

APPG for Ending Homelessness, Ordinary Meeting, 02/03/2026,

Room S, 1 Parliament Street

Attendees

Minister Alison McGovern MP, Paula Barker MP (Chair), Bob Blackman MP, Emily Darlington MP, David Smith MP, Siobhain McDonagh MP, Lee Pitcher MP, Rachel Blake MP, Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani, Baroness Lister

Jasmine Basran, Matt Bold (Crisis – APPG for Ending Homelessness Secretariat), Isabel Kaner (Shared Health – APPG for Temporary Accommodation Secretariat), Morgan Tebbs (Justlife Foundation, APPG for Temporary Accommodation Secretariat)

Introduction – Paula Barker MP and Siobhain McDonagh MP

Paula Barker MP introduced the meeting. Set out the challenge facing us. Thousands of people woke up this morning not knowing where they would sleep, patients will be sent out of hospitals to recover as best they can, people will give up jobs because their temporary accommodation has been moved and children will be in B&Bs where they do not have enough space to do their homework.

Set out the latest statistics from last week, these included record levels of people forced to sleep rough and households (as well as children) in temporary accommodation.

Highlighted the [Homes, Support, Prevention](#) report released by the APPG last year after a series of roundtables that heard from the sector, campaigning organisations, academics and people with lived experience how the Government could end homelessness.

Siobhain McDonagh MP set out the work of the APPG for Households in Temporary Accommodation, they focus on practical measures we can take now to improve the experience of temporary accommodation for homeless households.

This included the SAFE notification protocol, reducing the number of children in temporary accommodation (in London it is 1 in 26 children), as well as addressing the safety of the accommodation itself, e.g. reducing child deaths in temporary accommodation by ensuring they are all equipped with a cot.

However, she noted that the aim was in the long-term to end the use of temporary accommodation for non-emergency situations, with temporary accommodation currently costing London Councils £5 million *per day*. Ultimately reducing the use of temporary accommodation will only be achieved with more social home units.

Feedback from the Steering Group - Jasmine Basran, Matt Bold (Crisis – APPG for Ending Homelessness Secretariat)

- The APPG has a Steering Group of 27 organisations, this includes service providers, campaigning organisations, representatives and now the JRF.
- These organisations were brought together in January to discuss the National Plan and discussed its strengths and areas for improvements.
- The APPG Steering Group welcomes;
 - That the plan covers different forms of homelessness
 - Targets on reducing discharge from public institutions into homelessness
 - Bringing in more accountability on Councils and expectations that Councils will improve the inclusivity of their services
 - Collation of homelessness funding into fewer multiannual pots
 - Continuation of lived experience forum

- The APPG Steering Group has concerns that;
 - There is inaction on housing affordability, insufficient social house building to support the plan and ongoing LHA freeze
 - The prevention targets for the Home Office are weak and non-existent for DWP even at a jobcentre level
 - Accountability mechanisms for councils are unclear and there is little new money
 - Unclear if the Inter Ministerial Group will be able to hold Departments to account
 - Lack of action on sustainable funding for support services
 - Lack of support for and promotion of Housing First approaches

Discussion – All

Paula Barker MP and other members highlighted issues around housing affordability, including the lack of adequate housing benefits to prevent homelessness and the slow delivery of new social homes.

Rachel Blake MP and others highlighted the number of people who had become homeless after leaving asylum accommodation. She noted it was a major issue in Westminster. Suggestion that MHCLG was being left to pick up the consequences of the decisions of other Departments. Important that the Inter Ministerial Group for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping is meeting and is discussing all the relevant issues.

She feels that it is a moral issue but important to be clear that preventing homelessness has a clear value for money imperative.

Baroness Lister concurred on the issue of refugee homelessness, she noted the new Duty to Collaborate, how would that actually be applied to the Home Office?

Lee Pitcher MP noted the importance of delivering trauma informed care. Too often people seeking help faced support that was not delivered in line with these principles.

Members welcomed the specific targets. But **David Smith MP** queried where the money was coming from to deliver them, he would like a written response from Departments.

Statement by the Minister and Q & A

The Minister set out that figures from last week showed that progress was being made in certain areas, the number of children in B&Bs had dropped and was projected to drop further. But there was further to go in other areas.

Government sees homelessness as being driven by a several key drivers including; lack of homes people can afford, lack of income to afford a home, domestic violence as well as discharge from public institutions, particularly prisons.

Paula Barker MP and **Lord Best** highlighted the question of Local Housing Allowance. Homes for rent are simply not affordable, Paula stated that in her constituency affordability on LHA was just 3%, Lord Best cited Crisis' research which showed that the average shortfall between rents and LHA was £393 for a 2-bed home. The Government could save money by investing in LHA to prevent homelessness.

Local authorities are feeling very frustrated that they are pouring money into temporary accommodation and have to compete with the Home Office on procurement. He also pointed out that landlords will not take people on benefits if it will not cover their rent.

Siobhain McDonagh MP highlighted how homes were being lost at scale because the landlords switching from renting privately to contracting for temporary accommodation from Councils, removing affordable properties from the market.

Bob Blackman MP also pointed about the rise of Air BnBs, where holiday homes were replacing all other homes in an area, urged the Minister to ensure that the Government considered the housing sector holistically.

He also raised the issue of supported housing, and how local authorities were still awaiting guidance on how to implement the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act. The Minister confirmed that acting on this was a priority.

The Minister set out that she had received positive feedback from local authorities and Housing Associations on the Social and Affordable Housing Programme that had just opened, but there are still challenges on construction costs. Housing Minister Matthew Pennycook is working on a Long-Term Housing Strategy.

The Minister was also clear that addressing incomes was under discussion within Government, particularly between MHCLG, DWP and Treasury. She also pointed out that reducing temporary accommodation use was part of the rationale for lifting the two-child benefit cap. The savings on LHA were not necessarily clear cut, but the Treasury is leading a Value for Money review on homelessness and the Minister sees this as informing discussion on LHA. The Government is aware of concerns about landlords pivoting to providing temporary accommodation.

David Smith MP highlighted questions over how Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Care would support the strategy, would they ringfencing parts of their budgets for this work?

Paula Barker MP raised the efficacy of Housing First pilots funded under the last Government and reiterated the APPGs disappointment that there would not be funding for a national roll out.

Emily Darlington MP highlighted local innovation in Milton Keynes to tackle the issue of people cycling in and out of temporary accommodation and sleeping rough but suggested that this had struggled with a lack of flexibility in Homelessness Reduction Act funding and Homes England. The Minister advised that this should be raised directly with Homes England and Matthew Pennycook as Housing Minister.

The Minister also set out that her vision was for less prescription on how councils improved their services and ended homelessness with fewer ringfences on delivery but that the Plan would match that with more focus on whether local authorities were delivering outcomes and improving services.

Therefore, it would be on councils to identify and address local need and deliver locally tailored approaches effectively, hence why the government isn't stipulating for things like Housing First to be delivered. Oversight on outcomes would be delivered via the Outcomes Framework for local authorities that would be published shortly. The plan was published before this was in place to allow MHCLG to move more quickly into the delivery phase.

Paula Barker MP, Baroness Lister and **Bishop Guli** raised the role of the Home Office in causing homelessness. They asked whether the impact of the asylum changes, ending the 56 day move-on period pilot on homelessness had been considered at all? This was

particularly given research by Crisis that showed that homelessness after move-on from asylum accommodation had risen 37% last year.

The Minister stated she was aware of these issues and highlighted ongoing engagement with the Home Office. In particular, she stated that there was very positive engagement on domestic violence as a driver of homelessness for women.

She also highlighted that the link between asylum seekers, refugees, Home Office and procurement of temporary accommodation would be considered as part of the Value for Money review.

Paula Barker MP thanked the Minister for attending and noted that the APPG would be following up in writing and publishing a minute of the meeting.