



Households  
in Temporary  
Accommodation

## **Emergency All-Party Parliamentary Group for Households in Temporary Accommodation and All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness.**

Monday 11/09/2023, 13.30-15.07, hybrid meeting  
Portcullis House.

**Secretariats:**

- APPG for Households in TA - Shared Health Foundation (SHF) and Justlife (JL)
- APPG for Ending Homelessness - Crisis

**Panellists:**

Dr Laura Neilson (SHF), Francesca Albanese (Crisis) Siobhain McDonagh (MP, Labour), Bob Blackman (MP Conservative), Vicky Spratt (iNewspaper), Daniel Hewitt (ITV News), Kate Webb (GLA)

**Attendees in person:** Baroness Healy of Primrose Hill (Peer, Labour), Richard Bacon (MP, Conservative), Sam Pratt (SHF), Christa Macvier (JL), Simon Gale (JL), William Lewson Cole (Office of Natalie Elphicke MP), Anna Gorrell (Office of Catherine West MP), Hinna Ghafoor (Office of Catherine West MP), Harry Axelson (Office of Ben Everitt MP), Sally Cullins (Office of Richard Bacon MP), Amy Bentham (Office of Sharon Hodgson MP), Josh Hartley (Office of Sharon Hodgson MP), David Taylor (Havering Council), Emily Page (Pathways), Nicola Taylor (Office of Apsana Begum MP), Jack Logan (Office of Anne Marie Morris MP), Emily Batchelor (Crisis/APPG for Ending Homelessness), Rosie Perkins (Crisis)

**Number of attendees online:** 140

Purpose:

An emergency meeting called by the APPG for Households in TA and APPG for Ending Homelessness to stress upon the need of a National Strategy on the homelessness crisis and increasing number of children (131,370) currently living in TA.

Meeting

<p><b>Bob Blackman</b></p>	<p><i>Co-Chair of the APPG for Ending Homelessness opens the event, welcomes attendees, introduces the panellists, and makes opening remarks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We meet against the background on the increasing requirement for TA – there are stark statistics from London councils and across the country of households and children in TA.</li> <li>• In my constituency – children in TA have been moved around multiple times, causing disruption to their education and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Number of homeless households in TA has hit highest point in record in the last 25 years ago.</li> <li>• There are many issues involved.</li> <li>• My secondment private member’s Bill on Supported housing on exempt accommodation is now being regulated for the first time. We are still waiting for enactment, however.</li> <li>• This is good news but still there are many vulnerable people out there being exploited by scrupulous landlords.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Francesca Albanese</b></p>	<p><i>Executive Director of Policy and Social Change from Crisis is pleased to have joined forces with the APPG on TA and discusses the latest findings from the ‘Homelessness monitor’ – a longitudinal study (part funded by Crisis and Joesph Rowntree Foundation), that provides a summary of homelessness impacts due to recent economic and policy developments in the UK.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness in England is on the rise and usage of TA is acute, reaching 104,000 households and 131,370 children currently living in TA. This is enough to fill over 4000 classrooms.</li> <li>• Monitor looks at current trends and predictions of homelessness, including all forms of homelessness such as: statutory homelessness, sofa surfers, people living in cars and unsuitable buildings – this developed data set is seen as the core of homelessness which is driven predominately by inflation and rising private rent costs, (alongside evictions).</li> <li>• In short-term homelessness will increase. There is mounting pressure on households being pushed into homelessness and those already homeless are forced more and more into unsuitable TA, with insufficient amount of suitable accommodation for people to move into.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most striking finding from the monitor is the pressure LAs are under to procure housing in Private Rented Sector (PRS).</li> <li>• PRS housing rates, lack of housing supply and frozen LHA rates are prime factors causing the homelessness crisis.</li> <li>• However, we have modelled policy solutions as part of this research: 1) Short-term focus on households and social housing allocated to homeless households, 2) Increasing LHA to 30 percentile rates, 3) Maximising homelessness prevention, and 4) Long-term increase of social housing supply by 90,000 in the next 15 years.</li> <li>• A national strategy (implementing these solutions) needs to address all forms of homelessness and the wider systemic issues of TA, and there needs to be a clear strategy on TA.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dr Laura Neilson</b></p>	<p><i>CEO of Shared Health Foundation and doctor in Paediatric Emergency medicine. Laura requests clip of MP Siobhain McDonagh announcing in Parliament the increasing figures of children stuck in TA from 2019-2023 to be shown to panellists and online attendees.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issues highlighted today are not something that parliament are unaware of.</li> <li>• There are in England 131,370 children stuck in TA and year-on-year there is a steady increase. We expect this to go up quicker this year for many reasons: 1) Processing and eviction notices, and 2) Issues already raised regarding housing market.</li> <li>• As a doctor I see a huge cohort of homeless children. About 1 in 23 children in London are homeless. This is not only affecting housing sector but public services such as schools and NHS.</li> <li>• Children who enter homelessness journey have all faced the day when they must be moved quickly to a different accommodation. Some of the children I've seen through the support hub we service in Oldham (and one opening in Heywood) have no where to sleep by the end of their school day. This is not an uncommon story.</li> <li>• Reasons why children end up in TA is multitude: 1) Domestic violence plays a big part, 2) Relationship breakdowns, 3) Financial pressures, 4) Landlord and Local Authority evictions, 5) Children coming out of asylum systems. 1 child never had a home throughout their whole years in primary school.</li> <li>• Lots of trauma develops from this unsettling experience and yet we expect children to move multiple times at such short notice. This makes it difficult to make friends, integrate at school and make meaningful relationships. We know that all this has an accumulative effect on a childhood's development, and how they end up as adults.</li> <li>• From NHS angle, these children are less immunised, fallen out of health checks and health systems. For children on waiting list, once they get to the top of that waiting list, often they</li> </ul>

	<p>have been moved out of area and must start again. This is the same in many areas of support such as education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young children in particularly perform badly overall when living in TA. Common TAs are small and overcrowded, we've seen many toddlers unable to crawl and risk of them being unable to walk due to restrictive physical space. Children in TA also eat a lot of fast-food as there are no cooking appliances for home cooked meals.</li> <li>• Another concern about TA is safety. We've had conversations about damp, condensation on windows, children gaining injuries due to there being no stairways and no basic safety features, no plugs, no plumbing. As a doctor I see children with head and body injuries because of this.</li> <li>• No safeguarding – at the moment, we are mixing children in TA with adults who have many different needs and pose risks to children. Yet we are mixing them, unchecked in accommodation. I urge for action around safeguarding risks.</li> <li>• Last year we conducted a mortality view with Bristol University and asked the question – “ How many children had died in TA in the last couple of years?” This had never been asked before. We found out that 34 children died in TA. This is equivalent to a whole primary school class. Most of these children were under 1 years of age with no medical problems. There was no reason why these children should have died.</li> <li>• Combination of poverty, chaos, and unpredictability that leads to such tragic cases, and a lot of the times it's the result of not having a cot.</li> <li>• Children are placed into TA with no cots available. Who is responsible for the cot? We provide cots at our Hub – they are really cheap and can be lifesaving.</li> <li>• I am asking for cross-party focus on this. There are ways in the NHS to improve this: 1) a Notification System to integrate public sector services, 2) Equal rights for children in education suffering with homeless as Looked After children, 3) Safeguarding to be taken seriously, 4) Proper risk assessment and 5) Cots for these young children.</li> <li>• There must also be quick action to combat these issues. In our own homeless families support service we have seen a 300% increase in the last 6 months. This is a national issue that is barely hidden.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vicky Spratt</b></p>	<p><i>Housing Correspondent, the iNewspaper reveals saddening case studies of families who were moved out of borough to unsuitable TA:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is emotional for me because I have worked for years with a mother whose child died from living in TA, her name is Kelly.</li> <li>• <u>Case study of Kelly</u> whose asthmatic son died from living in a destitute TA away from original locality. Kelly's son died in the ambulance on way to hospital. Kelly did not know her local health services. Had she remained in the area her children grew up in this would've been avoided. This is what</li> </ul>

	<p>displacement means for families and children. It shouldn't be happening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I covered a story with a FOI expert Jack Shaw where we looked at the impact of these out of area placements. The data Jack pulled showed that nearly 30,000 households like Kelly were moved out of their original locality. We estimated that around 70,000 households in total.</li> <li>• Families are moved away from there familiar surroundings and plunged into complete chaos.</li> <li>• I have spent a month speaking with women in these situations and most of them suffered with avoidable tragedies.</li> <li>• <u>Case study of Stacey</u> a 40-year-old carer who was moved out from her home. The new TA had no furniture, and she doesn't know how long she will be living in her current home. She had also been made unemployed because she could not commute the long distance to her job.</li> <li>• <u>Case study of Besty</u>: who was moved out of her original locality as there were no affordable housing. One of her children is autistic and nonverbal. Her husband works as a security guard in west London and would commute long distances often. Betsy would take children far out to a school that had special support for her child and spend rest of the day waiting in this area until end of school day to take her children back home. On top of this, the TA they were moved to was on the top floor of a block of flats. She had to struggle up the stairs with her children and a child that is very difficult to deal with. The council told Besty there was nothing they could do. However, I made them move her and the family back to their original area. It shouldn't take a journalist to do that.</li> <li>• There is no plan for TA. I have been reporting on this for 10 years and it's only getting worse.</li> <li>• TA can be fatal, and the case study of Kelly shows how evictions can cause potential dangers to lives.</li> <li>• This issue is acute in London but areas across England are also affected.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Daniel Hewitt</b></p>	<p><i>Investigations Correspondent for ITV News reports on case studies and findings of families pushed into the brink of homelessness and living in unsuitable TA:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 ½ years ago we first started looked how initially the issues surrounding social housing and then came across a block of flats in England where the conditions were described by Shelter and others, as the worst in Britain.</li> <li>• In a block of flats in Croydon I can absolutely see how you can end up with 34 child deaths. A family in a flat had so much damp and safety risks I was surprised the children hadn't already been injured or killed. Conditions were</li> </ul>

	<p>appalling. Damp everywhere, water in the electrical appliances, carpet drenched. That was a TA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many cases such as these have been happening for a long time. We are at a crunch point where lack of intervention, support, and policy on this has widen the net of poverty.</li> <li>• We hear a lot of the times that work is the way out of poverty, but from what we've seen that is simply not true.</li> <li>• <u>Case study of 1 man</u> with family who had a no-fault eviction. This man has a full-time job but could not afford to pay Landlord's asking price of £1500pcm rent. Plunged into TA in the PRS sector but through the experience he saw his children's health deteriorate. He was doing all the right things to earn his keep but had been thrown to the wolves. His local council told him there was no housing available. I've seen this happen to many families.</li> <li>• Biggest worry I have is that these families are losing hope. That is a very dangerous place to be in.</li> <li>• The main party do not have a grasp of this national scandal and it is not treated as a national scandal by enough politicians or press.</li> <li>• The impact TA has on children cannot be overstated. Some families who are moved to hotels or B&amp;Bs are left there, forgotten for months and months.</li> <li>• We've created a generation of children that may never have anywhere to live and are absorbing all that uncertainty.</li> <li>• This issue has to be top priority for the main political parties.</li> <li>• There needs to be a post-war plan to quickly re-build good social housing to accommodate all that are stuck for long periods of time in TA.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Kate Webb</b></p>	<p><i>Head of Housing Strategy for Greater London Authority (GLA) makes following statements on the pressure's councils face on the ground:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 in 23 children in London living in TA fills up more than just one classroom.</li> <li>• Undoubtably this is a pressure that looms larger than life for politicians working in London.</li> <li>• We need to acknowledge that the safety net we ask households to fall upon doesn't feel very safe or central or very much like a public service aimed at improving lives.</li> <li>• Policies makers should not shy away from these issues.</li> <li>• I think it is important that people think about the eco-systems that LAs are working in. What we are seeing is a housing crisis.</li> <li>• People simple cannot find an accommodation that they can afford or there isn't any accommodation on the market in their area. In fact, the agency that they are turning to for help are also struggling with the barriers.</li> <li>• There isn't a magic pool of accommodation that LAs can call upon.</li> <li>• Lack of accommodation that the household could afford is what is driving the usage of out-of-area TA (increasingly out of London), hotels, B&amp;B and other forms of TA.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAs budget is being crippled by TA spend.</li> <li>• All of London boroughs are aligned with the Mayor of London and other cross-sector organisations in acknowledging that this is a priority where action must be taken.</li> <li>• What we cannot shy away from is that the big policy leaders, treasury, and central government need to be pulled into this discussion and step up to pull those levers.</li> <li>• Reformation of LHA rates must happen. People on standard incomes in London cannot afford rent. LHA has become a mainstream part of how people on standard incomes make ends meet.</li> <li>• What you get on LHA rates bears no resemblance to reality and this exacerbates pressures onto LAs.</li> <li>• LHA rates have been frozen since 2020. What we hear less from is an additional LHA route that helps keep people in TA- this has not changed since 2011.</li> <li>• We need to invest in social housing urgently. The state has the responsibility to put the investment in which will pave a way out of this crisis.</li> <li>• At the moment, there is no way we can continue relying on the PRS - we must have a new build strategy.</li> <li>• We are looking at short-term solutions as realistically we will not be able to build enough homes by January next year. The consensus is to look at acquisitions in London however, there are certain constraints to what can be pulled from the housing market.</li> <li>• None of this is new evidence and unfortunately, we haven't moved the big decision makers enough.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Siobhain McDonagh opens Q&amp;A</b></p>	<p>1. <b>Rachel Williamson asks:</b> "Is there any hope that government will use the Autumn statement to discuss LHA rates and housing?"</p> <p><b>Francesca Albanese</b> -Keep the pressure on anyone in a position to highlight issues and make change.</p> <p><b>Vicky Spratt</b> - Find new ways to explain the issues with policy makers.</p> <p><b>Siobhain McDonagh</b> – There should be a monetary policy commitment to reduce the impact of rent in the PRS. In all honesty, I do not believe the housing crisis and LHA rates will be mentioned in the Autumn statement. I hope I am wrong.</p> <p>2. <b>David Taylor asks:</b> "How are LAs supposed to balance upkeep of housing standards with procurement?"</p> <p><b>Vicky Spratt</b> - Lead from examples of good social housing.</p> <p><b>Kate Webb</b> - Lobby government urgently to see what plans they must solve this issue.</p>

	<p><b>Siobhain McDonagh</b> - Get local MPs and Councillors to join forces and protest issue for investment in housing standards.</p> <p>3. <b>Helen Lawrence asks:</b> "Is there a consensus on mitigating people from being moved out of area?"</p> <p><b>Dr Laura Neilson</b> Shared Health Foundation provides service through their Focused care project that supports people throughout their homelessness journey. However, this responsibility cannot be held by charities alone.</p> <p><b>Siobhain McDonagh</b> - Additionally, implementing a service akin to Ofsted will improve safeguarding for households, preventing many from being moved out of area.</p>
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