homelessness has been developed. Core

¹² Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis.; Bramley, G. (forthcoming) *Homelessness projections: core, wider homelessness across Great Britain – extent, trends and prospects*. London: Crisis.

Table 2.1. Core homelessness groups

Core homelessness
Rough sleeping
Sleeping in cars, tents, public transport*
Squatting (unlicensed, insecure)*
Unsuitable non-residential accommodation e.g. 'beds in sheds'*
Hostel residents
Users of night/winter shelters*
Domestic abuse survivors in refuges*
Unsuitable temporary accommodation (including bed and breakfast accommodation, hotels, etc.)
'Sofa surfing' – staying with others (not close family), on short term/ insecure basis/wanting to move, in crowded conditions (this does not include students)

*For the projections data shown in this chapter, these groups of homeless people are presented as 'other'.

homelessness refers to the population of people experiencing the most acute forms of homelessness, or living in short-term emergency and unsuitable accommodation.

To estimate levels of core homelessness in 2011 and 2016 across England, Scotland and Wales, a new model was built by Heriot-Watt University. It used secondary data sources

including panel and household surveys, alongside statutory homelessness statistics and academic studies.¹³ Given the uncertainties and inconsistencies of some data sources, a low, mid and high range was produced.¹⁴ All figures presented below reflect the 'mid-range'.

Table 2.2 details the core homeless population at any one point in time across Great

13 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis.

14 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis.

Table 2.2. Core homeless households in Great Britain 2011 and 2016

Core homelessness	England		Wales		Scotland		Great Britain	
	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016
Rough sleepers	5,000	8,000	200	300	900	800	6,100	9,100
Car, tent, public transport	5,000	8,000	200	300	700	800	5,900	9,100
Squatting	6,800	11,500	300	300	800	400	7,900	12,200
Hostels, refuges, and night/winter shelters	44,200	38,500	900	900	2,000	2,300	47,100	41,700
Unsuitable temporary accommodation	7,000	17,000	400	200	2,700	2,100	10,100	19,300
Sofa Surfers	35,000	59,000	2,900	3,400	6,000	4,600	43,900	67,000
Total	103,000	142,000	4,900	5,400	13,100	11,000	121,000	158,400

Britain in 2011 and 2016.¹⁵ In 2016, core homelessness (covering definitions 1 to 3 of homelessness ended - see Table 2.1.) in Great Britain stood at 158,400 households (142,000 in England, 11,000 in Scotland, 5,400 in Wales).

To forecast future levels of homelessness, the following two assumptions have been made. Current and planned policies in welfare and other major policy areas will

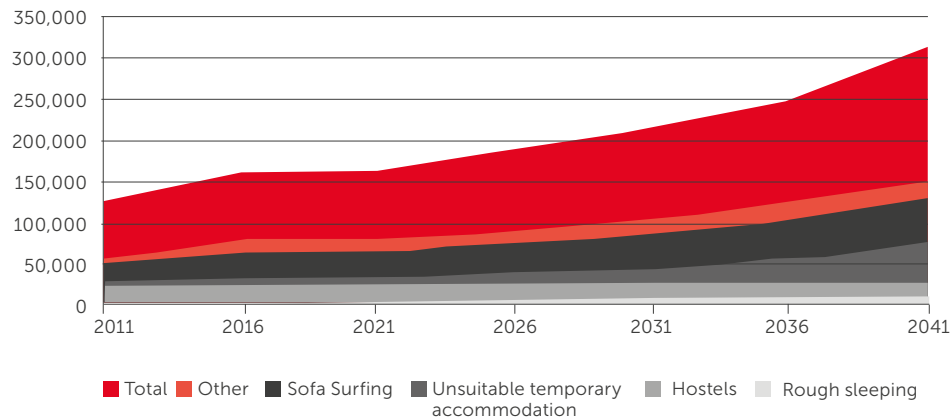
continue, and relatively benign conditions will prevail in the wider economy and labour market.¹⁶ The model that sits behind these projections uses 15 inter-dependent variables, including relative poverty, eviction rates, homelessness applications, etc.¹⁷ The model also takes into account the relative success of the different national legislative arrangements for statutory homelessness.

15 The analysis shows the 'stock' figures of people experiencing homelessness at a given point in time, rather than the 'flow' figures which would be the total number of people who have been homeless over a given period of time.

16 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis.

17 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis.

Figure 2.1. Baseline forecast of core homelessness main component, Great Britain 2011-41



Core homelessness in Great Britain is forecast to continue to grow over the next 25 years. Although in the medium term the rate of increase is tempered by a predicted correction in the affordability of the housing

market. By 2041, large increases in homelessness are predicted, largely driven by increases in England. Across England, Scotland and Wales there are marked differences in projected levels of homelessness in the coming

Table 2.3. Wider homelessness groups

Wider homelessness
Staying with friends/relatives because unable to find own accommodation (longer term)
Eviction/under notice to quit (and unable to afford rent/deposit)
Asked to leave by friends/relatives
Intermediate accommodation and receiving support
In other temporary accommodation (e.g. conventional social housing, private sector leasing)
Discharge from prison, hospital and other state institution without permanent housing

years, but also in the relative size of the different core homeless groups.

In the process of considering and gathering improved data about the most acute 'core' elements of homelessness in Great Britain, Heriot-Watt also built a model of those who were considered to be in the wider homelessness group. This includes a range of situations including other statutory homeless households who have been housed in suitable forms of temporary accommodation; and people at risk of core and statutory homelessness.¹⁸ Those within the wider homelessness group are a broader group of people experiencing insecure or

poor housing. They may have recently experienced core homelessness, or are statutorily homeless and have been rehoused in suitable temporary accommodation including social housing.

It is important to acknowledge this wider group, and also the cross over in the definition of homelessness ended between core and at risk homelessness. In reality the two groups will cross over in a number of ways and some households in the wider homeless group are more at risk of experiencing core homelessness than others. For the purposes of definitions four and five of homelessness ended we have identified that 87,892 households in

¹⁸ Bramley, G. (Forthcoming) *Homelessness projections: core, wider homelessness across Great Britain – extent, trends and prospects*. London: Crisis.

wider homelessness are at risk across Britain.¹⁹ It remains important, however, to identify and measure the most acute forms of homelessness

to present an up to date picture of the problem to design strategies for tackling homelessness in its most pernicious forms.

Public policy and homelessness

The choices made by politicians can both cause and resolve homelessness. Since 1977 there have been targeted and successful political attempts to reduce it. When political action is backed across different parts of government it works well; it works best when policies that can increase homelessness are stopped.

The levels of homelessness experienced in Great Britain today have been shaped by public policy choices including housing supply and affordability; welfare spending; and eligibility for housing assistance. Intentionally or otherwise, these choices have implications for causing, preventing or ending homelessness. There are key pieces of legislation and policy initiatives that have tackled homelessness to varying degrees, which are set out below:

The National Assistance Act (1948) – This provided the first social safety net for citizens who did not pay national insurance and was deemed necessary for homeless people, disabled people and other vulnerable groups. It was an important forerunner for more comprehensive reform but did not lead to the provision of suitable accommodation for homeless families or individuals.

¹⁹ Calculated from Bramley, G. (Forthcoming) *Homelessness projections: core and wider homelessness across Great Britain – extent, trends and prospects*. London: Crisis. This figure is based on the probability of the wider homelessness group becoming homeless and consist of: concealed households (29,452), sharing households (15,254), those in the private rented sector under notice to quite or asked to leave (33,676) and those discharged from institutions without permanent housing (8,918).

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act (1977) – The radical 1977 Act provided an entitlement to long term rehousing for people considered homeless in Great Britain (extended to Northern Ireland in 1988). The Act crucially distinguished between those who would qualify for assistance and those who would not. Only those deemed in priority need would be entitled to housing, primarily families with dependent children, single people and childless couples had to prove they met strict vulnerability tests. Homeless people also had to prove they were blameless for their situation and local authorities only had to consider applications where people had local connection to an area. Notwithstanding the impact of these arbitrary distinctions, the Act has helped more than 4.5 million households into alternative long-term housing since it came into force.

Rough sleeping policy 1990 –2003 – in response to a growing problem in rough sleeping the first Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) was established in 1990. Between 1990 – 1996 this was focussed specifically on London with £90 million invested in outreach work, emergency hostel beds and other forms of temporary and permanent accommodation. From 1997 the New Labour government continued this work to tackle rough sleeping, establishing the Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU) in 1999 with a target of reducing rough sleeping in England by two thirds by 2002. The RSU achieved its target a year early. A crucial element of its success was the political importance and authority ascribed to the target to reduce rough sleeping and the RSU itself. It was given cross-departmental authority in Whitehall and a reporting line to the Prime Minister.

Tackling veteran homelessness – in the early 1990s around quarter of single homeless people in England had served in the armed forces. This and other evidence on the issue led to the formation of the Ex-Service Action group (ESAG) who found that the ex-service homeless population tended to be older, more likely to have slept rough and more likely to have physical health and alcohol problems. The new evidence prompted cross-departmental political action and the MoD established a joint services housing advice unit with action being taken by the RSU to address the issue. In 2002 extension to the priority need categories also gave more legal powers to local authorities to address veteran

homelessness. By 2008 there was a significant reduction in veteran homelessness, down to six per cent.

The Homelessness Etc. (Scotland) Act (2003) – two years after devolution a ‘Homelessness taskforce’ was established in Scotland. Amongst many proposed reforms was the abolition of the priority need test. This was adopted and legislated for in the 2003 Act, and came into force in 2012. Whilst this reform has by no means solved homelessness for many people, including rough sleepers, it has expanded the safety net to all eligible and non-intentionally homeless people, and is perhaps the most significant step forward in political action in Great Britain since 1977.

The Housing (Wales) Act (2014) – following the advent of primary law making in Wales in 2011, the Welsh Government commissioned a review of homelessness legislation. The main recommendation taken from the review was a duty on local authorities to take all reasonable steps to achieve a suitable housing solution for all households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Furthermore, this should apply to all applicants regardless of priority need, local connection or intentionality. The Act brought about a step change in homelessness prevention and has been universally welcomed.ⁱ It is by no means a solution to homelessness in Wales however, and there are still many people unable to access help, including rough sleepers and non-priority households whose homelessness has not been prevented.

The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) – The two-tier homelessness system created by *The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act (1977)* has long been a source of concern for homeless advocates.ⁱⁱ In 2015 a panel of experts was assembled by Crisis to consider the options for legal reform in England. The proposals owed much to the emerging example in Wales and focused heavily on the benefits of both homelessness prevention and removing eligibility barriers homeless households when accessing prevention and relief assistance. These proposals were drafted into a potential

ⁱ Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2015) *The Homelessness Monitor: Wales 2015*. London: Crisis.

ⁱⁱ Dobie, S., Sanders, B. & Teixeira, L. (2014) *Turned Away: The treatment of single homeless people by local authority homelessness services in England*. London: Crisis.

Bill which was chosen by Conservative backbench MP Bob Blackman as a private member’s bill and eventually became the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017). The came into force in April 2018, and while the impact of these new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness are as yet unknown, the Act has demonstrated that radical reform on homelessness is possible and can attract cross-party support.

As much as these specific homelessness policies have improved responses to the issue, it is also worth noting the impact of non-homelessness policy over time. For example, the decline of social house building from 157,026 completions in 1970 to 3,305 in 2016 is a clear indicator of the chronic shortage of accessible and affordable supply. This has severely impacted the ability of local authorities to discharge their homelessness duties. Similarly, local authorities consistently cite changes in welfare as posing the greatest challenge in assisting homeless people.

"I've been in different hostels and shelters all over Glasgow... but I've been with Housing First for about two years now. I was put in contact with them through the hostel staff. It doesn't seem just like a job to them. I feel like they really care. You get a key to your own place, and they help me maintain my flat. They help me keep my life in order. They listen to me and don't just dismiss me as a junkie. It's like they treat me as a real human being. That's a bit different.

They've also got people working there who've been in addiction themselves. They understand what it's like rather than just being told by someone who's read a book. It's much more personal care, and it makes me think I could be doing something similar to help people in the future. I'd like to do that one day, but I know I need to help myself first."

Nicola, Glasgow



Chapter 3: Solutions to end homelessness

Ending homelessness doesn't mean that no-one will ever lose their home again. It means it rarely happens, and that there's a quick solution when it does. This section sets out how to ensure that where we can predict homelessness we can prevent it, and where homelessness does occur, that the solutions are in place to ensure it is dealt with quickly. The solutions presented across this section set out how to achieve this across all five definitions of homelessness ended.

3.1. Homelessness Prevention

The best way to end homelessness is to stop it happening in the first place. To do so is both cost effective and humane.

The concept of homeless prevention is well developed across Great Britain, but gaps in policy and practice still exist that stop some people getting the help they need, when

they need it most. Prevention services must be available to everybody at immediate risk of homelessness. And the on-going failure of state institutions to prevent people falling into homelessness when discharged from their care must be addressed.

There are gaps in the law that must be filled to protect people from homelessness. With these gaps filled, and with sufficient funding for effective services, everyone

at immediate risk could have their homelessness prevented. The human cost of homelessness is highest when it is continual or recurrent. Repeated and long-term exposure to homelessness damages physical and mental health. It also seriously affects the financial and social prospects of people and their families.

The financial cost and cost savings of effective prevention are also important. Research in both the US and parts of Europe found that higher rates of service use – medical, mental health or criminal justice – are associated with long-term and repeat homelessness.²⁰

There is strong political consensus across England, Scotland and Wales on the need to fund and to promote measures that prevent homelessness. This dates back to *The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act (1977)*, which gives duties to local authorities to assist people under imminent threat of homelessness, albeit only for those classed as ‘priority need’.

Across Great Britain each nation is now at a different stage of adopting formal or legally enforced approaches to homelessness prevention. In Wales, *The Housing (Wales) Act (2014)* and in England, the *Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)* both embed preventative approaches. Lead responsibility for prevention and relief sits with local authority housing teams in England and in Wales, with duties to help prevent and relieve homelessness set out in law. The picture is similar in Scotland, but on a non-statutory footing. All three countries have also adopted a Housing Options model. Housing Options is a catchall description that encompasses the ways a local authority can strive to prevent homelessness, and the need for a household to be rehoused under the ‘full’ homelessness duty to provide an offer of new settled accommodation. This approach has been lauded as a culture shift that means ‘a proactive rather than reactive style, with an increased emphasis on networking, negotiation and creativity’.²¹

20 Culhane, D.P. (2008) *The Costs of Homelessness: A Perspective from the United States*. European Journal of Homelessness 2(1), 97-114; Pleace, N., Baptista, I., Benjaminsen, L., Volker Busch-Geertsemal (2013) *The Costs of Homelessness in Europe: An Assessment of the Current Evidence Base*. Brussels: FEANTSA; Benjaminsen, L. and Andrade, S.B. (2015) *Testing a Typology of Homelessness Across Welfare Regimes: Shelter Use in Denmark and the USA*. Housing Studies, 30(6), 858-876.

21 Pawson, H., Netto, G., Jones, C., Wager, F., Fancy, C. and Lomax, D. (2007) *Evaluating Homelessness Prevention*. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

There are inherent problems in this settlement of responsibility because the actions required to prevent homelessness will be most effective when delivered at the earliest opportunity. By the time a household presents for assistance at a local authority housing team it is likely that opportunities have been missed to resolve the issue.

Successful attempts to tackle homelessness around the globe are often focused on reductions in rough sleeping or chronic homelessness. Commonly cited examples include:

- the Finnish success in reducing long-term homelessness through Housing First.²²
- the success of the 100,000 Homes campaign in the US to house ‘chronic and vulnerable’ rough sleepers.²³
- the town of Medicine Hat in Canada that

declared in 2015 that it had ended homelessness (rough sleeping).²⁴

These and other examples share an approach to tackling homelessness that focuses first (and sometimes exclusively) on tackling the most dangerous, but also least prevalent form of the problem. This is understandable from a moral standpoint, given the extreme dangers faced by rough sleepers. But a strategy to alleviate rough sleeping alone does nothing to address the reasons people sleep rough to start with, or to tackle the misery of other forms of homelessness.

These international comparisons offer a warning to governments in Britain, and anyone planning to end homelessness without due emphasis on prevention. Homeless people with acute and multiple support needs take up a disproportionate amount of public spending²⁵, and the failure to act early to prevent the escalation of needs and human costs is

22 Housing First Europe Hub (2017) *Finland*. <http://housingfirsteurope.eu/countries/finland/>

23 Leopold, J. and Ho, H. (2015) *Evaluation of the 100,000 Homes campaign*. Washington: Urban Institute.

24 BC Radio Canada (2015) *Medicine Hat becomes the first city in Canada to eliminate homelessness* <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-thursday-edition-1.3074402/medicine-hat-becomesthe-first-city-in-canada-to-eliminate-homelessness-1.3074742>

25 Culhane, D., Metraux, S. and Hadley, T. (2002) *Public Service Reductions Associated with Placement of Homeless Persons with Severe Mental Illness in Supportive Housing*. Housing Policy Debate, 13(1), 107-163.

both socially and financially irresponsible.

What needs to change?

The actions required to prevent homelessness will be most effective when delivered at the earliest opportunity. By the time a household presents for assistance at a local authority housing team it is likely that opportunities have been missed to resolve the issue. Indeed, in the case of people leaving institutions, some people will no longer be at risk of homelessness, but already experiencing it.

Crisis commissioned the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to undertake a 'Rapid Evidence Assessment' of interventions to tackle homelessness. This study looked at the evidence base for prevention services. This included services for people at immediate risk of homelessness, solutions to prevent homelessness for those leaving state institutions, and prevention of youth homelessness.

Services for people at immediate risk

The SCIE study found that successful prevention services for people at immediate risk of homelessness have the

following core elements:

- A case management approach. This was identified as important as it provides a basis for personalised solutions that help households avoid homelessness.
- Speedy access to financial support. Flexibility is key to a problem-solving approach but short-term financial support is usually used for rent, security deposits or utility bills.
- The provision of expert advice. This involves advice on welfare entitlements, and information about relevant services on offer, such as short-term emergency accommodation.

Housing Options is not, strictly speaking, an 'evidence-based programme', but at its best it contains all elements identified as successful from the international evidence. Personalised, flexible case management, alongside provision of expert advice and financial assistance, are all elements of a good Housing Options service.²⁶ The common core elements of successful Housing Options approaches have been

identified as follows²⁷:

- enhanced housing advice
- private renting access schemes
- family mediation
- domestic violence victim support
- prison, hospital and other institution discharge arrangements
- tenancy sustainment
- Housing Association protocols

Services for people leaving institutions

The most successful approaches to prevention are those that start as early as possible to identify people at risk of homelessness. It should not be left to local authority housing teams to start prevention work when people are at immediate risk (i.e. at 56 days or when someone approaches Housing Options for assistance). Those leaving institutions could have been assisted much earlier. Services within prisons, hospitals, asylum support services, local authority leaving care teams, and armed forces discharge teams must see homelessness prevention as

a core part of their work.

Critical Time Intervention (CTI) is a time-limited evidence-based practice that supports people vulnerable to homelessness during periods of transition. CTI has been applied with armed forces veterans, people with mental illness, people leaving prison, and many other groups in an international context.²⁸ It is a housing-led approach providing rapid access to housing. It also features an intensive case management approach to address the particular needs of people once they have security of accommodation.²⁹ The CTI model is based on moving through clear, time-limited phases that are agreed and appropriate for the programme of support. A case manager will start to build a relationship while the individual is still in the institution, for example prison or hospital (or even emergency housing). At the point of transition into the community there are three distinct phases that are followed: transition; try-out; transfer of care.³⁰

26 Pawson, H., Netto, G., Jones, C., Wager, F., Fancy, C. and Lomax, D. (2007) *Evaluating Homelessness Prevention*. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

27 Pawson, H. (2007) *Local Authority Homelessness Prevention in England: Empowering Consumers or Denying Rights*. *Housing Studies*, 22(6) pp.867-883.

28 Centre for the Advancement of Critical Time Intervention (2014) *CTI Model*. <https://www.criticaltime.org/cti-model/>

29 Benjaminsen, L. (2013) *Sustainable ways of preventing homelessness: Results from the Housing First based Danish Homelessness Strategy and the challenges of youth homelessness*. (Prepared for Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion programme) <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1884&furtherNews=yes>

30 Smith, A. (2017) *Could Critical Time Intervention work in England?* Fulfilling Lives Newcastle Gateshead <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2017/jul/07/could-critical-time-intervention-work-in-england>



Critical Time Intervention (CTI)

CTI is an empirically proven model that has been widely adopted in the US, and in various European contexts.

Transition: This is the most intensive support phase. The case manager makes sure the practicalities of moving into accommodation run smoothly, including setting up utilities, bills and support to furnish a property. Emotional support is often also important, applying psychologically informed techniques to help someone stay motivated, and to avoid isolation. The case manager will often also act as a negotiator or mediator with neighbours, or with a landlord, helping to overcome any conflicts during the transition.

Try out: At this stage, the case manager works less intensively with individuals, while still 'on call' to step back in, should a crisis arise. This stage may still involve daily visits, but could be less intense, based on the needs of the individual. This period allows the case manager to assess how the person is settling into their accommodation and local community. Careful attention is paid to helping them access mainstream support services, such as drug and alcohol treatment and regular health appointments.

Transfer: The final stage is the transfer of care into the support systems that have been created. During this phase, there will be an explicit set of activities that solidify the support system that is in place. There should be a final meeting with all parties to allow reflection and ensure there is a planned ending to the client-worker relationship.

Preventing youth homelessness

Youth homelessness charity Centrepoin recently published the results of a systematic review of the evidence on approaches to youth homelessness prevention.³¹ Four key principles were identified as important in successfully preventing youth homelessness. Each was seen as a common theme in the available evidence. These were:

- **Multi-agency working**, to ensure all agencies coordinate to identify and respond to young people at risk.
- **A 'single front door'** approach, to ensure young people have a consistent and reliable place to access everything they need, and to ensure they are not passed between services.
- **A whole family approach** that responds to the breakdown of family relationships as a key driver of youth homelessness.

- **Positive professional relationships** that help young people build trust, resilience and self-esteem.

In 2007, a UK-wide review of youth homelessness provision reported positive results in the burgeoning Housing Options approach.³² Then, as now, it was considered crucial that local authority responses focused heavily on mediation approaches with families. And if necessary, an alternative source of secure housing should be available for young people. Much of this approach is reflected in the St Basil's Positive Pathway model,³³ which 66 per cent of local authorities in England report using or developing.³⁴ The Positive Pathway brings together evidence of good practice, and outlines how agencies should work together in an integrated way.

In 2009 House of Lords passed what is known as the 'Southwark Judgement'.³⁵ This obliged children's services to provide accommodation and

31 Centrepoin (2016) *Preventing Youth Homelessness: What Works*. London: Centrepoin.

32 Quilgars, D., Johnsen, S. and Pleace, N. (2008) *Youth homelessness in the UK*. York: Joseph Rowntree. Foundation.

33 St Basil's (2015) *Developing Positive Pathways to Adulthood*. London: St Basil's.

34 Homeless Link (2018) *Young and Homeless 2018*. Homeless Link.

35 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department of Education. (2018) *Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation*. London: MHCLG and DoE.

support to homeless 16 and 17 year olds. It also shone a light on the need for better commissioning between local authority children's services and housing departments. Immediate access to alternative accommodation is often provided through the 'Nightstop' approach.³⁶

All these elements add up to a good body of knowledge about how to help young people at risk of homelessness, but further evaluation and innovation is crucial.³⁷

Prevention legislation

To ensure Housing Options is delivered on a stable and consistent footing it must be brought into the statutory homelessness framework across Great Britain. Local housing authorities should have a statutory duty to prevent homelessness for all households who are at risk of becoming homeless in 56 days. This duty is already in place in England and Wales. A new duty to prevent homelessness, and to cooperate with local housing authorities in relieving homelessness, should be extended to relevant public bodies. This is in addition to the existing duties on

local housing authorities in England and Wales to prevent homelessness (which are also recommended for Scotland). Such an approach would be bolstered by truly cross-government strategies to end homelessness in the three nations.

Homelessness prevention must become the business of a range of public services. This will require cross-government reforms and crucially the large-scale deployment of programmes such as CTI.

Prevention could and should be the first and most important element of a strategy to end homelessness. But it will only be possible with the reforms outlined above in place and an active agenda to improve the evidence of what works for different groups and circumstances.

3.2. Rapid Rehousing

Wherever possible homelessness should be prevented and person-centred, timely solutions make this feasible. If homelessness cannot be prevented it should be rare, brief and non-recurring. Rapid rehousing approaches, within a housing-led system, are

critical in making this happen. A housing-led system provides stable, appropriate accommodation and any necessary support as quickly as possible to people who are homeless or at risk of it. This housing-led approach, when properly applied means the need for many forms of interim accommodation will diminish.

The following are key elements of rapid rehousing:

- A focus on helping people into permanent accommodation before addressing any other issues they may need support with.
- Helping homeless people with lower or no support needs, and in doing so preventing complex needs or chronic problems from occurring or escalating.
- Offering a package of assistance specially tailored to individual needs.
- No requirement to be assessed for 'housing readiness' in order to access accommodation.

Rapid Rehousing is an approach for people whose first and most important need is to access housing; with a lack of it often the main

reason why they are homeless. Rapid rehousing helps people settle quickly back with family or friends, into private rental, social housing or other affordable and safe long-term housing options. It does not mean emergency temporary accommodation is not needed. It simply states the best outcomes (for the person and the public purse) are achieved when people can access affordable, secure and decent accommodation quickly and with the right support.

The largest groups of core homeless people are those sofa surfing (67,000); those staying in hostels, refuges and shelters (41,700); and, those in 'unsuitable' temporary accommodation (19,300).³⁸ Rapid rehousing can address the homelessness of people in these forms of accommodation.

For those with high and complex needs, Housing First is the recommended approach to rapid rehousing. In contrast to CTI, Housing First is not time limited. It prioritises getting people quickly into stable accommodation and addresses any other support needs - such as alcohol or mental health problems - through coordinated intensive support for as long as that

³⁶ Depaul (2018) Nightstop UK. <https://uk.depaulcharity.org/NightstopUK>

³⁷ Centrepoint (2016) *Preventing Youth Homelessness: What Works*. Centrepoint.

³⁸ Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis.

person needs it. For more information on Housing First see box below.

Scaling up Housing First across Great Britain

The Housing First model prioritises getting people quickly into stable homes. From this point, any other support needs they might have – such as alcohol and drug dependency, physical and/or mental health problems – are addressed through coordinated and intensive support. It is the most important innovation in tackling homelessness of the last few decades. It is proven to end homelessness for around 80 per cent of people with high support needs.ⁱ

Housing First works most effectively when a high-fidelity model is applied.ⁱⁱ A report from Homeless Link, examining evidence on the scale of Housing First in England, found that adherence – ‘fidelity’ – to the Housing First model is mixed. The principles of Housing First are:

- People have a right to a home
- Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed
- Housing and support are separated
- Individuals have choice and control
- An active engagement approach
- Based on people’s strengths, goals and aspirations
- A harm minimisation approach

Housing First already exists across Great Britain but currently operates at a small scale. Evidence from Housing First projects in Great Britain demonstrates if adopted on a large scale it could significantly reduce homelessness for people with high support needs. The implementation of Housing First across Great Britain would require enough homes to offer a tenant long-term security and investment in flexible person centred support. The table below shows national breakdowns of potential Housing First beneficiaries.

	England	Scotland	Wales	GB total
High estimate	29,678	1,470	1,113	32,261
Low estimate	16,434	1,356	586	18,376

ⁱ Housing First Europe Hub. Accessed: <http://housingfirsteurope.eu/guide/>

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

To fulfil the additional housing requirements needed to scale up Housing First (and other housing-led approaches), new and bold measures are required to acquire additional accommodation. This should be both in social housing and the private rental market. There should be overall targets for the delivery of Housing First projects and any target for numbers of homeless people accessing Housing First, must bring with it corresponding targets for housing units.

There are several factors to consider when designing the funding and commissioning structures for Housing First. The need to commission long-term, integrated support packages is critical. Whilst there are a number of options for governments in each nation to consider in order to develop and extend provision of Housing First, overall we recommend that Housing First is funded through the mainstream Housing Benefit system.

Housing First is designed to meet the needs of people who are currently homeless and have complex or multiple support needs. Our recent analysis of the potential size of homeless populations with complex or multiple needs provides an estimate of the current population who might benefit from Housing First in England, Scotland and Wales.ⁱⁱⁱ

Strategic leadership from national government has been central to the successful implementation of Housing First in a number of international examples. Housing First has been most effective in reducing the overall number of people experiencing homelessness where it has been integrated within a wider homelessness strategy.

ⁱⁱⁱ Blood, I., Goldup, M., Peters, L. and Dulson, S. (2018 forthcoming) *Implementing Housing First across England, Scotland and Wales*. London: Crisis and Homeless Link.

Homelessness can result in the urgent need for accommodation and shelter. This demand cannot always be met by the immediate, same-day provision of secure, long-term and stable accommodation. During our consultation to inform this plan, people with lived experience of homelessness said safe and secure emergency accommodation was extremely important – especially for people who became homeless suddenly.³⁹ The numbers of people living in hostels are not predicted to increase, and future investment in hostel development is uncertain. Rapid rehousing from hostels will be increasingly important to ensure the best possible use is made of the stock, and as detailed below, it is also essential that the financial future of short-term supported housing is secure.

The importance of self-contained, 'normal' housing for the reintegration of homeless people should not be underestimated. Studies have shown homeless people, even those who have been severely marginalised and homeless for a long time, have good results keeping their tenancies in normal housing,

provided that those people who need social support are offered it and at an adequate standard.

The evidence makes it clear that the majority of people experiencing homelessness should be provided with normal, self-contained housing as quickly as possible. This will help them avoid the destabilising and marginalising effects of prolonged homelessness.⁴⁰ This housing-led approach is the opposite of the 'treatment first' philosophy. In Great Britain, the 61,000 people living in hostels and other emergency accommodation show we are a long way from a truly housing-led system. However, we cannot characterise our whole homelessness system as treatment first. There are plenty of examples of schemes providing rapid access to accommodation for homeless people. This includes the London Clearing House scheme for rough sleepers; where people receive support to maintain tenancies, rather than to qualify for them.

The provision of rapid rehousing typically involves the following:

- **Housing identification.**

Housing identification services help find the most appropriate housing for the person/household and address any potential barriers to securing this accommodation.

- **Financial assistance with rent or move-in costs.** Rapid rehousing programmes should offer financial assistance to cover move-in costs, deposits, and rental or utility assistance for an agreed period.
- **Tailored package of assistance.** Any assistance provided should be tailored to the person or family's need so they receive appropriate assistance and for the correct length of time.
- **Case management and services.** Case management should be provided to help households overcome barriers to securing and maintaining housing.

Barriers to delivering a rapid rehousing approach

A pre-requisite of rapid rehousing is ensuring there is enough secure, affordable accommodation for people

to be rehoused. A Homeless Link analysis reported that 34 per cent of accommodation projects in England cited lack of available accommodation as the main barrier to their residents moving on.⁴¹ Without accommodation, people with very few needs for support may be forced to rely upon homeless hostels.

Our research has identified consistent barriers faced by hostel residents accessing permanent accommodation in the social and private rented sectors. These include:

- social housing allocation policies that restrict eligibility for those with a recent history of serious and unacceptable behaviour (e.g. rent arrears, criminal convictions, anti-social behaviour or leaving a property in a poor condition).⁴²
- the challenges of bidding for social housing properties online.
- the high cost of deposits and rental advances required by private sector landlords.⁴³
- getting furniture and appliances even if able to

39 Crisis, Groundswell and uscreates (2018) *The lived experience of homelessness*. London: Crisis.

40 Busch-Geertsema, V. (2005) *Does Re-Housing Lead to Reintegration?* Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research. 18(2), pp.205–26.

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

42 Rowe, S. and Wagstaff, T. (2017) *Moving on: Improving access to housing for single homeless people in England*. London: Crisis.

43 Gousy, H. (2016) *Home. No less will do: Improving access to private renting for single homeless people*. London: Crisis.

find a property, whether in the private or social rented sectors.

These challenges have been exacerbated by recent welfare changes. These have reduced the amount of rent in the private rented sector that can be covered by benefits. The Local Housing Allowance was initially set at the 50th percentile of market rents, but was subsequently reduced to the 30th percentile. This means 70 per cent of private rented accommodation in an area is likely to be unaffordable to people on benefits or low incomes. Local Housing Allowance level have been frozen for several years. Meanwhile, private rent levels are increasing above inflation rates in many areas of high demand – further reducing homeless people’s access to the rental market. Housing supply, access and associated welfare constraints have hampered efforts to move homeless people into their own accommodation for a long time.⁴⁴ Despite these

challenges, there are a number of examples of positive practice that have identified ways to overcome barriers to housing access for homeless people. These include the following:

- the Rough Sleepers Clearing House⁴⁵
- the Crisis PRS Access Development Programme⁴⁶
- the Sharing Solutions programme⁴⁷

What needs to change?

- **Ensuring people are not stuck in unsuitable temporary accommodation.**

There are thousands of people living in unsuitable temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfasts and nightly paid accommodation.⁴⁸ This is detrimental to them and expensive for local authorities.⁴⁹

44 Warnes, A.M., Crane, M. and Foley, P. (2005) *London's Hostels for Homeless People in the 21st Century*. London: Pan-London Providers Group of Homelessness Organisations.

45 St Mungo's (2016) *The Clearing House: Finding homes for rough sleepers for a quarter of a century*. London: St Mungo's.

46 Rugg, J. (2014) *Crisis Private Rented Sector Access Development Programme: Year Two to April 2013* York: University of York.

47 Batty, E., Cole, I., Green, S., McCarthy, L. and Reeve, K. (2015) *Evaluation of the Sharing Solutions programme*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University.

48 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis.

49 Crisis (2017) *A Life in Limbo – the use of prolonged unsuitable accommodation for homeless people in Scotland*. London: Crisis.

A rapid rehousing approach should be adopted. Strict time limits should be placed on the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation of no more than seven days. This should apply to all homeless households, not just families or 'priority' groups.

- **Local authority strategies to provide rapid rehousing.** In addition to people living in unsuitable temporary accommodation, there are more than 40,000 households living in hostels, and others forms of emergency accommodation.⁵⁰ These people should be offered mainstream housing and then relevant support once their homelessness is ended. However, with the exception of Scotland where local authorities have been asked by Scottish Government to develop rapid rehousing plans by December 2018 to be implemented within five years, rapid rehousing is not the required strategic response for central or local governments.

National governments, working with local authorities, should set targets or quotas ensuring a supply of homes for homeless people. This should include the numbers of people in all forms of emergency accommodation, in every locality. Local authorities should develop targets and strategies around the numbers of people in temporary and emergency accommodation and those sleeping rough. Assessments should be undertaken. They should determine which people need a Housing First approach and those who need a CTI rapid rehousing approach, to leave homelessness for good.

- **Improved entitlements for homeless people.** In England and Wales homeless people considered a non-priority case, can be denied rehousing. All eligible homeless people are owed a duty by their local authorities to take all reasonable steps to prevent them becoming homeless, or relieve homelessness where prevention is

50 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis.

not possible. However, there is no guarantee of accommodation in the short or the long term for those not considered to be in priority need. In Scotland, the priority need test has been abolished and all eligible homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation. Local authorities also have a duty to assess whether support is needed once people are rehoused, and to ensure that it is provided if required.

The introduction of two duties in England and Wales would make a significant difference in ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring. These are: a duty to provide interim accommodation for anyone who is homeless and would otherwise have nowhere safe to stay (regardless of priority need) and a duty to undertake a person-centred assessment and provide the support needed, within a housing-led system. Alongside the introduction of these two duties the priority need criterion in England and Wales must be abolished.

- **Better evidence of what works in rapid rehousing.** Despite the compelling evidence that rapid rehousing successfully ends homelessness for people with low support needs, there are some key gaps in evidence. These include a lack of UK-based evidence that meets the highest comparative standards (Random Controlled Trials; Systematic Reviews). There is also a lack of data relating to groups of homeless people including young people, LGBT groups, and survivors of domestic abuse.⁵¹

The Centre for Homelessness Impact has recently been established specifically with the remit of completing assessments of the evidence of solutions to homelessness, and to fill any gaps. The Centre should be commissioned to improve the evidence-base for rapid rehousing approaches, especially in comparing to 'treatment as usual' in Britain, and for specific groups of homeless people.

The inter-related elements to achieving successful rapid rehousing⁵² and ensuring no one is left living in emergency accommodation without a plan for moving on are:

1. Measures that increase the supply of and access to accommodation.
2. Interventions and services that support people through the process of rapid rehousing, and ensure they are able to maintain the accommodation.

Both elements need to be in place for this definition of core homelessness to be ended. There are challenges to be overcome – particularly accessing suitable accommodation which remains very difficult in certain rental markets. However, the personal costs of not doing so are high. They involve people with their lives on hold in emergency accommodation, feeling unable to afford to work and contribute, struggling to maintain positive support networks, and feeling deskilled, demotivated and depressed.

Rapid rehousing makes sense for society and individuals. As evidence from the USA, Europe and increasingly the UK shows, re-engineering a homelessness system may take time but will make a crucial difference in ending homelessness.⁵³

3.3. Ending Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most visible and damaging form of homelessness. It rightly causes the most concern among the public, decision makers, and advocates for homeless people in the charity sector. Rough sleeping is not usually the first form of homelessness people experience. However, tackling it must be central to any plan to end homelessness, given the extreme dangers posed to people living on our streets.

The suffering of people who experience rough sleeping is overwhelming. It severely affects their physical and mental health and personal safety. The average age of

51 SCIE (2018) *A rapid evidence assessment of what works in homelessness services*. London: SCIE.

52 Cunningham, M., Gillespie, S. and Anderson, J. (2015) *Rapid Re-Housing What the Research Says*. Washington: Urban Institute <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/54201/2000265-Rapid-Rehousing-What-the-Research-Says.pdf>

53 Pleave, N. (2018) *Using Housing First in Integrated Homelessness Strategies A Review of Evidence*. York: Centre for Housing Policy: University of York https://www.mungos.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ST_Mungos_HousingFirst_Report_2018.pdf

A recent history of rough sleeping and initiatives

- 1980s: rough sleeping visibly risen in London and other cities
- 1990s: estimated 3,000 people sleeping rough on any one night. Locations such as 'Cardboard City' next to Waterloo Station in London grown in size and notoriety
- 1990: First Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) established as a three-year programme in London.
- 1993: RSI extended for three years with additional £60million funding
- 1996: First 'official' estimates of rough sleeping made nationwide as local authorities asked to provide annual estimates
- 1997: Scottish Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) established
- 1998: Social Exclusion Unit published report looking at wider structural causes of homelessness
- 1999: Rough Sleeping Unit (RSU) established with a target of reducing rough sleeping by two-thirds by 2002. Scottish RSI sets target of no-one sleeping rough in Scotland by 2003
- 2001: RSU achieves its target a year early
- 2003: Rough sleeping presentations fall by over a third in Scotland
- 2011: 6,100 estimated to be rough sleeping across GB
- 2016: 9,100 estimated to be rough sleeping across GB
- 2018: England Rough Sleeping Strategy published with a target of halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it by 2027
- 2041: 20,300 projected to be rough sleeping across GB if current policy choices are continued

death for homeless people is just 47.⁵⁴ Rough sleepers are likely to have an even higher risk of dying. Recent data from people living on London's streets reveals their average age of death as 44.⁵⁵

The experience of rough sleeping for any one person is frightening and devastating; more than 9,000 bedding down every night on our streets is a damning indictment of our society. We are one of the richest nations in the world and we are ignoring the strong evidence and experience of how to solve the problem.

In 2017, Crisis commissioned Cardiff University and Heriot-Watt University to carry out an international evidence review of 'what works' to end rough sleeping.⁵⁶ The review suggested five key themes to help underpin the approach taken to prevent and end rough sleeping:

- Recognise the diverse needs of individual rough sleepers
- Take swift action

- Employ assertive outreach leading to a suitable accommodation offer
- Be housing-led
- Offer person-centred support and choice

Crisis also commissioned the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to undertake a broader examination of the evidence on homelessness interventions.⁵⁷ The review explored the following homelessness interventions in relation to rough sleeping:

Housing First

Housing First is the most important innovation in tackling homelessness of the last few decades. It is proven to end homelessness for around 80 per cent of people with high support needs.⁵⁸ The Housing First model prioritises getting people quickly into stable homes. From this point any other support needs are addressed through coordinated and intensive support. Central to the concept of 'Housing First' is that permanent housing is provided without a test of

54 Thomas, B. (2012) *Homelessness kills: An analysis of the mortality of homeless people in early twenty-first century England*. London: Crisis.

55 St Mungo's (2016) *Nowhere Safe to Stay: the dangers of sleeping rough*. London: St Mungo's.

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

57 SCIE (2018) *A rapid evidence assessment of what works in homelessness services*. Social Care Institute for Excellence. London: SCIE.

58 Housing First Europe Hub (2018) *Housing First Guide*. <http://housingfirsteurope.eu/guide/what-is-housing-first/introducing-housing-first/>

having to be 'housing ready'.

Housing First has been used with success across Europe, North America and Australia. In Finland, the National Housing First programme has virtually eradicated rough sleeping.⁵⁹ In Canada, a RCT study of the Chez Soi programme found 73 per cent of Housing First participants stably housed compared to 32 per cent of those receiving treatment as usual. In Australia, 95 per cent of clients in The Street to Home Brisbane programme sustained housing after one year. The high tenancy sustainment rates internationally make the case for extending Housing First across Great Britain.

Outreach

Street outreach teams are often the first point of contact for rough sleepers. They work to move people off the streets as quickly as possible and help them to access support services and accommodation. No Second Night Out (NSNO) is an initiative, which has been widely rolled out across England since 2011 and aims to provide a place of safety for assessment of need, emergency accommodation

and reconnections for people back to their community.⁶⁰ It primarily works to help move new rough sleepers off the streets as quickly as possible. Outreach services, to help identify people on the streets, is one of the key elements of the approach.

For rough sleepers unable to prove a local connection, it is most likely that the offer will be a reconnection either within the UK, or back to their country of origin. The aim is that no rough sleeper should spend more than 72 hours at a NSNO hub, where they can access emergency accommodation along with washing facilities and food where necessary.

At present, there is relatively limited evidence regarding NSNO, with only smaller scale evaluations, which have focused on short-term outcomes. NSNO is, however, effective in helping to find people temporary accommodation. The 'what works' review also found that service providers recognised that NSNO needed to serve a wider client group than those who are new to the streets. Some areas have widened the

eligibility criteria to provide help for longer-term rough sleepers.

The review also considered the role of more assertive forms of outreach. Assertive outreach teams aim to work with people who have been sleeping rough for a long time and have the highest levels of support needs. The teams use an integrated model of support, drawing on a range of services, including drugs, alcohol and mental health. The primary objective is to rehouse people in permanent accommodation. Teams work with people using a trauma-informed approach that is open-ended and persistent. This is not to be confused with coercive or punitive approaches. There is some positive evidence on the impacts of assertive outreach, including evaluations of the Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU) and Rough Sleepers Initiative programmes in England and Scotland, and of Street to Home in Australia.⁶¹ The use of the approach under the RSU significantly reduced the number of rough sleepers by approximately two thirds within three years.

Personalised budgets

A personalised budget is an agreed amount of money allocated to someone by a local authority, or other funding stream. Personalised budget use was found to be particularly helpful for long-term rough sleepers with high support needs. The budgets were also very helpful in supporting people to move into accommodation and are associated with long-term savings for a range of public agencies.⁶²

Supported accommodation

Supported accommodation and homeless hostels are currently the backbone of homelessness services to address rough sleeping. Supported accommodation varies substantially in relation to the size and support provided. For example, the term can describe very basic hostels simply providing people with an emergency bed to get them off the streets as quickly as possible but more commonly supported accommodation for homeless people tends to be clustered temporary accommodation. Providers offer a wider range of services to people

59 FEANTSA (2016) *News: Finland leads the way on reducing homelessness with Housing First 14th November*. <http://www.feantsa.org/en/news/2016/11/14/finland-leads-the-way-on-reducinghomelessness-with-housing-first?bcParent=27>

60 Homeless Link (2014) *Adopting the No Second Night Out Standard - Developing a service offer for those new to the streets*. London: Homeless Link

61 Randall, G. and Brown, S. (2002) *Helping Rough Sleepers Off the Streets: A Report to the Homelessness Directorate*. London: ODPM; Fitzpatrick, S., Preece, N. and Bevan, M. (2005) *Final evaluation of the Rough Sleepers Initiative*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive; Parsell, C. (2011) *Responding to People Sleeping Rough: Dilemmas and Opportunities for Social Work*. Australian Social Work, 64(3): 330-345; Phillips R. and Parsell

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

before they move into permanent housing.

In some supported accommodation, a 'staircase model' is applied. This means that someone must engage with support services and demonstrate housing readiness before they can move to permanent accommodation. Our 2017 'what works' review found limited UK evidence evaluating the effectiveness of supported accommodation in moving people into permanent housing and ending their homelessness. There is a clear need to expand the evidence base.

What needs to change?

Ensuring rough sleeping is rare: preventing people rough sleeping in the first place:

- A duty to provide emergency accommodation to all those with nowhere safe to stay.
- Scaling up a 'No First Night Out' approach.

- Investment in Critical Time Intervention (CTI) to prevent rough sleeping for people leaving state institutions.
- Tackling rough sleeping in new and improved local authority homelessness strategies that detail the accommodation and support that will be provided for all rough sleepers.
- Collecting better data on rough sleeping via a national 'CHAIN-like' dataset administered at local level.⁶³

Resolving rough sleeping quickly when it happens: ending rough sleeping for people already sleeping rough

- Scaling up the assertive outreach model.
- Providing personal budgets for rough sleepers needing high levels of support.
- Ensuring support for rough sleepers is underpinned by a legal duty on local authorities.
- Investing more in StreetLink to better identify people sleeping rough.

⁶³ The London CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) system funded by the Greater London Authority is the most robust and comprehensive rough sleeper data set in Great Britain. The database is able to collect flows of rough sleeping which allow outreach teams and services to know if someone is new to the street, a returner or a long-term rough sleeper. Support needs, prior homelessness experiences and demographic information is also collected.

- Introducing national reconnection frameworks.
- Scrap local connection criteria for rough sleepers.
- Scrap *The Vagrancy Act (1824)* - which still criminalises rough sleepers to this day.
- Ensuring support for migrant rough sleepers including a guarantee of emergency accommodation.
- Ensure that local authority safeguarding reviews take place where a person has died homeless and living on the streets.

Making sure no one returns to the streets: ensuring the right support is in place to stop people returning to the streets

- A national director for Housing First in each nation.
- National and local targets for delivering Housing First projects and accommodation.
- Collect and publish data on the fidelity and outcomes of Housing First projects.
- Statutory provision of housing and support.

The Rough Sleeping Strategy in England, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Advisory Group (HARSAG) in Scotland, and the Rough Sleeping Action Plan in Wales contain some mentions of these recommendations but

none have been implemented to date.

The recent rise in rough sleeping across Britain has alarmed politicians and the public alike. It is right that the problem raises immediate concerns, given the danger faced by every person living on the streets. The evidence of how to prevent and tackle rough sleeping is relatively strong compared to other forms of homelessness. This is because there are a number of countries and localities that have made good progress. The important lesson of recent years is that housing led solutions are a more effective approach than offering or requiring people to move from the streets to emergency accommodation.

The reductions in rough sleeping during the late 1990s and early 2000s are a reminder that targeted action, backed by political commitments, can make a real difference. The test of the political attention now ascribed to the problem will be whether the action is taken to prevent and permanently end rough sleeping.

"I was working as a chef, but got offered a better job in Devon. After Christmas they said they only needed me for seasonal work... I had to leave the staff accommodation. I didn't have enough money for a deposit but I managed to get my old job back...I thought if I worked full-time for long enough I could save it myself.

I stayed on a friend's sofa, but you end up feeling like a burden to people...so I moved into a bed and breakfast...I was soon working 50 or 60 hours a week just to pay for the room, and for travel and food.

I went to the housing officer and told them my situation, but they said that because I was in full-time work they couldn't help me. I explained that I just needed help with the deposit, but they said there was nothing they could do...

After a few weeks living on the streets and still working full time I realised I couldn't do it anymore....In the end, I decided to cut my working hours down so that I would qualify for Housing Benefit and get off the street quicker.

Just today they emailed me to say that now I qualified for help to get into a shared property. I've got an interview for Universal Credit next week, but I don't want to be on benefits at all. As soon as I get housed I want to go back to full-time work and move on with my life...

Adam, Swansea



Chapter 4: Wider reforms needed to achieve the solutions to end homelessness

Ending homelessness is only possible if we also tackle the wider structural policy issues that can cause and sustain it. This must include having sufficient affordable housing, a welfare system that is a complete safety net, and a legislative system that protects all those at risk of and experiencing homelessness. This chapter sets out the reforms needed to achieve this.

4.1. Homelessness legislation

Great Britain has some of the most effective and forward thinking homelessness legislation in the world. It protects hundreds of thousands of people annually. But despite this success there are still winners and losers from the statutory systems in England, Scotland and Wales. The time

is right to complete a strong safety net of legal protection for all homeless people.

To gather an assessment of the ideal legal framework, we commissioned an analysis and proposal for wholesale reform from the two leading experts in academia and housing law. They are Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick from Heriot-Watt University, and barrister Liz Davies from Garden Court

Chambers.⁶⁴ Presented below is a significantly condensed version of the framework proposed highlighting the key principles. The homelessness legislation chapter in the plan should be referred to for full details. Our proposals also draw on learning and evidence from across Great Britain and internationally. We present the rationale for a strong and complete safety net of legal protections and entitlements for homeless people.

The fundamentals of Great Britain's statutory homelessness system

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act (1977) was a major step forward in legally protecting homeless people. It set out how local authorities must make accommodation available to certain categories of homeless people, mainly families with dependent children. For a number of years, the long-term accommodation provided under this legislation was usually council housing. The legislation also strongly reinforced an ongoing shift from council house allocations based on desert (judged by various moral criteria) to ones based more clearly on housing need.⁶⁵

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act (1977) covered all of Great Britain, and has since been consolidated into separate legislation in each nation. The basic statutory homelessness framework remained very similar throughout Great Britain until the 1990s. But there is now a significant differentiation in homelessness law in each jurisdiction.

Strictly speaking, the 1977 homelessness legislation did not create *rights* – rather it imposed *duties* on local housing authorities once certain conditions were triggered. However, critically these duties were precise enough to allow legal recourse to people whom local authorities fail in their duty. Any failure to comply with the duty could be enforced by the applicant through the courts.

All three British jurisdictions have developed their homelessness systems in different ways since the 1990s, and each has strengths and weaknesses. With priority need remaining in England and Wales there is disparity in the provision available for individuals in each nation.

Although none of the systems are ideal, there are lessons to be drawn from each in determining the ideal statutory system.

Scotland

- The first specifically Scottish piece of legislation governing homelessness was *The Housing (Scotland) Act (1987), Part 2*. This remains in force and contains the legal framework for homelessness duties and powers on Scottish local authorities
- *The Housing (Scotland) Act (2001)*, introduced new duties on local authorities to provide temporary accommodation for non-priority homeless households. This also gave the Scottish Government the power to suspend the operation of local connection rules
- More radical reforms were introduced in *The Homelessness Etc. (Scotland) Act (2003)* with the gradual expansion and eventual abolition of priority need by the end of December 2012.⁶⁶ This reform means that

Scotland has one of the most progressive homelessness legislations in the world creating a near universal statutory homelessness system.

- A duty to assess the housing support needs of homeless households, and to ensure that specified housing support needs are met, was introduced by *The Housing (Scotland) Act (2010)*.⁶⁷

Wales

- A radically new approach was contained in the *Housing (Wales) Act (2014)*. It strongly emphasised earlier intervention and assistance tailored towards the specific needs of households threatened with homelessness within 56 days. This preventative assistance – and homelessness relief if prevention is unsuccessful – is available to all eligible households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, regardless of whether or not they have a priority need.⁶⁸

64 Davies, L., Fitzpatrick, S. (forthcoming) *A 'Perfect' Statutory Homelessness System for an Imperfect World: Principles, Priorities, Proposals and Possibilities*.

65 Fitzpatrick, S., and Stephens, M. (1999) *Homelessness, need and desert in the allocation of council housing*. *Housing Studies*, 14(4), 413-431.

66 Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003, s 2, and Homelessness (Abolition of Priority Need Test) (Scotland) Order 2012, SI 2012/330 (Scottish SI).

67 The duty is contained in Section 32B of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended

68 Housing (Wales) Act (2014), s 66 and Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness (Welsh Government, March 2016) (Welsh Code), Chapter 12.

England

- The approach applied in Wales since April 2015 was broadly introduced in England on 3 April 2018, when amendments inserted into *The Housing Act (1996)* by *The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)* came into force.
- The amendments inserted by *The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)* mirror the Welsh approach in that:
 - there is an emphasis on early intervention, with the definition of ‘threatened with homelessness’ expanded.⁶⁹
 - the new prevention⁷⁰ and relief⁷¹ duties apply to all applicants who are eligible for assistance and are either threatened with homelessness, or are homeless; there is no consideration at those stages of whether the applicants have a priority need or have become homeless intentionally.
- interim accommodation must be secured for applicants where there is reason to believe that they may have a priority need.⁷²
- duties to accommodate after the relief duty has come to an end are only owed to applicants who are homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need.⁷³

The principles of an ‘ideal’ statutory homelessness system

Using the learning from all three statutory homelessness systems in Great Britain, and that gained from international comparisons, Davies and Fitzpatrick have laid out the key principles of an ideal statutory homelessness system.

69 Housing Act (1996), s 175(4) and (5): increasing the period from 28 days to 56 days, and providing that an applicant is deemed to be threatened with homelessness if he or she has been served with a valid Housing Act (1988), s 21 notice.

70 Housing Act (1996), s 195(2).

71 Housing Act (1996), s 189B(2).

72 Housing Act (1996), s 188.

73 Those duties might be the short-term accommodation duty owed to applicants who have a priority need and have become homeless intentionally (Housing Act (1996), s.190(2)(a)), the main housing duty owed to applicants who have a priority need and have not become homeless intentionally (Housing Act (1996), s.193(2)) or the accommodation duty owed to applicants who have a priority need, have not become homeless intentionally and have deliberately and unreasonably refused to co-operate (Housing Act (1996), s 193C(4)).

- **Principle 1:** Robust prevention.
- **Principle 2:** A complete statutory safety net providing access to suitable settled accommodation.
- **Principle 3(a):** Priority access to social housing.
- **Principle 3(b):** Intentionality should be abolished in its current form.
- **Principle 4:** Local connection should cease to be a bar to assistance.
- **Principle 5:** Appropriate provision must be made for households who remain homeless after exhausting their entitlements under the homelessness statutory framework, particularly families with dependent children.
- **Principle 6(a):** Local housing authorities should have a duty to provide housing support in relevant cases.
- **Principle 6(b):** other public bodies should have robust duties to both ‘prevent homelessness’ (see above) and to cooperate with local housing authorities in relieving homelessness. For example, by providing relevant health and social care support services.
- **Principle 7:** Robust but proportionate regulation, monitoring and inspection regime.
- **Principle 8:** An open system of individual reviews and appeals.
- **Principle 9:** Much more emphasis should be placed on training and supporting frontline homelessness officers.
- **Principle 10:** Minimum subsistence benefits and basic accommodation must be made available to all regardless of immigration status.

What needs to change

Having set out the principles we need to establish the different changes needed across England, Scotland and Wales that should be applied to achieve the ideal homelessness system.

Scotland

- Introduce a statutory duty to prevent homelessness for all households who are at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days, regardless of priority status, local connection, intentionality or migration status.
- Place a duty on all relevant public bodies to prevent homelessness and to cooperate with local housing authorities in relieving homelessness.
- Set out in secondary legislation a mandated set of activities that local authorities should have available to them to help prevent and relieve

- homelessness.
 - Ensure that appropriate provisions are made for households who remain homeless after exhausting their entitlements under the homelessness statutory framework.
 - Abolish intentionality in its current form and introduce a new test focusing on deliberate manipulation of the homelessness system.
 - Ensure that the regulation, monitoring, and inspection of how local authorities, other public bodies, and social housing providers discharge their homelessness duties is fit for purpose.
 - Abolish local connection criteria for rough sleepers, and ensure it no longer presents a barrier to assistance for anyone threatened with or experiencing homelessness.
 - Ensure there is a more open system of individual reviews and appeals.
 - Introduce a funded programme of professional support and training for local housing authority staff.
 - Provide migrant homeless people access to a minimum of emergency accommodation and access to statutory assistance.
 - Ensure that short-term emergency accommodation and access to immigration advice is provided for migrants who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
 - Consider how best to grant access to the statutory homelessness system for all migrants.
- Wales**
- Place a duty on all relevant public bodies to prevent homelessness and to cooperate with local housing authorities in relieving homelessness.
 - Abolish the priority need criteria.
 - Introduce a duty to provide immediate emergency accommodation to all those with nowhere safe to stay until priority need is abolished in Wales.
 - Place a duty on local authorities to provide the housing support that has been identified as needed via a personalised housing plan.
 - Ensure that appropriate provisions are made for households who remain homeless after exhausting their entitlements under the homelessness statutory framework.
 - Ensure housing associations give 'reasonable preference' to homeless households in

- their allocations policies.
 - Abolish intentionality in its current form and introduce a new test focusing on deliberate manipulation of the homelessness system.
 - Ensure that there is a robust but proportionate regulation, monitoring and inspection of how local authorities, public bodies and social housing providers discharge their homelessness duties.
 - Abolish local connection criteria for rough sleepers, and ensure it no longer presents a barrier to assistance for anyone threatened with or experiencing homelessness.
 - Ensure there is a more open system of individual reviews and appeals and access to free or means-tested legal advice.
 - Continue and improve the professional support and training programme for frontline homelessness officers.
 - Ensure that short-term emergency accommodation and access to immigration advice is provided for migrants who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
 - Consider how best to grant access to the statutory homelessness system for all migrants.
- At a minimum, ensure that all migrants at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days are eligible for support under the statutory duty to prevent homelessness.
- England**
- Place a duty on all relevant public bodies to prevent homelessness and to cooperate with local housing authorities in relieving homelessness.
 - Set out in secondary legislation a mandated set of activities that local authorities should have available to them to help prevent and relieve homelessness.
 - Place a duty on local authorities to provide the housing support that has been identified as needed via a personalised housing plan.
 - Abolish the priority need criteria.
 - Introduce a duty to provide immediate emergency accommodation to all those with nowhere safe to stay until priority need is abolished.
 - Ensure that appropriate provisions are made for households who remain homeless after exhausting their entitlements under the homelessness statutory framework.
 - Ensure housing associations give

- 'reasonable preference' to homeless households in their allocations policies.
- Abolish intentionality in its current form and introduce a new test focusing on deliberate manipulation of the homelessness system.
 - Abolish local connection criteria for rough sleepers, and ensure it no longer presents a barrier to assistance for anyone threatened with or experiencing homelessness.
 - Ensure that there is a robust but proportionate regulation, monitoring and inspection of how local authorities, public bodies and social housing providers discharge their homelessness duties.
 - Ensure there is a more open system of individual reviews and appeals and access to free or means-tested legal advice.
 - Introduce a funded programme of professional support and training for local housing authority staff.
 - Ensure that short-term emergency accommodation and access to immigration advice is provided for migrants who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.
 - Consider how best to grant access to the
- statutory homelessness system for all migrants.
- At a minimum, ensure that all migrants at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days are eligible for support under the statutory duty to prevent homelessness.
- We recommend a legal settlement for homelessness that melds the best from England, Scotland and Wales. This ideally contains the following features:
- an overwhelming emphasis on prevention/early intervention.
 - it moves away from the stigmatising concept of homelessness altogether wherever possible.
 - it provides a complete statutory safety net, with entitlement to settled housing, regardless of household type or vulnerability.
 - it ensures that obligations are imposed not just on housing authorities, but also upon health, justice and other public authority colleagues, with housing associations playing a full role.
 - it makes reasonable demands on applicants to act reasonably in cooperating with local authorities to resolve their housing crises.
 - it offers far fewer opportunities for punitive

or harsh judgments, with a more humane, effective and just approach to assessing individual circumstances and choices.

With wider contextual factors taken into account, this is a framework of law that is the natural extension to the post *Housing (Homeless Persons) Act (1977)* settlement throughout Great Britain. It is a

bold vision, but at its heart is about completing the safety net that already exists for some.

Every lever possible at our disposal in driving down homelessness must be seized. The law is one such crucial lever.

Public attitudes and homelessness

The way that the homelessness sector and the media communicate about homelessness has direct impact on public attitudes about the problem. This also affects whether the public will demand political change. The messages the public receive about homelessness reinforce negative stereotypes and drive people further away from believing that ending homelessness is possible. The homelessness sector must change the way it communicates, both directly and through the media.

Crisis commissioned the FrameWorks Institute to analyse this issue.ⁱ The two-year study uncovered a significant gap between the public view of homelessness and the messages that experts on the issue are trying to communicate. It also

ⁱ See Crisis knowledge hub: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/> O'Neil, M., Gerstein Pineau, M., Kendall-Taylor, N., Volmert, D., Stevens, A. (2017) *Finding a Better Frame: How to Create More Effective Messages on Homelessness in the United Kingdom*. FrameWorks Institute; Nichols, J., Volmert, A., Busso, D., Gerstein Pineau, M., O'Neil, M. and Kendall-Taylor, N. (2018) *Reframing Homelessness in the United Kingdom: A FrameWorks MessageMemo*. FrameWorks Institute.

proposed changes to the way we communicate to redress the problem.

There were several challenges identified for those seeking to communicate effectively with the public about homelessness:

- **Challenge #1** – The public have a narrow definition of what homelessness is, and who is affected. The public equates homelessness with people living on the streets and have existing mental images of specific groups of people affected – middle aged men, young runaways and women fleeing abuse. The narrow definitions make it difficult for people to think of it as a widespread social issue and often associate it with homelessness being a personal choice and feelings of blame towards those that experience it.
- **Challenge #2** – People see homelessness through the lens of individualism. Whilst experts view the problem of homelessness caused by housing and welfare policies, the public see it as an individual problem caused through poor life choices. Added to this is the public belief that individuals make their own fates and determine their own destinies, and therefore homelessness is a consequence of someone not trying hard enough or making bad decisions.
- **Challenge #3** – Prevention is poorly understood by the public. We know that steps can be taken to prevent homelessness but the concept of prevention is rarely talked about in the public domain and is therefore poorly understood. The public don't think of broader economic policies or solutions but instead think of short term crisis solutions such as finding people immediate shelter.
- **Challenge #4** – Fatalism about homelessness limits support for solutions. The public see homelessness as inevitable and unsolvable. Often this is viewed as homelessness being bad luck and unpredictable when in reality there are causal and predictive factors that make someone more at risk than others. Whilst the public recognises causes and effects of homelessness such as addiction, they think the damage is already done and it is an unbreakable cycle where someone is beyond help.

FrameWorks developed a series of messages designed to

increase public understanding of homelessness and increase support for policy solutions. They were tested throughout the UK via on the street interviews and a nationally representative sample of 9,900 survey respondents.

The results showed the following values and strategies can help people connect to the issue of homelessness and boosts support for change.

- **Use the value of moral human rights** – this is based on the idea that we all have the moral right to dignity and respect as part of our basic humanity. Using this value increases people's feeling of responsibility for addressing homelessness and boosts support for change. It dislodges the tendency to see homeless people as 'different' and 'other' and the issue as one that doesn't warrant public concern or attention.
- **Use the value of interdependence** – this highlights the connections and inter-reliance amongst everyone in society and in doing so it helps people to see the social causes and consequences of homelessness. Priming communications with this value also gives people the sense that tackling homelessness is a social and collective responsibility. Talking about how we are all connected – socially and economically – increases support for preventative policies.
- **Explain the causes of homelessness by using a 'constant pressure' metaphor** – Communications that explain and illustrate how something works are powerful and metaphors are a strategy designed to 'translate' complex concepts. By giving people a memorable mental picture of how poverty and other social factors cause homelessness, we enable people to see beyond individuals to systems.

'poverty puts pressure on people. Scott was under constant pressure from his high rent and low-paying zero hours contract job. When he got ill, the pressure became too much and Scott was pushed into homelessness. Now he's sleeping on sofas and floors. People welcome him in for a few nights, only to tell him he'll have to find somewhere else to go. Scott's story shows what happens when our society leaves people exposed to this kind of pressure. We need to make sure

that no-one has to face Scott's situation, by working upstream to prevent homelessness. This means acting to fix our housing market so people have access to stable affordable housing.'

The constant pressure metaphor is an effective, vivid and true-to-life way of explaining how homelessness happens. The familiar concept of pressure connects with people and brings systematic factors to the forefront of thinking. Crucially, it does this by allowing people to identify with homeless people and their situation.

- **Use experiential stories** – stories that describe the lived experience of homelessness are a powerful way to engage people and raise the salience of the issue. By making the experience of homelessness accessible to people, stories of lived experience generate concern and options for prioritising policy solutions.
- **Cement understanding by providing concrete solutions** – when a message lacks a clear policy 'ask' people are likely to assume either that the problem is too big to be solved or that it's up to individuals to find their own solutions. To avoid feeding this sense of fatalism, it is critical to put solutions in the picture.

Broadening public understanding of homelessness and building support for solutions needed to end it requires a concerted effort to reframe homelessness by the homelessness sector and the media. The research has shown that the long-term impact of combined communications messages and materials of charities and other organisations profoundly affects peoples' understanding of homelessness. To move public attitudes into more productive territory we must develop and use a shared set of messages. It is critical these are based on the powerful evidence generated by the FrameWorks research.

4.2. Migrant homelessness

Migrant homeless people face all the dangers that homeless people from the UK face and more. On a daily basis, they must contend with suspicion about their motives, being excluded from almost all support services, and experience a constant threat of removal from the country.

The political agenda to create a 'hostile environment' for some irregular migrants has severely affected people from outside the UK who face homelessness in this country. This is regardless of their status in the UK, or reason for being here. It has also made it harder for homelessness services to help people. Although the solutions to homelessness for migrants are essentially the same as for any other people experiencing the problem, a set of policies now stands in the way. These must be changed.

We use the term migrants to refer to people who enter the UK intending to stay but whose country of origin is not the UK. Our plan is specifically focused on migrants who are homeless or at risk of becoming so.

In practice this includes several distinct groups:

- people from within the European Economic Area (EEA)
- asylum seekers
- refugees
- undocumented migrants
- migrants with leave to remain subject to a condition of 'no recourse to public funds'.

'Undocumented migrants' describes people without a legal right to stay in the UK; people needing to establish their right; and those with a right but without documented proof. This includes refused asylum seekers who are considered to have no basis to stay in the UK, but are unable to return to their country of origin.

The ideal approach to solving migrant homelessness would be to disregard the 'migrant' status, and give people the same entitlements as UK nationals. The difficulties migrant homeless people face, as well as homelessness itself, mostly centre upon the numerous ways statutory services are restricted or denied to them. These restrictions are driven by a wider political agenda to reduce net migration to the UK. The unintended consequence is to seriously hamper efforts to resolve migrant homelessness when it happens.

The reforms proposed look to ensure migrants can access help to prevent or resolve their homelessness on the same basis as UK nationals. These reforms should ensure they are not further disadvantaged by their different country of origin or immigration status. It is also important to recognise that migrants may have specific needs that a homeless person from the UK is less likely to have. For example, these can include language barriers and experience of trauma, particularly for people seeking asylum in the UK.

All other solutions and reforms presented in this plan assume that migrant homeless people can access the same solutions to homelessness as UK nationals. This section sets out the specific solutions needed to allow that access.

- **Right to rent policy.** The right to rent scheme was introduced in the *Immigration Act (2014)*. It requires private landlords and letting agents to check that tenants have a right to rent for any

tenancies starting after 1 February 2016. The scheme only applies in England. Evaluation of right to rent found that the scheme was causing homelessness and making it more difficult for people without documentation to access private rented accommodation.⁷⁴

End the right to rent policy so landlords are no longer responsible for checking their tenants' immigration status.

- **Charging for NHS services.** Regulations effective in August and October 2017 have increased the types of NHS-funded secondary healthcare that some categories of overseas visitors and migrants must pay for. These regulations apply to England only. Under the new regulations all nonurgent treatment has to be paid for up front and studies have shown that they

act as a deterrent from seeking healthcare and result in delayed treatment.⁷⁵

Reverse the new regulations. If the regulations remain in place, then it is essential that guidance for healthcare providers clearly sets out a wide range of evidence that patients can provide to prove they have a right to access free healthcare. Acceptable evidence should include documentation from a homelessness organisation that can vouch for the person's circumstances. The government should drop plans to extend charging into other healthcare services (A&E and GP services).

- **Access to bank accounts.** The *Immigration Act (2014)* requires banks and building societies to carry out status checks for any person opening a new current account. The *Immigration Act (2016)* requires banks and building societies to carry out an immigration status check of every current

account holder against a Home Office supplied database. This adds to the barriers that homeless people and refugees already face when trying to open a bank account. Without a bank account people are unlikely to be able to receive benefit payments and will find it harder to secure a private rented property.

The Financial Conduct Authority should issue new guidance to banks regarding the documentation that banks must accept as sufficient proof to allow someone to open an account. This should include documentation that is straightforward for homeless people to get, such as a letter from a homelessness organisation they are working with. It should also include information about the documentation that newly recognised refugees will have.

- **Immigration detention.** Between 2,500 and 2,900 individuals are detained in immigration detention centres in the UK on any given day, and around

74 Home Office (2015) *Evaluation of the Right to Rent scheme: Full evaluation report of phase one*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/468934/horr83.pdf; Patel, C. and Peel, C. (2017) *Passport Please: The impact of the Right to Rent checks on migrants and ethnic minorities in England*. London: Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants; Mayor of London (2017) *London Housing Strategy, draft for public consultation, September 2017*. London: Greater London Authority

75 Doctors of the World UK (2017) *Deterrence, delay and distress: the impact of charging in NHS hospitals on migrants in vulnerable circumstances*. <https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=2a7fc733-ceef-4417-9783-d69b016ff74f>

30,000 people will enter immigration detention annually. At the point of release, people are at high risk of homelessness and rough sleeping, particularly as most are released on immigration bail. This means they are not entitled to homelessness assistance or welfare benefits.⁷⁶ Data showing the number of people who are homeless when they are released from detention is not available. However, without access to benefits or knowledge of how to access asylum support many people released are likely to become homeless. Research from Amnesty International has found that release from detention is resulting in destitution and street homelessness.⁷⁷

Detention centres should be required to refer people to the local housing authority if they are at risk of homelessness when they are due for release. Emergency accommodation should be available for

immigration detainees who would otherwise be homeless on release.

- **Voluntary reconnection.**

Evidence suggests that many homeless migrants will be able to regularise their immigration status in the UK when they have access to appropriate immigration advice.⁷⁸ However, in the current policy context there will always be some people who cannot regularise their status in the UK or access public funds. International reconnection involves supporting migrant homeless people to return to their country of origin.

Reconnections support should be available for migrants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and who want to explore the option of returning to their country of origin.

Some further solutions are relevant only to specific migrant groups:

EEA nationals

- EEA nationals with jobseeker status should be entitled to claim Housing Benefit.
- All EEA nationals with a right to reside should be eligible for statutory homelessness assistance in England and Wales, as is already the case in Scotland.
- Across Great Britain, EEA nationals with a right to reside who are homeless or threatened with homelessness should have a limited entitlement to benefits for six months.
- Every local authority and public agency that could assist EEA nationals should be issued with national guidance. This guidance should clarify links between the right to reside, entitlement to benefits and eligibility for homelessness assistance.
- Assertive outreach for EEA nationals already rough sleeping is likely to require an emphasis on access to legal, benefits and employment support. This could be achieved by extending or replicating the model used by the Street Legal project.⁷⁹

Asylum seekers

- The Government must take steps to address the high level of incorrect decisions currently being made on applications for asylum support. Errors and delays in decision making can mean people are left homeless and without support to meet their basic needs. Steps should include improving quality assurance and ensuring immigration case workers have sufficient training and capacity to make accurate and timely decisions in line with current policies and legislation.

Refugees

- The 28 day move-on period should be extended to at least 56 days in alignment with the HRA in England and Housing (Wales) Act in Wales. This reflects the time it actually takes for refugees to access accommodation and financial support, particularly as Universal Credit is rolled out nationally. This will help to ensure newly recognised refugees do not have a gap in their support.

⁷⁶ Home Office detention tables, table dt_05. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigrationstatistics-july-to-september-2017/how-many-people-are-detained-or-retained#data-tables>

⁷⁷ Amnesty International (2017) *A matter of routine: the use of immigration detention in the UK*. London: Amnesty International.

⁷⁸ Petch, H., Perry, J. and Lakes, S. (2015) *How to improve support and services for destitute migrants*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

⁷⁹ Homeless Link (2016) *How innovative legal help is supporting destitute migrants*. <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/features/2016/nov/02/how-innovative-legal-helpissupportingdestitute-migrants>

- Support should be available to help newly recognised refugees navigate the move-on period and access housing, education, employment and welfare benefits. Asylum seekers, financially supported by the Home Office, will have been unable to save for a deposit.⁸⁰ Therefore, support should include help with the costs of accessing private rented sector accommodation. This could be achieved through the use of a Critical Time Intervention approach.
- Asylum support accommodation providers should be required to refer newly recognised refugees, who are at risk of homelessness, to the local housing authority when they are given notice to leave their asylum support accommodation.

Undocumented migrants

- Access to good immigration advice and legal aid will be critical to ending homelessness for undocumented migrants. Assertive outreach for undocumented migrants must provide both emergency accommodation and access to immigration advice.
- National governments should provide short-term emergency accommodation for destitute migrants currently rough sleeping, or at high and imminent risk of sleeping rough. Access to immigration advice and legal support should be provided alongside this.

Migrants with leave to remain with a condition of no recourse to public funds

- National governments should issue guidance for local authorities clearly setting out the duties they owe to migrant families and adults with no recourse to public funds. This should include clearly stating that local authorities' duty towards British children with migrant parents extends to the whole household. It should clarify it is not acceptable to split the family by only accommodating the children.
- National governments should provide access to immigration advice and short-term emergency

accommodation for migrants with no recourse to public funds.

Underlying these recommendations is a proposed shift in public policy thinking towards migrant homeless people. Migrants who are homeless are vulnerable to exploitation because of being unable to access mainstream benefits and support. Some will be at particular risk because they have been a victim of modern slavery,⁸¹ have fled exploitation or danger, or are young people.⁸² In the face of such trauma and disadvantage, the current policy responses can seem callous and at times inhumane.

No strategy to end homelessness can be credible or valid without also including migrant homelessness. And no approach to ending migrant homelessness will be effective or justifiable unless the help is provided on the basis of need, and not on the basis of where someone was born.

4.3 Making welfare work

A complete welfare safety net is critical in preventing and solving homelessness. A key component to its effectiveness is financial support for housing costs when people need help. This support must cover the real cost of housing in all parts of Great Britain.

Most homeless people want to work, so a successful functioning welfare system also involves meeting these aspirations. Bold reforms to the way employment support is provided will help many more people find and sustain a route out of homelessness and into work.

Financial support through the benefits system is crucial in preventing homelessness. It provides low-income households with protection and stable housing. For people who are already homeless, welfare assistance with housing and other costs is a lifeline that helps them leave the devastation of homelessness behind.

Homeless people face a welfare system that is a fragmented safety net. Some

80 All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees (2017) *Refugees Welcome? The experience of new refugees in the UK*. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0004/0316/APPG_on_Refugees_-_Refugees_Welcome_report.pdf

81 Keast, M. (2017) *Understanding and responding to modern slavery within the homelessness sector*. London: The Passage.

82 Petch, H., Perry, J. and Lakes, S. (2015) *How to improve support and services for destitute migrants*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

get the help they need to pay for housing costs; others may get limited, or no financial help at all. But the safety net can be completed. We start with simple principles – to end homelessness, those who cannot afford housing must be given enough assistance to do so. And adequate support must be available to help homeless people into work where it's appropriate for them.

A joined-up approach to support with housing and employment will help to prevent future homelessness for people at risk, reduce the chances of repeat homelessness and help homeless people into work.

Housing Benefit

The Housing Benefit system was introduced in 1987. Significant reforms to the system began in the early 2000s by the UK government. A key change was the creation of Local Housing Allowance for tenants in the private sector, which was rolled out nationally in 2008.

In 2013, the most significant welfare reform in decades was introduced through Universal Credit. Universal Credit aims to simplify the current benefits

system by bringing together six different benefits (including Housing Benefit) into one single monthly payment. This means Housing Benefit will exist in a limited way when Universal Credit is rolled out completely.⁸³ However, support with housing costs in Universal Credit will be calculated in much the same way as Housing Benefit. Within this section, Housing Benefit and support with housing costs in Universal Credit are synonymous, unless stated otherwise.

Support from Universal Credit to stabilise housing is vital for people who want to leave homelessness behind. It is also a financial safety net preventing low-income households from becoming homeless in the first place.

To successfully stabilise housing for these groups, investment is needed in Universal Credit to ensure it covers the cost of housing.

In the consultation to inform this plan, people with lived experience of homelessness strongly emphasised the importance of having a benefits system that provides an adequate safety net. This is essential to prevent people

from becoming homeless if they experience a period of unemployment or unstable employment. People increasingly felt that the benefits system is no longer providing a sufficient safety net. Recommendations for resolving these issues are below.

- **Local Housing Allowance rates covering the cost of rent.** Local Housing Allowance rates determine the amount of Housing Benefit someone is entitled to. Reductions to these have made renting unaffordable for homeless people in many areas of Britain. Many households are now in a position where they have few, or no, options to be able to manage the gap between their rent and their Housing Benefit. Our 2018 research with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)⁸⁴ considered private rented sector affordability within Local Housing Allowance rates 2018/19 for one bedroom households, two bedroom

households and shared accommodation. Across Great Britain 61% of areas⁸⁵ are unaffordable to any of the household types, and 92% of areas are unaffordable to at least one of these household types. This is driven largely by England in which 97% of areas are unaffordable to at least one household type against 67% in Scotland and 82% in Wales. This means the private rented sector is increasingly unviable as a solution to homelessness. This is particularly concerning in the context of a shortage of affordable housing for low income households across Britain.

Returning Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile is urgently required to redress homelessness.

- **Sustaining Local Housing Allowance rates to meet the cost of rent.** The reductions to Local Housing Allowance rates from the 30th

⁸³ The Westminster Government announced in August 2018 that supported housing will continue to be funded through the Housing Benefit system rather than through Universal Credit, so some Housing Benefit functionality is being retained.

⁸⁴ Crisis and CIH (publication forthcoming).

⁸⁵ Local Housing Allowance rates are set by specific areas known as Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA). A BRMA is defined as 'an area within which a person could reasonably be expected to live having regard to facilities and services for the purpose of health, education, personal banking and shopping, taking account of the distance of travel, by public and private transport, to and from these facilities and services'. There are 152 BRMAs in England, 18 in Scotland, and 22 in Wales.

percentile happened through changes to the way Housing Benefit was uprated. The rates have been frozen since 2016. This freeze will continue until 2018. If the UK government restores Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile, as strongly recommended, this solution must remain sustainable. This can only be achieved by uprating Local Housing Allowance rates by an appropriate mechanism that reflects how private rents change.

To retain the link with local rents, the Westminster Government should uprate Local Housing Allowance rates annually in line with projected growth of rents. An average calculated over a maximum of five years is suggested.

- **Setting Local Housing Allowance rates.** Local Housing Allowance rates are based on the entirety of rents that can be collected by rent officers, rather than statistically robust samples. For example, in some areas, the SAR (Shared Accommodation Rate) levels have been based on very small samples

and are unlikely to reflect the reality of rents for shared accommodation. The method for setting Local Housing Allowance rates has also contributed to some of the gaps experienced by Housing Benefit recipients.

For Local Housing Allowance rates to be accurate landlords should be required to submit annual data on the size of their rental property, through landlord registration schemes, and the level of rent they are charging.

- **Shared Accommodation Rate.** The SAR requires Universal Credit claimants under 35 to live in shared housing. This is often not appropriate for homeless people or those at high risk of becoming homeless.

All homeless people or people at risk of homelessness for whom sharing is not appropriate should be entirely exempt from the SAR; including domestic abuse survivors and care leavers.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is ambitious. Its intention is to create a

welfare system that helps people achieve financial stability and employability wherever possible. While the intention behind Universal Credit is promising, a series of changes and falling investment since its original design have reduced entitlement to financial support for the people who need it most. The £1.5 billion package of support through the Autumn Budget 2017 was a welcome recognition of the additional support needed. This will go some way to reducing financial pressures, especially with housing needs, but there remain other areas in need of investment and policy change.

For Universal Credit to be an effective tool for responding to, and preventing, homelessness, it needs to function correctly. This was a key theme raised throughout the national consultation undertaken to inform this plan.⁸⁶ Below are a number of issues and suggested solutions.

- **Implementing Universal Credit.** The roll out of Universal Credit has been beset by administrative errors and delays. Implementation issues have meant vulnerable recipients and people

with more complex cases have had to wait far more than six weeks for their first payment. Many problems have resulted from administrative errors; existing safeguards applied incorrectly or not set up; and recipients receiving contradictory advice from DWP staff. This has included homeless people being advised incorrectly about Universal Credit and other benefits. This has created long delays where people are left without crucial financial support.

Errors and delays in processing Universal Credit claims must be resolved.

Resources must match demand as the Universal Credit rollout continues. This should include investment in training and numbers of staff in service centres and the helpline.

- **Universal Credit deductions.** The amount of Universal Credit someone receives can be reduced to pay off money owed to the DWP, and debts and loans from companies. This includes an advance payment of the first month

⁸⁶ Hughes, N. (2018) *Have your say policy consultation: summary report*. London: Crisis

of Universal Credit.⁸⁷ The money owed can be deducted by up to 40 per cent of someone's monthly Universal Credit payment. This can cause prolonged financial hardship.

Homeless people should be able to access the equivalent financial support as an advance Universal Credit payment without having to pay it back.

Overall deductions must be set at affordable levels for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness to avoid repeat homelessness or homelessness.

Benefit cap

The benefit cap was introduced in 2013. It sets a flat rate amount of benefits that a household can receive. The cap was originally set at the average income of a

household in work, excluding income from benefits.⁸⁸ This was £26,000 a year for couples, with or without children, and single people. However, a lower cap was introduced that reflected no link to average household earnings. Since 2017, the cap has been £23,000 a year in London for families (£15,410 for single people), and £20,000 across the rest of Britain (£13,400 for single people).

The cap works by reducing Housing Benefit if the overall amount of benefits a household receives, with some exemptions,⁸⁹ exceeds the cap. Under Universal Credit, the cap is applied to the total amount, and not just support with housing costs. Households receiving Working Tax Credits are exempt, to encourage people to consider working enough to be eligible for Working Tax Credit to avoid its impact.

87 Universal Credit is paid one month in arrears. Advance payments were made available as many people do not have the funds to withstand the minimum five week wait for their first Universal Credit payment.

88 CIH analysis shows that a family with a net income of £20,000 would still be eligible for some benefits to top up earnings. For example, in 2017 a couple with two children would still receive £3,370 in child tax credits and £1,709 in child benefit. They would also qualify for Housing Benefit if their rent exceeded £106 per week on top of £20,000 of earned income. From: Pipe, D. (2017) *CIH response to: work and pensions benefit cap inquiry*. Coventry: Chartered Institute of Housing.

89 Including: those living in supported accommodation; those entitled to Working Tax Credit; and those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independent Payment, Attendance Allowance, and the support component of Employment and Support Allowance; or the limited capability for work-related activity component of Universal Credit. From Pipe, D. (2017) *CIH response to: work and pensions benefit cap inquiry*. Coventry: Chartered Institute of Housing.

- People are at an increased risk of homelessness where Local Housing Allowance rates do not reflect market rents. However, if Local Housing Allowance rates are increased to the 30th percentile of the market there will be more households affected by the benefit cap. This issue will also occur when DWP end the freeze on Local Housing Allowance in 2020.

There must be increased flexibility to lift the benefit cap in specified circumstances related to homelessness.

Employment Support

Homeless people are individuals, not a homogenous group. Employment histories, attempts to find work and the type of the support needed vary considerably from person to person.

Some homeless people are already in work, but struggle to cover high housing costs. Other homeless people are likely to need relatively little

support to find work.⁹⁰ Yet others need much more help to deal with the barriers to employment affecting them. As well as their homelessness, these barriers can include a lack of skills, training, qualifications, and mental health issues and disabilities.⁹¹ Some homeless people, such as young people, migrants, and prison leavers, are likely to need more specialist advice and support to increase their chances of successfully finding and sustaining suitable work.⁹²

- **The response to homelessness within Jobcentre Plus.**

Jobcentre Plus is often the first port of call for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness who need support from the welfare system. Work coaches in Jobcentre Plus can apply safeguards through Universal Credit to support homeless people to stabilise housing and protect people at risk of homelessness from further housing instability. However, recognition

90 Rowe, S. and Wagstaff, T. (2017) *Moving On: Improving access to housing for single homeless people in England*. London: Crisis.

91 Bramley, G., Fitzpatrick, S., Edwards, J., Ford, D., Johnsen, S., Sosenko, F., Watkins, D. (2015) *Hard edges: Mapping severe and multiple disadvantage*. London: Lankelly Chase Foundation.

92 McHugh, K. (2018) *Evidence from the Employment Related Support Association from a review of employment support for homeless people* for Crisis.

and understanding of homelessness is often poor across Jobcentre Plus.

The DWP should establish a network of housing and homelessness leads in Jobcentre Plus to integrate housing within employment support.

- **The Work Capability Assessment.** Health issues and disability can prevent homeless people from taking steps towards employment, even if they want to work immediately or in the future.⁹³ The Work Capability Assessment (WCA) is used by the DWP to assess whether someone can work towards employment, taking into account any health needs and disabilities. It includes a range of descriptors set out in legislation which cover different tasks, and a point scoring system. However, it does not take account of the impact of homelessness on health.

The alternative criteria guidance for the WCA should recognise the impact of homelessness on work capability.

- **Conditionality and sanctions.** Conditionality is a key feature of the welfare system in the UK. It is based on the principle that 'access to certain basic, publicly provided, welfare benefits and services should be dependent on an individual first agreeing to meet particular obligations or patterns of behaviour.'⁹⁴ Sanctions are a tool to enforce welfare conditionality through reduced entitlement to financial support through the work-related elements of Universal Credit. However, research shows that the conditionality system has an overwhelmingly negative impact on homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. Sanctions are often applied when homeless people and those at risk of homelessness cannot comply with conditions rather than because they

93 Bramley, G., Fitzpatrick, S., Edwards, J., Ford, D., Johnson, S., Sosenko, F., Watkins, D. (2015) *Hard Edges: Mapping Severe and Multiple Disadvantage in England*. London: Lankelly Chase Foundation.

94 University of York (2016) *What is welfare conditionality?* <http://www.welfareconditionality.ac.uk/aboutour-research/what-is-welfare-conditionality/>

choose not to comply. Evidence shows sanctions cause homelessness.⁹⁵

Sanctions should not be issued if they will cause homelessness. The conditionality system must be reformed to ensure it does not cause homelessness.

4.4 Housing solutions

In order to end homelessness there is an urgent need for more housing that provides people on low incomes with security, decent living conditions and affordable rents. The decline in availability of homes affordable to low income households has significantly contributed to rise of homelessness. To stop this housing and welfare policies must work effectively together. More homes must be built and more made available at social rent levels. And more must be done to ensure that private tenancies provide the stability that people need to prevent and move on from homelessness.

Context

In all three countries, the need and demand for low-rent housing outstrips supply. As fewer people can afford to buy homes and there are fewer social rented tenancies, more people are renting their homes from private landlords. The proportion of people living in the private rented sector is higher in England (20%) than Scotland (15%) and Wales (15%) but is growing across Great Britain.⁹⁶

Private renting

There has been growing reliance on expensive and sometimes unsuitable temporary accommodation to house homeless people, and private rented housing is playing a greater role in meeting the needs of homeless people. While private rented housing can provide a sustainable housing option for people moving on from homelessness,⁹⁷ many homeless people struggle to get access to homes let by private landlords and the sector is often not fit for purpose.⁹⁸

95 Batty, E., Beatty, C., Casey, R., Foden, M., McCarthy, L., Reeve, K. (2015) *Homeless people's experience of welfare conditionality and benefit sanctions*. London: Crisis.

96 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018) *Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants)*. London: MHCLG

97 Gousy, H. (2016) *Home no less will do. Improving access to private renting for single homeless people*. London: Crisis.

98 Gousy, H. (2016) *Home no less will do. Improving access to private renting for single homeless people*. London: Crisis

Increased reliance on private renting means people are spending more of their income on rent.⁹⁹ They are more likely to be pushed into poverty by the high cost of housing relative to earnings. A higher proportion of private renters of working age spend more than a third of their incomes on housing than working-age adults living in other tenures.¹⁰⁰

In all three nations, the condition of housing in the private rented sector is worse than in other tenures.¹⁰¹ Poor conditions tend to be concentrated at the lower-cost end of the private market, and so particularly affect homeless people.¹⁰² In Scotland and Wales, private landlords are obliged to join national registration schemes, but in England the private rented sector is largely unregulated.

In areas of highest housing pressure, reliance on private renting also creates opportunities for exploitation. People with the least purchasing power may be pushed into accepting very poor quality accommodation. Disreputable landlords may more readily exploit the situation, letting unsafe or overcrowded homes to people who have no choice.

In England and Wales, the combination of reliance on short fixed-term tenancies and rising rents has made more people homeless through tenancies ending. So, while private rented tenancies often provide homeless people with settled accommodation for a period of time, they can also be the cause of repeat homelessness. The Scottish Government has introduced changes to give private renters in Scotland greater security of tenure than in England and

99 Tinson, A., Ayrton, C., Barker, K., Barry Born, T., Aldridge, H., Kenwayl, P. (2016) *Monitoring Poverty & Social Exclusion 2016*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

100 Households Below Average Income, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2017

101 Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2017) *English Housing Survey headline report, 2016-17*. London: Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government; Scottish Government (2017) *Scottish House Condition Survey 2016 Key Findings*. Scotland: Scottish Government; Welsh Assembly Government (2008) *Living in Wales 2008*. Wales: Welsh Government. At the time of writing this was the last full survey of housing conditions in Wales, but results for 2017/18 are due for publication later this year <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-housing-conditions-survey/?lang=en>

102 Smith, M., Albanese, F., Truder, J. (2014) *A roof over my head. The final report of the sustain project*. London: Crisis/Shelter; Shelter Cymru (2016) *Accessing and sustaining social tenancies*. Swansea: Shelter Cymru.

Wales. The *Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act (2016)* introduced a new open-ended private tenancy that can only be brought to an end under specified grounds for eviction.

Reliance on the private rented sector to house homeless people and other low income households has significantly increased the cost of Housing Benefit. This is because of the higher cost of private market rents.¹⁰³ Between 2005/06 and 2014/15, Housing Benefit spending on 1.4 million private tenancies doubled to £9.3 billion.¹⁰⁴ During the same period the cost of Housing Benefit in the social rented sector rose by just over a fifth. Investment in housing at social rent levels is an alternative approach that would see cost benefits both for the taxpayer and for low income households. Analysis by Savills compared the costs of housing 100,000 households in the private rented sector and social rented sector respectively. The study found that the social rented sector option generated £23.9 billion savings over the long

term compared with private renting.¹⁰⁵

Social housing

There is significant variation in national policy on the provision of social housing in England, Scotland and Wales, and the extent to which homeless people can get access to it:

- In England, the Westminster government's social housing policies have reduced the supply of social housing available to homeless people. These policies included: replacing investment in social rented housing with investment in homes at affordable rent (at up to 80% of market rents) which can be unaffordable to those on the lowest incomes,¹⁰⁶ converting a proportion of existing social rent homes to affordable rents and the right to buy. Between 2012 and 2017 150,000 social rent homes have been lost through conversions to affordable rent, right to

103 Stephens, M. Perry, J. Wilcox, S. Williams, P. and Young, G. (2018) *2018 UK Housing Review*. Coventry: Chartered Institute of Housing .

104 National Housing Federation (2016) *Briefing: The growing Housing Benefit spend in the PRS*. London: National Housing Federation.

105 Savills. (2017) *Spotlight 2017: Investing to solve the housing crisis*. London: Savills.

106 Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2018) *The homelessness monitor: England 2018*. London: Crisis.

buy and demolition.¹⁰⁷

In England there is no national target for building homes at social rent levels. Fewer than a fifth of social housing lettings go to homeless people in England.

- In Scotland, there is a strong Government commitment to increase the supply of social rented housing, with a target of 35,000 social rented homes between 2016 and 2021. A £3 billion investment programme underpins this commitment, and evidence suggests that the target should be achievable.¹⁰⁸ The Scottish Government has abolished the Right to Buy. Over 40% of social rent lettings in Scotland are to homeless people.
- In Wales, there is a Government commitment to deliver more social rented housing, and to preserve the existing stock with the abolition of the right to buy. £1.5 billion is allocated to deliver 20,000 new affordable homes between 2016 and 2021, of which 65% will

be for rent (equivalent to 2,600 homes a year). Concerns have been raised, however, about the sector's ability to meet affordable housing targets, and the Welsh Government has launched an independent review to address the need for further reforms. While there is a commitment to grow the stock of social rented home, fewer than a fifth of new social lettings are to homeless people.

Traditionally social housing has been important in resolving homelessness. But it is becoming more difficult for homeless people to get access to social housing. As noted above, there are particular problems with the decline in availability of social rented housing in England arising from the Westminster Government's policy of replacing social rented homes with housing at higher affordable rent levels and the effects of the right to buy. But across all three nations, problems with the affordability of social housing make it harder for homeless people and others

107 Chartered Institute of Housing News Article, 31/01/2018. *More than 150,000 homes for social rent lost in just five years, new analysis reveals.* www.cih.org
108 G. Young and T. Donohoe (2018) *Review of Strategic Investment Plans for Affordable Housing*. Scotland: SFHA/Equality and Human Rights Commission/ Shelter Scotland.

Table 4.1. Backlog of housing need in Great Britain

Type of housing need/requirement	Number of households in GB (million)
Housing need including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concealed family or concealed single (including nondependent children) wanting to move, • Overcrowding (bedroom standard) • Serious affordability problems based on combination of ratio measures and subjective payment difficulties • Serious self-reported physical condition problems • Accommodation unsuitable for families (e.g. high-rise, no garden/yard) 	3.66
Core and wider homelessness	0.33
Older households with suitability needs	0.25
Households whose housing costs are unaffordable	0.51
Total	4.75

on very low income to access social housing.¹⁰⁹ In England and Wales concerns have been expressed that people are sometimes not being accepted for rehousing by some housing associations because they are 'too poor'.¹¹⁰ These problems are driven in part by the impact of reduced Housing Benefit entitlements

and changes associated with the introduction of Universal Credit. Affordability problems also increase the risk of rent arrears and eviction for low income households living in social housing.

How many new homes are needed?
Crisis and the National

109 Full details are set out in a Crisis and Chartered Institute of Housing briefing (forthcoming)

110 Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2018) *The homelessness monitor: England 2018*. London: Crisis; National Assembly for Wales Public Accounts Committee (2015) *Responding to Welfare Reform in Wales*. Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales.

Table 4.2. Target house-building numbers by tenure and country, 2016-31

Country	Total Dwellings	Private Sector	Social Rent	Shared Ownership	Intermediate rent	All Affordable
England	343,000	194,800	91,000	27,300	29,900	148,200
Wales	14,000	7,500	4,000	1,000	1,500	6,500
Scotland	26,000	16,000	5,500	2,500	2,000	10,000
GB Total	383,000	218,300	100,500	30,800	33,400	164,700

(figures rounded to nearest hundred)

Housing Federation have commissioned Heriot-Watt University to undertake a new analysis of housing supply requirements, including analysis of the number of homes needed at social rent levels. The evidence in this section are all based on this study.¹¹¹

There is currently a backlog of need of 4.75 million households across Great Britain (4 million in England). See Table 4.1. for which household groups this comprises.

We cannot meet all these needs instantaneously and it will take time to build up a really effective housebuilding programme to address these existing needs plus expected future needs and demands.

Heriot-Watt's analysis assumes housebuilding will take place over 15 years to develop to allow sufficient time and resources to meet the backlog of need set out above. Over the 15 year period the total level of new housebuilding required is estimated at 383,000 units per year including 100,500 units per year for social rent. Table 4.2 sets out how this splits out across England, Scotland and Wales, and by different tenure types.

Increasing the availability of decent housing, affordable to people on low incomes is critical to successfully ending homelessness in Great Britain. A significant increase in the supply of homes for social rent would mean more new social housing lettings could be

111 Bramley, G. (forthcoming) *Housing supply requirements across Great Britain for low income households and homeless people*. London: Crisis and the National Housing Federation

generated each year, making it easier to provide permanent housing for homeless people alongside others in housing need. It would also contribute to preventing homelessness for more people in future.

What needs to change?

We advocate a range of interventions to provide a sufficient supply of housing for homeless people across Great Britain. In England, this includes significantly increased national and local government investment in housing at social rent levels to meet identified housing requirements. In Scotland, it means maintaining and effectively targeting investment in the longer term to meet identified needs. In Wales, it means continuing to grow and target the investment in affordable housing already committed and ensure housing at social rent levels is available to meet identified requirements.

While investment programmes are rolled out, ethically-minded private landlords and institutional investors across Great Britain should play a greater role in providing homes for homeless people.

This should include provision in both the new build (build-to-rent)¹¹² and buy-to-let¹¹³ sectors, and making effective use of private rented sector access (help to rent) schemes.

There is significant variation in house prices, affordability and development economics across each nation's housing markets.¹¹⁴ So interventions to tackle homelessness must be shaped by local market conditions, and respond to the varying levels of what people need. Wider solutions to tackle housing supply problems are also needed, addressing factors such as the availability and cost of land, but it was not within the scope of the plan to address these. Housing interventions must also be underpinned by a welfare system that ensures Housing Benefit is available to meet the costs of renting in both the social and private rented sectors.

Across all three nations, the lack of affordable housing was identified as the biggest barrier to relieving homelessness in the extensive national consultation we undertook to inform this plan. Greater

112 Build to rent is used throughout to describe the provision of purpose built housing for rent as part of developments with professional, often onsite management, and longer (3 year plus) tenancies.

113 Buy to let is a term used throughout to describe homes let by private individuals, whether purchased with a buy to let mortgage or other sources of finance.

114 Baxter, D., and Murphy, L. (2017) *Priced Out? Affordable Housing in England*. London: IPPR.

availability of social housing was identified as the most important resource needed to help local authorities meet the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.¹¹⁵ This was also a key issue raised by consultation participants with lived experience of homelessness.¹¹⁶

The following recommendations are proposed to contribute to the provision of a sufficient supply of housing for homeless people across Great Britain:

- **Increase the supply of housing at social rent levels including:**

- In England set a target of delivering 90,000 homes a year of social rent levels and grow investment to meet this target over a 15 year period, end the policy of requiring housing associations to convert a proportion of social rent homes to affordable rents and suspend the right to buy.
- In Scotland maintain investment to deliver the equivalent of 5,500 homes a year over the

next 15 years at social rent levels.

- In Wales increase the annual target for the delivery of new social rent homes to 4,000 a year, and continue to grow investment to deliver this over a 15 year period.
- Across all three nations ensure the rent setting framework for social rented housing delivers rents that remain affordable to those earning the National Minimum Wage, and that social rented homes can be accessed by households in receipt of Housing Benefit.

- **Increase access to and sustainment of social renting for homeless people including:**

- Ensure all social housing providers fulfil their responsibilities to cooperate with local authorities in meeting their homelessness duties, and adopt best practice in supporting homeless people into social housing and helping them succeed in their tenancies.

- Encourage housing providers to sign up to the model commitments for social housing providers Crisis devised through consultation and with the Homes for Cathy group.¹¹⁷

limits on annual rent increases linked to an inflationary measure. If the government chooses not to do this then a new standard tenancy of three to five years should be introduced.

- **Ensure the private rented sector is fit for purpose as a housing solution for homeless people. The changes needed to achieve this are different for each nation.**

In England:

- Introduce a national register of landlords that all private landlords and lettings agencies are required to join, with a requirement to submit data annually on rent levels by number of bedrooms.
- Introduce national provision of private rented access schemes (help to rent) including a national rent deposit guarantee scheme.
- Introduce a new standard private rented tenancy with no fixed term period where the landlord could only give notice using specified grounds with

In Scotland:

- As part of the Scottish Landlord Register require all private landlords and lettings agencies to submit data annually on rent levels by number of bedrooms.
- Limit annual rent increases to a maximum inflationary measure and review provision of private rented access schemes.
- Consider the case for creating a national help to rent scheme for Scotland, including a national rent deposit guarantee scheme.

In Wales:

- As part of Rent Smart Wales require all private landlords and lettings agencies to submit data annually on rent levels by number of bedrooms.
- Introduce a new

¹¹⁵ Hughes, N. (2018) *Have your say policy consultation: summary report*. London: Crisis

¹¹⁶ Crisis, Groundswell and uscreates (2018) *The lived experience of homelessness*. London: Crisis.

¹¹⁷ <https://homesforcathy.org.uk/our-commitments/>

- standard private rented tenancy with no fixed term period where the landlord could only give notice using specified grounds with limits on annual rent increases linked to an inflationary measure.
- Review provision of private rented access schemes and consider the case for creating a national help to rent scheme for Wales, including a national rent deposit guarantee scheme.
 - **Encourage providers of private sector purpose built housing for rent (build to rent) in England**
- to deliver homes for homeless households.**
- **Plan for and provide a supply of permanent, mainstream housing that single homeless people and other low income single adult households can afford.**
 - **Ensure housing supply targets are informed by evidence on the scale of homelessness.**

Homelessness data

To end homelessness, we need to understand and measure the true scale of the problem and use data and insight to ensure we meet this shared aim. There is a lack of consistent and accurate data on all forms of homelessness across England, Scotland and Wales. The way data is used and understood to drive commissioning decisions and service design also varies.

To improve data and outcome measures across Great Britain the following reforms are recommended:

- Statutory homelessness data collection in England and Wales should be redesigned to follow individuals through their journeys within the homelessness system.
- A new CHAIN-like system for recording rough sleeping should be introduced in England, Scotland and Wales.
- Data linkage should be established in England,

Scotland and Wales. Data linkage and tracking people through homelessness datasets, across Great Britain and in all public services data sets, would show how well (or otherwise) services are meeting the needs of homeless people. Already in Scotland the statutory homelessness statistics is data linking with health service data.ⁱ This approach has the potential to revolutionise our understanding of what works to achieve positive outcomes for homeless people across public services; and in Wales, a four-year data linkage study into the Supporting People programme is running from 2016 and 2020.ⁱⁱ Large scale data merging across Britain is highly recommended.

- Governments in England, Scotland and Wales should commission the Centre for Homelessness Impact to fill gaps in evidence on homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing, as well as solutions for certain homelessness groups.
- Governments in England, Scotland and Wales should adopt a homelessness outcomes framework to provide consistency across policies and service delivery at national and local level.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ Scottish Government. *Health and Homelessness Data Linkage*. <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables/HealthHomelessnessDataLinkage>

ⁱⁱ Welsh Government (2017) *Supporting People data linking project*. <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/supporting-people-data-linking-project/?lang=en>

ⁱⁱⁱ Teixeira, L., Russell, D. and Hobbs, T. (2018) *The SHARE framework: a smarter way to end homelessness*. Centre for Homelessness Impact. https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/59f07e67422cdf0001904c14/5af4288fdebbda9d1a495a98_SHARE-framework_report_2018.pdf

Chapter 5: Costs and benefits of ending homelessness

5.1. Costs and benefits of ending homelessness

The plan has set out a package of solutions that are designed to cover each of our five definitions of homelessness ended. To meet this goal we need investment in the right services.

To end homelessness, we need services that prevent it from happening in the first place, that allow a rapid housing-led response; and that give people with multiple and complex needs the

support they need to keep their home.

This section sets out the costs and benefits of supporting homeless people in our five definitions of ending homelessness taken from a report published by PwC (2018), assessing the costs and benefits of our plan to end homelessness.¹¹⁸

Homelessness generates a financial, social and economic burden for society. As an indication of current spending, in 2015-2016, in England alone, local authorities spent more than £1.1 billion

on homelessness. More than three quarters of this was spent on temporary accommodation.¹¹⁹ In 2014 it was estimated that Scottish local authorities spent £94 million on temporary accommodation for homeless households.¹²⁰

Drawing on the Heriot-Watt homelessness projections study, PwC have estimated how many households would need to be supported if the definition of ending homelessness is achieved. In total, nearly 246,000 households will need support in 2018 and this will rise to nearly 436,000 by 2041 with unchanged policies. For each definition of homelessness ended, as set out in this report, a combination of interventions (i.e. solutions) have been recommended to meet the stated aim. To determine the expected costs and benefits of these solutions, PwC estimated how many households (or individual people) need to be supported by each recommended solution each year in the period from 2018 to 2041. The average unit cost was then multiplied per household (or per person). A similar approach

was used to estimate the expected benefits. The approach is consistent with the HM Treasury Green Book principles on economic appraisal and evaluation, specifically the treatment of the counterfactual, the approach to estimating economic costs and benefits of policy solutions and the use of discounting.

PwC analysis has focused on the expected economic costs and benefits of our recommended solutions to move people out of homelessness. In addition to these solutions, the plan also envisages a series of other policy changes. These will help achieve the overall ambition of ending homelessness indirectly through the wider reforms. Examples include:

- Returning the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to the 30th percentile and retaining the link between LHA rates and market rates post 2020.
- Restricting the use of sanctions on welfare benefits if it will cause homelessness.
- Reinstating entitlement to Housing Benefit (HB)

118 PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (2018) *Assessing the costs and benefits of Crisis' plan to end homelessness*. London: PwC.

119 National Audit Office (2017) *Homelessness*. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Homelessness.pdf>

120 Hunter, J. and Lindsay, T. (2014) *Temporary accommodation modelling review 2014*. Edinburgh: Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers. http://www.welfare-reforms-scotland.co.uk/downloads/Temporary_Accommodation_cost_modelling_report_June14.pdf

for EEA nationals with job seeker status.

- Extending the move-on period for newly recognised refugees to 56 days (currently 28 days);
- Creating a national register of landlords in England.
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing, specifically social housing, across the Great Britain to address homelessness.

Overall, PwC have estimated that the total discounted costs of the solutions recommended to achieve our definition of ending homelessness between 2018 and 2041 is £19,289m, at 2017 prices.¹²¹ The costs are distributed across the five objectives, and reflect the number of people projected to be in each of these categories, plus differences in the unit cost of the solutions recommended (see Table 5.1). The largest costs are to achieve Objective 2 (i.e. no one forced to live in transient or dangerous accommodation) and Objective 3 (i.e. no one forced to live in emergency accommodation without a plan for rapid rehousing). Together these make up 87%

of the estimated total costs. Over 90 per cent of the costs are expected to be incurred in England, with Greater London accounting for more than half of these. Scotland accounts for five per cent of the cost and Wales three per cent. This reflects the number of households and people projected to be homeless (core and wider) in each nation between 2018 and 2041.

More than half (£9,938m, or 52%) of the total discounted costs are expected to occur between 2018 and 2027. The solutions included in the PwC's analysis are assumed to support the cohort of households expected to be homeless in 2018. Over the following years, some of these households (those with more acute and complex needs) are expected to require continuing support from these solutions. In addition, new households are projected to be homeless and require support.

PwC's analysis also estimates that between 2018 and 2041 solutions included in the analysis will deliver discounted benefits of £53,908m at 2017 prices. Nearly half (£26,426m, or 49%) of the total discounted

Table 5.1. Total costs of recommended solutions to achieve Objectives 1 – 5 by objective and region/nation (Present Value (PV), £m 2017, prices)

Region/nation	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Total
Greater London	£602	£3,651	£5,285	£28	£547	£10,113
North	£115	£1,457	£936	£23	£225	£2,756
Midlands	£62	£838	£582	£13	£152	£1,646
South	£150	£1,507	£1,174	£24	£336	£3,191
Wales	£18	£370	£101	£3	£42	£535
Scotland	£46	£496	£423	£7	£76	£1,048
Great Britain	£992	£8,320	£8,501	£98	£1,378	£19,289

Table 5.2. Total benefits of Crisis' recommended solutions to achieve Objectives 1-5 by objective, region and nation (PV, £m, 2017 prices)

Region/nation	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Total
Greater London	£1,889	£10,702	£15,450	£89	£1,389	£29,518
North	£376	£3,646	£1,852	£75	£621	£6,570
Midlands	£215	£2,451	£1,426	£42	£423	£4,557
South	£513	£4,398	£2,900	£77	£924	£8,811
Wales	£60	£1,043	£240	£11	£118	£1,472
Scotland	£154	£1,455	£1,140	£23	£207	£2,979
Great Britain	£3,207	£23,694	£23,008	£318	£3,681	£53,908

¹²¹ We use discounting to aggregate and compare costs and benefits occurring at different points in time to account for society's time preference for incurring costs and benefits. We use the recommended rate in the HM Treasury Green Book (3.5%) to bring figures to a present value (PV) and compare costs and benefits that are experienced in earlier or later years.

benefits are expected to occur between 2018 and 2027 (Table 5.2).

In summary, in present value terms, for every £1 that will be invested in the solutions recommended to achieve Objectives 1 to 5, it is estimated that £2.80 will be generated in benefits – this includes cashable savings and wellbeing value. This is an overall benefit-cost ratio of 2.8. The benefit ratio varies by objective from 3.2 for Objective 1 (people who are rough sleeping) to 2.7 for Objective 5 (people who are at immediate risk of core homelessness). More than half (£9,938m, or 52%) of the total discounted costs are expected to occur between 2018 and 2027 alongside nearly half (£26,426m, or 49%) of the total discounted benefits.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

The purpose of this plan is to help politicians and governments make the decisions necessary to end homelessness. We have highlighted the best evidence available and the policy choices needed across Britain.

Homeless sector experts and decision makers' views of the plan will inevitably vary. We hope, however, that no one will consider ending homelessness too complicated to imagine or too difficult to achieve.

Many of the policy decisions that have impacted negatively on homelessness other the years, were not intended to do so. Yet, they have had lasting and serious consequences. Most obvious among them are housing, welfare and migration policies. Going forward we hope that a more positive agenda to prevent and end homelessness will be part of all political decision-making.

To ensure efforts to end homelessness are co-ordinated and impactful, political commitments must come from the highest level. The current approach across the three nations is fragmented. Renewed central government leadership across Great Britain is needed.

Crisis and others in our sector must also accept obligations. As service providers, we must follow the best evidence of, what works, and strive always to end people's homelessness for good. As communicators, we must change the story that we tell the public. And as campaigners, we must focus on solutions; helping politicians to make the right choices.

This plan is written in good faith as a tool for all those interested in tackling homelessness, and created in the certain knowledge that together we can end it.

About Us

Crisis is the national charity for homeless people. We are committed to ending homelessness.

Every day we see the devastating impact homelessness has on people's lives. Every year we work side by side with thousands of homeless people, to help them rebuild their lives and leave homelessness behind for good.

Through our pioneering research into the causes and consequences of homelessness and the solutions to it, we know what it will take to end it.

Together with others who share our resolve, we bring our knowledge, experience and determination to campaign for the changes that will solve the homelessness crisis once and for all.

We bring together a unique volunteer effort each Christmas, to bring warmth, companionship and vital services to people at one of the hardest times of the year, and offer a starting point out of homelessness.

We know that homelessness is not inevitable. We know that together we can end it.

Crisis head office

66 Commercial Street

London E1 6LT

Tel: 0300 636 1967

Fax: 0300 636 2012

www.crisis.org.uk

Copyright Crisis 2018

ISBN 978-1-78519-056-8

Crisis UK (trading as Crisis).

Registered Charity Numbers: E&W1082947,

SC040094. Company Number: 4024938. CRI0041



**Together
we will end
homelessness**