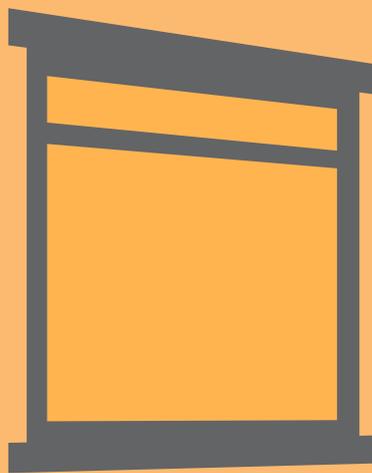




Together
we will end
homelessness



Cover the Cost:

Crisis' campaign to restore Local Housing Allowance rates to prevent homelessness

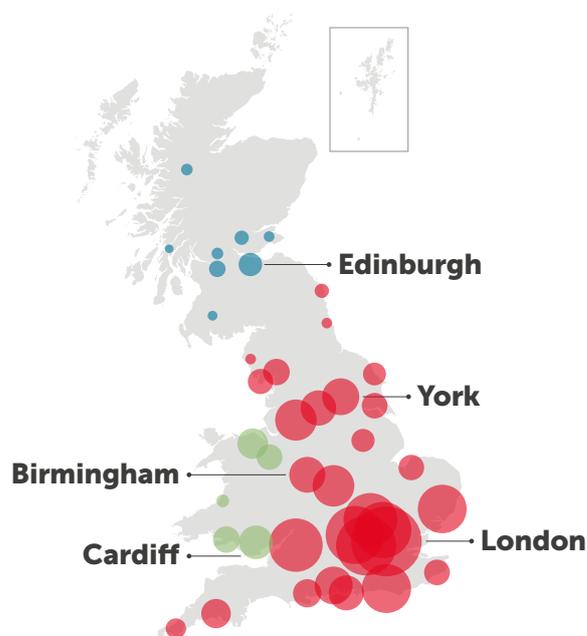
What is the Cover the Cost campaign?

Homelessness is an indignity that no one in our society should have to face. Crisis is calling on the UK Government to restore Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to cover the cost of rents and prevent thousands of people from becoming homeless.

Losing a private tenancy is one of the most common reasons people become homeless. People who are stuck in low-paid work or face an unexpected fall in income after redundancy or illness, are becoming homeless because Local Housing Allowance rates, commonly known as housing benefit, have fallen way below rents across most of Britain.

Our research found that consecutive cuts to this benefit means that in 94% of areas in Britain, one in five or less private rented homes are affordable for young single people, couples, or small families who need housing benefit. People are locked in a struggle to pay their rent and cover the basics like food and bills – in the worst cases, this is causing homelessness. And when homelessness does occur, people can't find another home due to the low level of LHA rates.

No one should have to live like this. Solving the crisis in the long term means building more affordable social homes. But this will take time. Meanwhile, we must give people the help they need to keep their home and



Areas with the biggest gaps between LHA rates and local private rents

avoid homelessness, and that's why we are calling for investment in LHA rates to be a top priority for government in upcoming spending decisions.

Why are we campaigning?

Housing benefit should be one of the quickest ways of preventing people from becoming homeless. However, there have been a series of cuts followed by a four-year freeze to LHA rates, which is due to come to an end next year. Government must decide urgently on how much money it will invest in LHA rates after this point.

The UK Government is currently deciding its long-term spending priorities. This is our best chance to restore Local Housing Allowance rates so they cover the cheapest third of rents – providing immediate help to people to keep their homes.

Crisis' new report shows that adequate investment in Local Housing Allowance rates in upcoming government spending decisions will prevent thousands of people from becoming homeless, and lift thousands more families and children out of poverty;

- £3.3 billion over three years' investment needed to restore Local Housing Allowance rates to cover the cheapest third of rents
- More than 6,000 families and individuals would be prevented from becoming homeless.
- More than 32,000 families and individuals would be lifted out of poverty, including 35,000 children.

Preventing homelessness and lifting people out of poverty will bring wider benefits of £5.5 billion, including from reduced use of homelessness services and services related to homelessness like health. It will also lead to savings of £124 million including the reduced use of temporary accommodation. Councils are currently forced to use expensive temporary accommodation to house people trapped in homelessness, due to a lack of affordable housing options. This is often expensive, with councils spending nearly £1 billion a year on temporary accommodation in England alone, leaving far too many people without stable and secure homes, at a huge cost.

What needs to happen?

The UK Government is currently considering its long-term spending priorities. Crisis is calling on the UK Government to restore LHA rates to cover the cost of at least the cheapest third of rents (the 30th percentile). Research by Alma Economics, commissioned by Crisis, suggests this would mean investing £820 million for 2020/21 and committing to £3.3 billion in total to restore the rates over 3 years.

In the long-term, we know ensuring social housing is the most cost-effective option to provide people on low incomes with stable and secure housing. But with our research showing we need to build 90,000 social homes a year across Britain for 15 years to address the backlog of need for social housing, we cannot afford to ignore the crucial role Housing Benefit should play in immediately preventing and ending homelessness.

What can you do to help?

We need your help to make sure that Housing Benefit is top of government's agenda in upcoming spending decisions. To do this, it takes one minute to contact your local MP using our online form and ask them to write to the Chancellor to secure the much-needed investment into LHA rates. Act now to prevent thousands of families and individuals from becoming homeless at:

www.crisis.org.uk/coverthecost

We need as many people as possible to make their voices heard, so please help spread the word to your friends and family and share the campaign on social media.

Suggested tweets:

If the UK Government invested in housing benefit to **#CovertheCost** of rent, it could prevent thousands of people from losing their homes – and lift thousands more, including over 35,000 children, out of poverty. Write to your MP now: **bit.ly/2VtaRIA**

Everyone should have the right to a stable, affordable home. But right now, people who need support are locked in a struggle to pay their rent. Ask your MP to call for housing benefit to **#CovertheCost** of rent, & free people from the threat of homelessness: **bit.ly/2VtaRIA**

For more information about how to get involved, please contact:
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