All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness

Rapidly responding to homelessness – a look at migrant homelessness, youth homelessness and rapid rehousing models

July 2018: Report 2

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for Ending Homelessness

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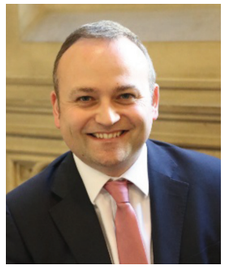
FOREWORD



Neil Coyle, MP

Will Quince, MP

As Co-Chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Ending Homelessness, we are pleased to introduce its second report on this issue. Following on from last year's theme of prevention, we chose to focus on rapid response to consider how we can resolve homelessness quickly if prevention fails.

Whilst prevention should always be strived for, this may not always be possible. We know that homelessness is life shattering and creates further problems, from loss of confidence to physical and mental health problems. As such, it is vital that action is taken to find people stable, secure housing as quickly as possible to prevent their support needs escalating, and minimise the risk of repeat homelessness. For this year's theme of rapid response, we have chosen to focus on migrant homelessness, rapid rehousing models and youth homelessness.

Migrants that are homeless or at risk of homelessness currently face significant additional barriers to resolving it due to their immigration status. Fear of detention or deportation, as well as a lack of access to support, means they are often left facing destitution and forced underground. Most migrants that are homeless have reached crisis point before seeking support.

Equally, young people can face significant practical barriers to exiting homelessness. Lack of suitable, affordable accommodation options for this group, alongside low wages, insecure work (often part-time or on zero hours' contracts) and lower rates of Housing Benefit can make it difficult for young people to afford and sustain housing.

Rapid rehousing models, which focus on getting people into permanent accommodation as quickly as possible, have emerged in recent years as an effective approach towards resolving homelessness quickly among people with low to medium level support needs. They focus on getting homeless people into safe, secure accommodation as quickly as possible, before addressing any other support needs they might have.

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The last few years have seen increasing political will to address homelessness, with cross-party commitments to end rough sleeping and tackle homelessness more broadly. The passing of the *Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)* and establishment of the Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Reduction Taskforce, are important steps forward in efforts to prevent and tackle homelessness. However, it is necessary to go beyond commitments to end rough sleeping and consider how we can end homelessness altogether. Effective rapid responses to homelessness play a vital role in minimising the damaging impact of ongoing homelessness on individuals and the public purse, and should be an essential part of any strategy for ending homelessness.

This report demonstrates that with focused and evidence-based interventions, a person's homelessness can be ended quickly and effectively. It also gives Government and other decision makers carefully thought through recommendations for action. This report is the culmination of a year's research and consultation. As joint Co-Chairs, we welcome its findings and look forward to acting upon the recommendations.

We would like to pay tribute to all the organisations and the people with lived experience of homelessness who have contributed to this report and taken the time to meet with us, submit evidence or attend the APPG's inquiries in Parliament. Without them, this report could not exist.

We now look forward to working with our Vice-Chairs, Officers, and all the APPG for Ending Homelessness' members to take forward the recommendations in this report.

Together, we are united in ending homelessness.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are almost 160,000 households[1] experiencing the worst forms of homelessness[2] in Great Britain. If current trends continue, this is expected to almost double in the next 25 years.[3] Homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurrent. The current safety net is clearly not working as effectively as it should to prevent and resolve homelessness. We believe it is vital that the Government recognises this growing emergency.

Since the APPG for Ending Homelessness was established in 2016, we have developed strong cross-party support and provided a platform for homeless people to inform the political dialogue surrounding homelessness. Alongside MPs and peers, the APPG for Ending Homelessness works with a wide range of homelessness organisations to enable the group to be fully informed on the debate and understand the different experiences of people who are homeless. Our goal from inception was to develop robust policy solutions to prevent and end homelessness.

Prevention was the focus of our year one inquiry, specifically looking at cohorts which are most at risk: care leavers; prison leavers; and survivors of domestic violence. For our second year, we moved on to consider what happens when prevention fails. Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative effect on adults and children. It can make it harder to find and maintain employment and can exacerbate or lead to drug and alcohol problems, mental health problems and physical health problems. The average age of death among homeless people is 47 compared to 77 for the general population.[4] In April 2018, research published by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism found that an average of three people have died every week on UK streets since October 2017.[5]

We looked at groups who face significant practical barriers to exiting homelessness – migrants and young people – and rapid rehousing approaches that can be used to support those with low-level needs to exit homelessness quickly. We brought together people with lived experience and other experts at inquiry sessions, and collected additional evidence through meetings and written submissions, to develop policy recommendations in those three areas.

To achieve the Government's goal of ending rough sleeping by 2027, and the APPG's goal of ending homelessness, it is vital to address migrant homelessness. In 2016/17, 53% of people seen sleeping rough in London were from outside the UK.[6] Statutory homelessness statistics show that approximately one fifth of the total number of people accepted as statutory homeless in England in 2015/16 were born outside the UK.[7] There are many complex reasons and inter-related issues that result in people from outside the UK becoming homeless, which make it more difficult to resolve their homelessness. These can include difficulties resolving their immigration status, vulnerability to exploitation forcing them underground and barriers to accessing support.[8] Errors and poor access to legal advice, alongside social isolation and a lack of access to support, have resulted in many people who could have their immigration status regularised facing ongoing destitution and homelessness.[9]

The causes of homelessness among young people often differ from the causes of homelessness among the wider population. Whilst the end of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy is now the largest cause of homelessness among the adult population in England,[10] for young people, it is a relationship breakdown.[11] Young people leaving public institutions, such as care leavers, are also particularly vulnerable to homelessness.[12] Centrepoint estimates that around 86,000 young people approached their local authority for help with housing in the UK in 2016/17.[13] Research has found that people who become homeless at a younger age are more likely to face ongoing problems and be vulnerable to poor physical and mental health; and risk-taking behaviour such as self-neglect, self-harm, suicide and substance use.[14] Crisis' *Nations Apart?* report found that half of single homeless people became homeless before the age of 21 and that the earlier a person becomes homeless, the greater the likelihood that they will have five or more homeless experiences.[15] People who first become homeless at a young age often face a vicious cycle that leaves them vulnerable to violence, substance abuse and problems with mental and physical health. Once someone is trapped in this cycle, it can be incredibly difficult to escape. At the same time, as people's needs become more complex, the costs to society grow.[16] Resolving homelessness quickly for this group is essential to minimising damage, preventing repeat homelessness and ensuring young people do not become stuck in the homelessness system. However, young people face additional barriers to housing, such as insecure work, access to lower rates of Housing Benefit and difficulties proving their housing readiness.

Rapid rehousing can be an effective rapid response to homelessness among people with lower support needs who predominantly face practical barriers to housing.[17] It can prevent the snowball effect and stop complex needs or chronic problems from developing by allowing for effective early intervention that addresses the needs of the individual. People are supported through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services. There is increasing evidence of the effectiveness of rapid rehousing models.[18] They have already been embraced by other countries, including Denmark where the Critical Time Intervention approach has seen 95% of participants rehoused successfully.[19] Rapid rehousing can also help reduce costs to the public purse by reducing expenditure on stays in expensive, unsuitable temporary accommodation, such as B&Bs,[20] and spending on other public services associated with escalating support needs among the homeless population.[21]

To end homelessness, it is vital that the Government consider how homelessness can be addressed more quickly to prevent it from becoming ongoing and recurrent. In our year one report, we recommended that national Government establish a cross-government strategy, led by Number 10, to prevent and tackle homelessness. This must include a focus on rapidly responding to homelessness when it does occur to prevent needs from escalating and reduce future costs. The recommendations presented in this report provide an important opportunity for the Government to develop appropriate rapid responses to homelessness and reduce ongoing homelessness among a significant proportion of the population.

1 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*. London: Crisis
2 This refers to core homelessness which defines those experiencing the most acute forms of homelessness and includes rough sleeping; sleeping in tents, cars and on public transport; squatting; unsuitable non-residential accommodation; hostel residents; users of night/winter shelters; refuges; unsuitable temporary accommodation; and sofa-surfing.
3 Bramley, G. (2017) *Homelessness projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain*, London: Crisis.
4 Thomas, B. (2012) *Homelessness kills: An analysis of the mortality of homeless people in early twenty-first century England*. London: Crisis.
5 McClenaghan, M. (2018) '*A hundred homeless people have died since October but no-one is asking why*' Bureau of Investigative Journalism
6 Greater London Authority (2017) *CHAIN annual report: Greater London 2016/17*. Greater London Authority.
7 Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (2017) *Migrants and housing*. http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0560/POST-PN-0560.pdf
8 APPG for Ending Homelessness (2018) Minutes, 27th November. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238410/appgeh-migrant-homelessness-inquiry-session-minutes-171127.pdf
9 APPG for Ending Homelessness (2018) Minutes, 27th November. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238410/appgeh-migrant-homelessness-inquiry-session-minutes-171127.pdf
10 MHCLG, Homelessness Statistics, https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#live-tables
11 Homeless Link (2018) *Young and Homeless 2018*. London: Homeless Link
12 Greaves, R. (2017) *All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness: Homelessness prevention for care leavers, prison leavers and survivors of domestic violence*. London: APPG for Ending Homelessness
13 Centrepoint (2018) *More than a number: The scale of youth homelessness in the UK*. London: Centrepoint
14 Mental Health Foundation (2002) *The Mental Health Needs of Homeless Children and Young People*. Updates, Volume 3, Issue 22, August.
15 Mackie, P. & Thomas, I. (2014) *Nations apart? Experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain*. London: Crisis.
16 Mackie, P. & Thomas, I. (2014) *Nations apart? Experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain*. London: Crisis.
17 Social Care Institute for Excellence (2018) *A rapid evidence assessment of what works in homelessness services* London: Social Care Institute for Excellence.
18 Dane, K. (1998) *Making it last: Report into tenancy outcomes for rough sleepers*. London: Housing Services Agency; Busch-Geertsema, V. (2005) 'Does Re-Housing Lead to Reintegration? Innovation' *The European Journal of Social Science Research*. 18(2), pp.205–26.; Warnes, A.M., Crane, M. and Foley, P. (2005) *London's Hostels for Homeless People in the 21 st Century*. London: Pan London Providers Group.; Crane, M., Warnes, A.M. and Coward, S. (2011) *Moves to Independent Living: Single Homeless People's Experiences and Outcomes of Resettlement Sheffield*. UK: Sheffield Institute for Studies on Ageing, University of Sheffield.
19 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
20 Young, B. (2015) *The Cost of Access: Sustaining and supporting private renting projects*. London: Crisis
21 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

MIGRANT HOMELESSNESS

Migrants facing or at risk of homelessness include:

- 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'.

In 2016, we saw the first decline in the number of non-UK nationals rough sleeping in London since 2010/11. This trend has continued throughout 2016/17.[22] Nonetheless, non-UK nationals still constituted over half (53%) of people seen sleeping rough in London in 2016/17. Forty-five per cent were EEA nationals and 11% were from countries outside the EEA. There were more than 900 non-EEA migrants sleeping rough in London in 2016/17.[23] Statutory homelessness statistics show that approximately one fifth of the total number of people accepted as statutory homeless in England in 2016 were migrants.[24]

However, these statistics only give us part of the picture due to a lack of accurate data on foreign nationals rough sleeping and on asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants in the UK, and the proportion of those who have experienced homelessness.

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) estimates that 1,550,000 people experienced destitution in the UK over the course of 2017, of which around 387,500 (one quarter) were destitute migrants. One fifth of destitute migrant households included children.[25] The largest proportion of destitute migrants in the UK were current or former asylum seekers. Of these, 21% had leave to remain, 16% had refugee status, 29% were awaiting a decision on their application and 11% had been refused asylum. A further 10% were not clear about their status, whilst 13% did not give their status.[26]

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman has identified problems with immigration casework, including procedural errors, delays and poor decision-making. The uphold rate for complaints to the Ombudsman about the Home Office has increased steadily over the last three years.[27] Almost half of immigration cases taken to appeal are upheld.[28] Further evidence of the scale of errors in decision-making by the Home Office is demonstrated by figures from The No Accommodation Network (NACCOM). NACCOM, a network of organisations who provide accommodation for destitute asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants, found that 60% of those who moved on from their member organisations either accessed asylum support, statutory support, or got some form of right to remain in the UK.[29]

Meanwhile, research from Refugee Action found that applications for temporary support were incorrectly refused on a regular basis. Fewer than half of the applications Refugee Action assisted with were granted on initial application. But after challenging the refusal and resubmitting applications 92% were granted, often with no change in the applicant's material situation.[30] Refugee Action's research further shows that delays and errors are causing homelessness with examples of asylum seekers being forced to sleep rough or remain in dangerous and unsuitable accommodation.[31] Furthermore, migrants often do not receive their National Insurance number, meaning they can be left unable to work or without access to support they're entitled to. Resolving administrative errors like this could ensure migrants can access mainstream support more quickly, avoiding homelessness altogether.

22 Fitzpatrick,S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S., Watts, B. & Wood, J. (2018) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2018*, London: Crisis.
23 Greater London Authority (2017) *CHAIN annual report: Greater London 2016/17*. Greater London Authority.
24 Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (2017) *Migrants and housing*. http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0560/POST-PN-0560.pdf
25 Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., Sosenko, F., Blenkinsopp, J., Johnsen, S., Littlewood, M., & Watts, B. (2018) *Destitution in the UK*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
26 Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., Sosenko, F., Blenkinsopp, J., Johnsen, S., Littlewood, M., & Watts, B. (2018) *Destitution in the UK*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
27 Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (2016) *Complaints about UK government departments and agencies, and some UK public organisations 2015–16*. https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/sites/default/files/Complaints_about_parliamentary_departments_2015-16.pdf
28 Ministry of Justice, Tribunals and gender recognition certificate statistics, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2017
29 NACCOM (2017) The *No Accommodation Network. Annual Report 2016-17*. Newcastle: NACCOM.
30 Refugee Action (2017) *Slipping through the cracks: How Britain's asylum support system fails the most vulnerable*. London: Refugee Action
31 Refugee Action (2017) *Slipping through the cracks: How Britain's asylum support system fails the most vulnerable*. London: Refugee Action

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Lack of access to legal aid and good immigration advice can also leave migrants unable to regularise their immigration status. Consequently, problems can snowball and the circumstances facing individuals can become much more difficult to address. The *Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2012)* resulted in 94% of immigration advice being taken out of the scope of legal aid. This includes cases relating to families with no recourse to public funds.[32]

In 2016/17 it took an average of 52 weeks to clear immigration appeals, an increase of 45% since 2015/16.[33] With nearly half of immigration cases taken to appeal upheld, the need for good access to legal aid and advice is vital to ensure access to justice is attainable, prevent unnecessary delays and hardship and ensure that immigration cases can be resolved quickly. Migrants can also face additional barriers to accessing justice, including financial and language barriers. Lack of access to immigration advice means many migrants are unaware of their rights and entitlements, and are unable to effectively argue their case.

Whilst immigration cases remain unresolved most migrants are unable to work or access statutory support, making it harder to move out of homelessness. Individuals are left facing ongoing destitution, homelessness and risk of exploitation. Single adults who are not considered vulnerable[34] are ineligible for any support and left reliant on family and friends for support, or support from the voluntary sector and local faith groups.

Street Legal project
Street Legal is an innovative partnership between Praxis Community Projects, Refugee Action and St Mungo's that tackles rough sleeping by linking specialist immigration advisers with homeless outreach services across London. It operates across London to provide immigration advice, and where possible accommodation, for homeless migrants from outside the EEA. A lack of immigration status, poverty and difficulty accessing information and legal representation makes this group particularly vulnerable and hard to reach. Referrals to Street Legal are made through outreach programmes and No Second Night Out. Most clients have been sofa-surfing for a while, staying in hostels or churches, or surviving off exploitative, cash-in hand work often in desperate circumstances. Clients are forced to sleep rough after exhausting all other options. The majority of Street Legal clients have been sleeping rough for just under a year, but have often been destitute for several years before they end up on the street. This group tend to be homeless due to their immigration status and have lower level needs. The project also works with those who are entrenched rough sleepers with high support needs. Street Legal deals with a wide range of cases, supporting people whose asylum claim has been refused, who have had their indefinite leave to remain removed, who are undocumented or are long-term residents but facing problems linked to their immigration status or to a change in immigration regulations. Most of these areas are not covered by legal aid.

Of the last 200 cases supported through Street Legal (as of January 2017) 20% were given leave to remain and permanently moved off the streets; 15% of applications are waiting for a decision; 60% of applications are being prepared, evidence is still being gathered, or there are no solutions under current immigration rules; and 5% returned home voluntarily.[35]

> **"I felt dehumanized. I felt like I had no dignity. Not being able to shower is awful. I lived in a box; I lived in the base of a double bed. I cut a hole in it and put a table over it and wrapped it in plastic to make sure I wouldn't get wet. Sometimes though I would wake up and be soaking wet. Street Legal has really helped me. My health has been saved."**
>
> **Street Legal client 'L'**

32 Bates, M. (2018) written evidence submitted to the APPG for Ending Homelessness' Year two inquiry on rapid responses to homelessness.
33 Frazer, L., MP (2018) Immigration: Appeals: Written question – 129416, 26th March. Accessed here: https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-02-23/129416/
34 With care or support needs, or other vulnerabilities where failing to support would constitute a breach of their human rights.
35 Barnett, A. (2018) written evidence submitted to the APPG for Ending Homelessness' Year two inquiry on rapid responses to homelessness.

Local authorities are left picking up the bill for accommodating and providing financial support to destitute migrant families. Data collected by 43 local authorities working with the NRPF Network found that they were supporting 2245 households with no recourse to public funds by providing accommodation and/or financial support at a combined annual cost of £36.4 million.[36] Twenty-four per cent of households have been supported for 1000 days or longer and require a decision from the Home Office or appeal courts.[37]

Section 17 of the *Children Act (1989)* places a safeguarding duty on local authorities to the children of migrants with no recourse to public funds. However, evidence suggests that local authorities are often failing to adequately fulfil their safeguarding duties. The Children's Society reports that six in ten families with no recourse to public funds who applied for Section 17 support in 2015 were not supported by their local council. An estimated 6,000 children in families with no recourse to public funds are being supported under Section 17. This is despite The Children's Society estimating that there are approximately 144,000 undocumented children living in England and Wales, with the most children located in London and the West Midlands.[38] These families face extreme levels of destitution and risk including living in unsafe accommodation, being unable to afford food and engaging in informal sexual relationships for small amounts of money.[39]

Rates of Section 17 support vary between local authorities meaning in some parts of the country, families are being forced to live on less than £2 per person a day.[40] Some local authorities continue to state that they can only accommodate the children in families with no recourse to public funds, despite the Birmingham City Council v Clue case where it was ruled that it was unlawful for local authorities to separate children from their families to avoid having to accommodate the whole family. Where support is provided subsistence rates and accommodation are exceptionally poor. There are families stuck in unsuitable temporary accommodation, often B&Bs.[41] The Birmingham Community Law Centre supported one family who had lived for five years in one hotel room.[42] Further, there are cases of local authorities paying some of the money meant to be paid directly to families to B&Bs to cover the higher costs of this type of accommodation. Consequentially, families are left with even less to live on.[43]

In July 2012, reforms of the family migration rules included imposing the no recourse to public funds condition on people who would formerly have been granted discretionary leave with recourse to public funds. Leave to remain is often obtained on the basis of caring for a British child or child who has lived in the UK for more than seven years. If granted such status, the person will be on a ten year route to settlement and will need to extend their leave every 30 months, at a current cost of £1493 per person.[44] Local authorities are starting to see re-presentations from people and families who were previously granted leave to remain with recourse because they were destitute and reliant on social services' support. When they have applied to extend their leave 30 months later, the no recourse to public funds condition has been imposed, leading to benefits suddenly stopping, parents having to give up work as they can no longer afford childcare, and rent arrears accruing.[45] Often the change of conditions process takes several months, so this situation cannot be resolved before the person or family becomes homeless. This status is commonly acquired by single parents, who have permission to work, but are unable to claim Housing Benefit, tax credits and Child Benefit

36 NRPF Connect data for 43 local authorities taken in March 2018. Available at: http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/NRPFconnect/Pages/default.aspx
37 NRPF Connect data for 48 local authorities taken on 15 February 2015
38 Dexter, Z., Capron, L., Gregg, L. (2016) *Making Life Impossible: How the needs of destitute migrant children are going unmet London: The Children's Society*
39 Dexter, Z., Capron, L., Gregg, L. (2016) *Making Life Impossible: How the needs of destitute migrant children are going unmet London: The Children's Society*
40 Dexter, Z., Capron, L., Gregg, L. (2016) *Making Life Impossible: How the needs of destitute migrant children are going unmet London: The Children's Society*
41 APPG for Ending Homelessness (2018) Minutes, 27th November. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238410/appgeh-migrant-homelessness-inquiry-session-minutes-171127.pdf
42 APPG for Ending Homelessness (2018) Minutes, 27th November. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238410/appgeh-migrant-homelessness-inquiry-session-minutes-171127.pdf
43 APPG for Ending Homelessness (2018) Minutes, 27th November. https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238410/appgeh-migrant-homelessness-inquiry-session-minutes-171127.pdf
44 NRPF Network (2018) written evidence to the APPG for Ending Homelessness' year two inquiry on rapid responses to homelessness.
45 NRPF Network (2018) written evidence submitted to the APPG for Ending Homelessness Year two inquiry on rapid responses to homelessness.

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in order to top up their income. Such families are excluded from social housing, so are reliant on the less stable private rented sector for accommodation. Evidence also shows most families in this position are failing to approach local authorities for help until they reach crisis point, for example, following a relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, eviction or hospital discharge.[46] This indicates that there is a significant amount of hidden homelessness amongst this group, including children, that does not come to the attention of local authorities.

The no recourse to public funds restriction is also a major cause of poverty, destitution and homelessness amongst migrant women facing domestic abuse.[47] These are vulnerable people, who often experience financial abuse, are isolated from family and friends and suffer from mental health problems. It is not just adults who suffer, but their children as well. The Polish Domestic Violence Helpline report that almost 80% of women who contact them and are classed as high-risk victims (at risk of serious physical harm or even death) have children.[48]

Southall Black Sisters work with survivors of domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse, 'honour' crimes, forced marriages and dowry-based violence. At least 60% of the women they work with have insecure immigration status and 42% of this group of clients were also identified as having problems with housing and/or homelessness.[49] Some of these women have previously been dependant on their partners/spouses for their immigration status whilst others arrive in the UK through other immigration routes. Victims of domestic abuse are also often financially dependent on their partners, preventing them from leaving. When they do decide to leave, they often find they have no recourse to public funds and can't apply for Housing Benefit. As a result, they face a choice between homelessness and returning to perpetrators. This issue was highlighted in the APPG's first year report on prevention.[50] Southall Black Sisters reports that on a daily basis, they are witness to countless migrant women who are subject to violence but have nowhere to go because they have insecure immigration status and fear deportation and destitution. Consequently, they are often forced underground, heightening their vulnerability to abuse and violence. When women do approach local authorities for help, their cases are often not followed up properly due to a lack of knowledge of immigration law and rules. Agencies also often pass responsibility for dealing with these cases between each other.

The domestic violence rule was introduced in 2002. This allows women on spousal visas a route to apply for indefinite leave to remain if their relationship broke down due to domestic violence. In 2012, the destitution and domestic violence concession was introduced to allow domestic violence rule applicants the chance to access limited state benefits and housing whilst their application is considered. However, women on other visas or those who have been trafficked into the UK or are here as migrant domestic workers, do not benefit from the reforms. The no recourse to public funds requirement for these sub-groups of women means that they continue to be denied access to safe accommodation and to public funds.

In 2017, Southall Black Sisters was awarded a grant from the Government's Tampon Tax Fund to establish a pilot project to provide temporary housing and subsistence funding to women with no recourse to public funding. The Government should now go further and scrap the no recourse to public funds condition for all migrants who have been a victim of domestic abuse, trafficking or modern slavery. This would enable them to safely escape their perpetrators, access safe accommodation and prevent them from being plunged into destitution that results in or compounds their trauma and mental and physical health problems. This would also be in line with Government commitments to tackle trafficking, prevent domestic abuse and protect victims of domestic violence and modern slavery.

46 Price, J and Spencer, S. (2015) *Safeguarding Children from Destitution: Local authority responses to families with 'no recourse to public funds'* Oxford: COMPAS
47 Wilcock, E. (2018) written evidence to the APPG for Ending Homelessness' Year 2 Inquiry on rapid responses to homelessness; Amnesty International and Southall Black Sisters (2008) *No recourse, no safety: the government's failure to protect women from violence London: Amnesty International, Southall Black Sisters*
48 Polish Domestic Violence Helpline (2018) written evidence to the APPG for Ending Homelessness' Year 2 inquiry on rapid responses to homelessness.
49 Southall Black Sisters (2018) written evidence to the APPG for Ending Homelessness' Year 2 inquiry on rapid responses to homelessness.
50 Greaves, R. (2017) All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness: Homelessness prevention for care leavers, prison leavers and survivors of domestic violence. London: APPG for Ending Homelessness

Case Study – Ms R

Following an arranged marriage, Ms R travelled to the UK from Pakistan on a spousal visa to join her husband, a British national. Ms R was subject to domestic violence, including controlling and emotional and financial abuse by her husband and in-laws. In 2014, she became pregnant but was always accompanied to her GP/midwife appointments to ensure that she was unable to report the abuse. Following the birth of her daughter in October 2015, the violence towards Ms R escalated. On one occasion Ms R's husband threw their infant daughter at Ms R, causing injury to her daughter and to her. In 2015, after yet another assault by her husband, Ms R telephoned the police. But she was subject to intense pressure by her in-laws to minimise the incident. Mr R received an informal warning from police.

A month later, Ms R reluctantly agreed to her husband's request that they travel to Pakistan with their daughter for what she understood was a holiday. However, her husband abandoned her at the airport taking her and her daughter's passports with him. Ms R contacted the British High Commission, the Forced Marriage Unit, and two MPs in the UK to seek assistance with returning to the UK to assert her matrimonial rights. She was eventually put in touch with a family law solicitor who commenced proceedings in the High Court in 2016 for her to return with her daughter. The High Court ordered the return of both Ms R and her daughter to the UK so that she could engage in legal proceedings in this country.

As a result of the efforts of Southall Black Sisters, Ms R's family solicitors and immigration solicitors (the latter acting pro bono as there was no legal aid available for her case), Ms R was granted leave outside the Immigration Rules to enter the UK, with no recourse to public funds. Her daughter, a British citizen, was granted an emergency travel document. Because Ms R had returned to the UK on a different visa to that which she had left the UK (her spousal visa no longer being valid due to her marriage breaking down), she had no recourse to public funds. Further, she was not entitled to apply for indefinite leave to remain under the domestic violence rule. This in turn meant she was not eligible for the destitution and domestic violence concession.

Ms R had arranged for herself and her daughter to stay with some family friends. However, this became untenable and Ms R and her daughter had to leave the house. As Ms R and her child were about to become homeless, Southall Black Sisters made a referral to their local children's services. The children's services attempted to abrogate their duty by refusing to carry out a Section 17 assessment; incorrectly telling Ms R she should return to the local authority area she had lived in before she was abandoned in Pakistan; suggesting Ms R return to live with family friends; referring Ms R to the charity Shelter; and offering to pay for a return ticket to Pakistan without consulting Southall Black Sisters or Ms R's immigration solicitors (despite a letter from Southall Black Sisters setting out why Ms R and her children would be at risk in Pakistan and that Ms R was trying to regularise her status).

Following a solicitor's letter threatening Judicial Review, children's services agreed to provide temporary accommodation and subsistence under Section 17. However, the subsistence level had to be challenged as it was inadequate. Their assessment ignored Ms R's allegations of domestic violence, suggesting her daughter could live with Mr R (the perpetrator) or his sister.

Ms R's immigration solicitors, with the assistance of Southall Black Sisters, were successful in their application for Ms R to be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Ms R is now trying to rebuild her life with her young daughter.

Care leavers subject to immigration control often have no recourse to public funds.[51] Consequently, most social workers say they can't support care leavers to prepare for transition into accommodation until they resolve their immigration status.[52] These young people are therefore forced to stay in semi-independent accommodation as the uncertainty of the immigration

51 Ayre, D., Capron, L., Egan, H., French, A., Gregg, L. (2016) *The Cost of being care free: The impact of poor financial education and removal of support on care leavers*, London: The Children's Society

52 Ayre, D., Capron, L., Egan, H., French, A., Gregg, L. (2016) *The Cost of being care free: The impact of poor financial education and removal of support on care leavers*, London: The Children's Society

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situation remains. Furthermore, the *Immigration Act (2016)* means that on the basis of their immigration status young people will generally no longer be able to stay in their foster placements, though there may be some exceptions. This provision counteracts the 'staying put' provisions which apply to British or settled care leavers and could have serious implications for their long-term welfare. Research by The Children's Society has shown that unaccompanied children often develop strong connections with their foster carers and this has a positive impact on their long-term future and stability.[53] As the APPG year one report found, care leavers are already a group vulnerable to homelessness.[54]

The policy of creating a 'hostile environment' for illegal immigrants has had damaging unintended consequences for migrants with a lawful right to be in the UK who have been caught up in the system. These include UK and EU nationals and non-EU nationals with valid leave.[55] The recent 'Windrush Scandal' has highlighted the human impact of mistakes made pursuing this approach.[56]

The increase in secondary immigration control, through which private citizens and public bodies have effectively been made responsible for immigration enforcement, has been damaging. There is evidence of the Right to Rent and bank checks introduced through the *Immigration Act (2014)* and the *Immigration Act (2016)* forcing migrants underground and causing homelessness.

The Right to Rent scheme requires private landlords and letting agents to check that tenants have a right to rent for any tenancies starting after 1 February 2016. New measures introduced in 2016 mean that landlords and letting agents will now face criminal charges if they rent their property to someone who does not have the right to rent. An evaluation of the Right to Rent scheme in Birmingham found that it was causing homelessness and making it more difficult for people without documentation to access private rented accommodation.[57] Research by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants indicates that this has led to discrimination against foreign nationals. Forty-two per cent of surveyed landlords state they would be less likely to rent to people who do not have a British passport as they feared criminal sanctions if they made a mistake under the legislation.[58] There is also no clear evidence that the scheme fulfils the Government's aims to encourage irregular migrants to leave the UK, or to effectively target rogue landlords who exploit migrants. An inspection of the scheme carried out by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration found that the scheme has 'yet to demonstrate its worth as a tool to encourage immigration compliance'.[59]

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)* takes this further by requiring banks and building societies to check the identity of every current account holder against a Home Office supplied database. Homeless people and newly recognised refugees already face significant barriers to opening bank accounts due to the identification and proof of address often required by banks. If a person lacks the usual forms of ID (e.g. passport) alternative forms of ID may be given, such as a letter from an employer. However, banks do not have to accept these forms of ID and homeless people often struggle to open accounts. The situation is similar for newly recognised refugees as shown by evidence from the Refugee

53 Ayre, D., Capron, L., Egan, H., French, A., Gregg, L. (2016) *The Cost of being care free: The impact of poor financial education and removal of support on care leavers*, London: The Children's Society

54 Greaves, R. (2017) *All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness: Homelessness prevention for care leavers, prison leavers and survivors of domestic violence*. London: APPG for Ending Homelessness

55 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2018) *Immigration policy: basis for building consensus. Second Report of Session 2017-19*. https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/500/500.pdf

56 BBC (2018) *Windrush: What is the hostile environment immigration policy?* http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-43831563/windrush-what-is-the-hostile-environment-immigration-policy?intlink_from_url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bbc.co.uk%2Fnews%2Ftopics%2Fc9vwmzw7n7lt%2Fwindrush-deportation-row&link_location=live-reporting-map

57 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

58 Patel, C. & 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

59 Bolt, D. (2018) *An inspection of the "Right to Rent" scheme*. London: Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

Council and APPG on Refugees.[60] Further, a bank account is needed to access Universal Credit, posing problems for some people eligible for welfare but unable to access a bank account. Enlisting untrained people to carry out what is effectively immigration enforcement is likely to result in mistakes, penalising migrants who are entitled to access housing and public services.

The APPG for Ending Homelessness heard evidence that 28 days is not enough time for refugees to find housing and access support through the mainstream welfare system before the Home Office provided financial support and accommodation ends.[61] Consequently, refugees are left facing homelessness and destitution. Forced underground, their transition to regularising their status and secure accommodation is delayed. Many end up relying on voluntary schemes (i.e. nightstops) for support.[62] NACCOM's annual report for 2016/17 reports rising numbers of refugees accommodated, including those facing destitution after the end of the 'move-on' period. Refugees made up 43% of residents in this year, compared to 29% last year. Of 824 refugees who accessed accommodation through NACCOM, at least 25% were destitute (i.e. without access to benefits, housing and employment) when they approached the member organisation for help.[63] This rise in newly recognised refugees experiencing homelessness is supported by the JRF's findings that the proportion of destitute migrants with refugee status had risen from around eight per cent in 2015 to 16% in 2017.[64]

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Civil legal aid for immigration cases should be reinstated to ensure all migrants have access to justice.**
   Access to good legal advice is essential to ensuring the quick, accurate resolution of immigration cases. Access to justice as a human right would help prevent unnecessary hardship, resolve destitution and homelessness more quickly, and stop existing problems from escalating. The Government review of the impact of measures in the *Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2012)* provides a welcome opportunity to address the removal of the majority of immigration cases from the scope of legal aid.

2. **The no recourse to public funds condition should not be imposed on a person who is applying for leave to remain under the family/private life rules when they have a dependent child. Care leavers and victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery should also be exempt from the condition.**
   There are groups for whom the no recourse to public funds condition can be especially damaging. Migrants applying for leave to remain on the basis of caring for a British child, or child who has lived in the UK for more than seven years, have been hit by changes brought in through the family migration rules imposing the no recourse to public funds condition on people formerly granted discretionary leave with recourse. The consequence has been significant rates of hidden homelessness among this population. Imposing the no recourse to public funds condition on some victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery can leave individuals facing a choice of remaining in a dangerous situation or homelessness. Ensuring all care leavers have access to public funds on leaving care would help aid their transition to adulthood and make them less likely to fall through the gaps by providing a much-needed safety net for this group of young people. The no recourse to public funds condition should be removed for these particularly vulnerable groups.

3. **Local authorities should be subject to guidelines clearly stipulating their safeguarding duties under Section 17 and held accountable for fulfilling these duties. This should be accompanied by adequate resourcing, especially in areas of high need.**
   The failure of some local authorities to meet their safeguarding duties to families with no recourse to public funds under Section 17, and inconsistent standards across councils where support is offered, should be addressed through clear guidelines. These should make clear local authorities' responsibility to the whole family, the need to keep families together when it is in the best interest of the child and the level of support that should be provided. Local authorities should receive adequate resourcing to fulfil these duties and to prevent gatekeeping. This should account for wide variation in the number of families with no recourse to public funds across the country, with those local authorities under particular strain given extra resource.

4. **Home Office errors should be addressed through better training, enforcement and accountability. Immigration case workers must have sufficient training and capacity to make accurate and timely decisions. There should be a mechanism in place for a yearly review of Home Office decisions and for holding the department accountable for high numbers of errors. In the short-term, applications from people who are currently homeless should be prioritised.**
   Administrative delays and errors can leave migrants entitled to support destitute, making it harder for them to go on to regularise their status or challenge decisions. This has been highlighted by the recent 'Windrush Scandal'. A small upfront investment by the Home Office in getting immigration cases right in the first place would help save money in the long-run and enable migrants to start rebuilding their lives more quickly, avoiding unnecessary hardship and homelessness.

5. **Existing models of good practice offering immigration advice and bed spaces to homeless migrants, such as the Street Legal model, should be scaled up. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Home Office should provide funding for these services in areas where commissioners and outreach services have identified a need among people sleeping rough in the local area.**
   Existing models of good practice that support homeless migrants to access legal advice and accommodation, such as Street Legal, should be scaled up. This would help homeless migrants to resolve their homelessness more quickly by giving them access to immigration advice and accommodation. As this approach is rolled out across the country, it should include increased funding to provide vital legal advice for homeless migrants and those close to street homelessness, to prevent entrenched rough sleeping among this particularly vulnerable group. It should take a rights-based approach to tackling homelessness, which runs through Home Office and local authority policies. Commissioning frameworks should include: an approach to voluntary return that is about helping people to explore their options through independent, non-directive advice; and a commitment to move away from the constant threat of enforcement action to building trust with rough sleepers.

6. **New duties in the *Immigration Act (2014)* and the *Immigration Act (2016)* relating to the Right to Rent and bank account checks should be scrapped.**
   We welcome the Government announcement in May 2018 that it would no longer seek patient data from the NHS in immigration cases. The decision was made following evidence that the policy had led to migrants being too afraid to seek medical care, risking them becoming more vulnerable and isolated. We would like to see the Government now take action to overturn the Right to Rent and bank checks due to evidence that these policies are increasing isolation and homelessness among migrants. Ending the Right to Rent would remove the threat of criminal charges and fines for landlords who rent to migrants who have irregular status. This should make landlords more willing

60 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; Doyle, L. (2014) *28 days later: experiences of new refugees in the UK*. London: Refugee Council
61 Smith, L. (2018) *Mind the Gap: Homelessness Amongst Newly Recognised Refugees* Newcastle: NACCOM
62 Smith, L. (2018) *Mind the Gap: Homelessness Amongst Newly Recognised Refugees* Newcastle: NACCOM
63 NACCOM (2017) *The No Accommodation Network. Annual Report 2016-17*. Newcastle: NACCOM.
64 Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., Sosenko, F., Blenkinsopp, J., Johnsen, S., Littlewood, M., Netto, G. & Watts, B. (2017) *Destitution in the UK*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

to rent properties to homeless people, migrants, people of black and minority ethnic backgrounds and people with less easily recognisable documentation.

Bank checks meanwhile open-up serious scope for errors and exacerbate existing difficulties faced by homeless people and refugees when opening bank accounts. Consequently, they risk creating a further barrier to resolving homelessness and further isolating vulnerable migrants. The Right to Rent and bank checks duties should be reversed to ensure migrants who are in the country legally are not caught up in the system and driven underground, making it harder to resolve their homelessness and leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

7. The 28 day 'move-on' period for refugees should be extended from 28 to 56 days.

An increasing number of refugees are facing destitution and homelessness as 28 days is not enough time for refugees to sort out welfare support, immigration status or find housing before their cash and accommodation support ends.[65] There is a clear need for change to the process and timeframe of the 'move-on' period for newly recognised refugees. The UK Government has now committed to reviewing the 28-day window. This will be based on an evaluation of the average time it takes new refugees to find work, apply for benefits and find somewhere to live. The Red Cross is also currently piloting an extension of the 'move-on' period to 50 days. The *Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)* extends the definition of threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days in recognition of the difficulties many people face trying to secure accommodation in four weeks. The 'move-on' period for refugees should also be increased to 56 days in line with the new homelessness legislation.

65 Smith, L. (2018) *Mind the Gap: Homelessness Amongst Newly Recognised Refugees* Newcastle: NACCOM

RAPID REHOUSING MODELS

Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative effect on adults and children. It can make it harder to find and maintain employment and can exacerbate or lead to drug and alcohol problems, mental health problems and physical health problems. It is therefore vital that homeless people are helped into permanent accommodation as quickly as possible.

Rapid rehousing models have the fundamental goal of reducing the amount of time a person is homeless, and are therefore critical to ending a person's homelessness quickly and reducing the risk of repeat homelessness. For people with low level needs, rapid rehousing can stop complex needs or chronic problems from developing by allowing for effective early intervention that addresses the needs of the individual.[66] The models focus on supporting those whose most important need is access to housing, with a lack of housing often being the main cause of their homelessness. They follow a housing-led approach, where the focus is on quick access to secure, permanent accommodation. Rather than requiring people to prove their 'housing readiness' before accessing long-term accommodation, rapid rehousing models help people into safe, stable housing before supporting them to address any other needs they might have. People are helped through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services. There are various models of rapid rehousing that can be effective depending on a person's individual circumstances and level of support needs. Housing First focuses on delivering support to people with complex needs; Critical Time Intervention (CTI) can be used to help people access housing during a period of transition (e.g. leaving care); and Help to Rent schemes can be effectively applied to support those with low to medium support needs access and sustain private rented accommodation.

Although the long-term impacts of rapid rehousing are still being studied, initial research indicates that people assisted by rapid rehousing models experience higher rates of permanent housing placement and similar or lower rates of return to homelessness after the assistance ends compared to those assisted by transitional housing or who only receive emergency shelter.[67]

There is increasing evidence of the effectiveness of rapid rehousing models. They have already been embraced by other countries, including Finland, Denmark, Canada and the USA, and there are promising programmes and pilots in the UK. In Finland, Housing First has led to the virtual eradication of rough sleeping and a drastic reduction in the numbers of other homeless people.[68] Meanwhile, in Denmark, the CTI programme has rehoused around 95% of participants successfully.[69]

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) in Scotland has recommended setting a clear national direction of travel to transition to a model of 'rapid rehousing' by default across Scotland. Each local authority area would develop and cost a five year 'Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan' by December 2018, within the framework consulted on and published by the Action Group in June 2018.[70]

Critical Time Intervention – Denmark

The APPG for Ending Homelessness heard evidence from Professor Lars Benjaminsen, a Senior Researcher at the Danish National Centre for Social Research who has studied the impact of rapid rehousing in Denmark.

Denmark has employed a Critical Time Intervention (CTI) approach to tackling homelessness. The approach is suitable for the broad 'middle group' of homeless people with moderate support needs. It provides a systematic, evidence based intervention aimed at supporting people in a critical transition period, for example leaving care, or from a shelter into their own housing. Interventions generally last for around nine

66 Busch-Geertsema, V. (2005) *Does Re-Housing Lead to Reintegration?* Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research. 18(2), pp.205–26.
67 Cunningham, M., Gillespie, S., Anderson, J. (2015) *Rapid Re-housing: what the research says* (Washington: Urban Institute)
68 Y-Foundation (2017) *A home of your own: Housing First and ending homelessness in Finland*. Keuruu: Otava Book Printing Ltd.
69 Benjamisen, 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
70 HARSAG (2017) *Ending Rough Sleeping in Scotland: An interim report on the activity of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group*, March 2017

months with three phases, each three months long, during which participants received specific support to meet their needs. The first phase involves a key worker helping the individual make the transition from shelter to housing. This includes supporting the individual to move from shelter to housing, building up contacts between the individuals and existing services in the local community. In phase two, the focus is on strengthening the individual's support network, testing how it works and adapting support provided where necessary. In phase three, the support offered transfers from the CTI key worker to local support networks and services.

The approach has proved very effective with around 95% of CTI participants rehoused successfully.[71] About half of the participants do not require further floating support after the nine months. The other half needed further floating support after the nine months and were often referred to general floating support usually of a lower intensity.

A study into the outcomes of the model found that CTI could significantly reduce the number of days homeless people spent in shelters, hospital care (both psychiatric and somatic), being treated for addition and in prison. Expenditure on GPs and other health care specialists was also reduced. Overall the study found that the first year of the CTI programme delivered a net cost saving of €13,097 per person.

However, for rapid rehousing to be delivered to scale and effectively, it is necessary to ensure there is enough secure, affordable accommodation where people can be rehoused. A report by Homeless Link found that 34% of accommodation projects in England cited lack of available accommodation as the main barrier to their residents moving on.[72] The supply of good quality, affordable homes across the UK clearly needs to be addressed as a priority and long-term aim for all national Governments to remove this barrier to adopting rapid rehousing models on a large scale.

The shrinking social rented sector coupled with the significant expansion of the private rented sector means it's important to ensure this type of tenure is accessible and appropriate for homeless people. Currently, homeless people face significant barriers to accessing private rented sector accommodation, including the high cost of deposits and rental advances required by private landlords.[73] A survey of more than 800 private landlords showed increasing reluctance amongst landlords to rent to homeless people or people in receipt of benefits. Eighty-two per cent of respondents were unwilling to rent to homeless people because of concerns over rent arrears and the need for more intensive tenancy management.[74] Homeless people can also struggle to meet upfront costs, such as deposits, rent in advance and agency fees.

Help to Rent schemes can help homeless people stuck in this situation by providing a deposit guarantee, which functions in the place of a cash deposit, and tenancy support for both the tenant and landlord. A deposit guarantee means that a charity or local authority agrees to cover any damages or arrears accrued for an agreed period, whilst tenancy support could include training on what it means to be a good tenant or mediation. Research has shown that 80% of landlords would be more willing to let to under-35s with a rent deposit scheme.[75]

Rapid rehousing models can also be cost-effective by reducing the cost of long stays in temporary accommodation as well as costs associated with medical treatment and stays in public institutions. Homelessness at present costs the public sector in excess of £1bn a year.[76] A National Audit Office report found that more than three quarters of this - £845m – was spent on temporary accommodation.[77] Evaluation of Crisis' Private Rented Sector Access Programme showed that

71 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
72 Homeless Link (2017) *Support for single homeless people in England: Annual review 2016*. London: Homeless Link.
73 Gousy, H. (2016) *Home. No less will do: Improving access to private renting for single homeless people*. London: Crisis.
74 Reeve, K., Cole, I., Batty, E., Foden, M., Green, S. & Pattison, B. (2016) *Home No less will do Homeless people's access to the Private Rented Sector*. London: Crisis.
75 Pattison, B., Reeve, K. (2017) *Access to homes for under-35's: The impact of Welfare Reform on Private Renting*. Sheffield Hallam University: Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.
76 National Audit Office (2017) *Homelessness*. London: National Audit Office.
77 National Audit Office (2017) *Homelessness*. London: National Audit Office.

in three months, 92 projects saved more than £13m in non-housing costs to the public purse.[78] Meanwhile, the first year of the CTI programme in Denmark delivered a net cost saving of €13,097[79] per person.

Plymouth Access to Housing (Path)
Plymouth Access to Housing's (Path) private rented accommodation service supports homeless people who are tenancy ready, often referred by the local authority. The service offers a Deposit Guarantee for 12 months. Once the tenancy is set up, the charity monitors it for 12 months, checking in with both tenant and landlord. It aims to problem-solve, mediate and generally support the tenancy to last. The aim is to work with landlords as partners to ensure the tenancy can last. Most people Path helps have somewhere to stay short-term. However, for single people who don't, the charity sees if it can offer them rooms in shared houses it manages as temporary accommodation. This means people have somewhere safe to stay in the short-term, with regular visits from Path staff. It enables some people to gain experience of sharing and also a reference for the charity from doing so. In 2017, the charity accommodated 123 non-priority clients, 65 priority cases and 43 young people, making a total of 231 people housed.

> "I had lived in a shared house for six years, but my living situation became untenable after a couple moved in who were disruptive and constantly arguing. I ended up having a nervous breakdown, feeling suicidal and being hospitalised. After approaching my local authority for help, I was told I wasn't a priority and referred to Path. Path saved my life by offering me structure, focus and help regaining my self-respect"
>
> Michael, Path client.

Deposit guarantees are a vital element of private rented access schemes. Although claims tend to be low, demonstrating the success of supporting people to maintain tenancies, it can mean charities holding high liability at any one time. This can make it difficult for small charities to extend schemes or keep them going. Mike Taylor, Director of Plymouth Access to Housing told the APPG how the charity would have had to pay out against £80,000 worth of deposit claims if the agreements went wrong. However, only £1,765 was claimed in 2017/18, despite £37,350 worth of deposit guarantees ending.[80]

Crisis commissioned WPI Economics to identify the true cost of private rented sector access schemes to the public purse. WPI Economics found that funding national provision of Help to Rent schemes, along with introducing a national deposit bond scheme would cost £31m annually. This consists of £6.7m for the annual cost of a national deposit bond scheme and £24.1m for Help to Rent projects. This additional upfront investment could help save money in the long-run. Evaluation of Crisis' Private Rented Sector Access Programme showed that in three months, 92 projects saved more than £13m in non-housing costs to the public purse.[81]

There has been increasing political will for implementing housing-led solutions to homelessness due to evidence of successes from both international examples and UK projects. A Government White Paper, published in February 2017 entitled *Fixing Our Broken Housing Market*, included a commitment to considering whether social lettings agencies can be an effective tool for securing more housing for households who would otherwise struggle – providing security for landlords and support for tenants to help strengthen and sustain tenancies.

The 2017 Budget saw a focus on housing-led solutions. The Government announced that there would be £20m made available for private rented sector accommodation and support over two years, which may or may not include a deposit bond scheme. It is

78 Gousy, H. (2016) *Home. No less will do: Improving access to private renting for single homeless people*.London: Crisis.
79 Benjaminsen, L. (2018) written evidence submitted to the APPG for Ending Homelessness' Year two inquiry on rapid responses to homelessness.
80 Taylor, M. (2018) written evidence submitted to the APPG for Ending Homelessness' Year two Inquiry on rapid responses to homelessness.
81 Gousy, H. (2016) *Home. No less will do: Improving access to private renting for single homeless people*. London: Crisis.

important that this funding is used to deliver good quality rapid rehousing approaches based on existing evidence of what works. It should also be accompanied by funding for a deposit guarantee service to make this expansion viable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Well-designed rapid rehousing approaches based on existing evidence of what works should be funded to scale for homeless people with low to medium level needs. This should include the commissioning of CTI approaches for care leavers, prison leavers and survivors of domestic abuse with low-level needs.**
   Evidence shows that rapid rehousing models can be effective in quickly resolving and preventing repeat homelessness among people with lower level needs. The CTI programme in Denmark has proved very effective with 95% of participants rehoused successfully.[82] In its first-year inquiry on prevention, the APPG looked at preventing homelessness among prison leavers, care leavers and survivors of domestic violence. These cohorts are easily identifiable and will already be in touch with public institutions meaning their risk of homelessness should be easy to pick up and address. All three cohorts also face significant barriers to housing. For example, since the *Localism Act (2011)* gave local authorities discretion to exclude certain groups from social housing waiting lists, some social housing providers have used this to exclude prospective tenants with a criminal record. Furthermore, there are significant financial barriers to the private rented sector such as high rents, delays in benefits and the need for a deposit. A CTI approach could help people with lower level needs obtain housing quickly, improve independence and ensure they remain housed, preventing repeat homelessness. Although investing in rapid rehousing approaches would require upfront investment, they can save on costs to the public purse in the long run by reducing the amount of time people spend in shelters, hospital care (both psychiatric and somatic), being treated for addiction and in prison.

2. **The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Taskforce must ensure that the allocated £20m investment in Help to Rent services is used to deliver both national provision of Help to Rent projects and a National Deposit Guarantee Scheme. Based on WPI Economics modelling, £31m funding per annum is required to deliver private rented sector schemes to scale, supported by a national deposit guarantee. The Treasury should therefore commit an additional £11m top-up funding per year for the delivery of this.**
   To make the expansion of private rented sector access schemes viable, the Government should underwrite the schemes with a National Deposit Guarantee Scheme. Transferring underwriting the risk of bonds to national Government would provide access schemes with greater financial security, allowing small charities to keep running and expand successful projects. As evidence shows claims tend to be low, meaning there is little risk associated with running a National Deposit Guarantee Scheme. The homelessness charity Crisis ran a number of private rented sector access schemes with funding from the MHCLG and found that claims often did not exceed 15 to 20% of the total value of the deposits.[83]

3. **A seven day time limit should be placed on stays in unsuitable temporary accommodation, accompanied by housing stock allocations policies and a fund to support local authorities to find alternative appropriate accommodation after this period.**
   For homeless people living in unsuitable temporary accommodation (e.g. B&Bs or hostels with no support mechanism in place) it is essential that an appropriate time limit be placed on stays to prevent support needs from escalating and unnecessary cost to the public purse. Unsuitable temporary accommodation can be of low standard with poor basic facilities, including inadequate access to toilet, washing and cooking facilities. It can also mean housing someone in an environment where they feel threatened or risk returning to destructive lifestyles.[84] Upfront investment in good quality rehousing schemes and to address housing supply will be necessary to support local authorities meet this time limit. Target dates for implementation should be agreed locally to allow time for adoption by the most struggling local authorities.

   Despite this upfront investment, the policy would lead to cost savings in the long-run by reducing the need for lengthy stays in expensive, unsuitable temporary accommodation, where the support needs of homeless people are going unmet. Research commissioned by Crisis and undertaken by PriceWaterhouseCoopers has estimated that in 2018 the expected benefits of moving all single people in Scotland out of unsuitable temporary accommodation to other forms of temporary accommodation within seven days would be a saving of £29m.[85]

   This recommendation could be implemented immediately in Scotland, where a seven day time limit has already been placed on the amount of time families or pregnant women can stay in B&B accommodation. However, it should be a longer term aim for the Westminster Government where wider reforms to improve entitlement to housing and increase housing provision for homeless people are necessary.

82 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) online: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1884&furtherNews=yes
83 Gousy, H. (2016) *Home. No less will do: Improving access to private renting for single homeless people*. London: Crisis.
84 Crisis (2018), *A Life in Limbo: costings summary*, https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238771/1804_a_life_in_limbo_costings_summary.pdf
85 Crisis (2018), *A Life in Limbo: costings summary*, https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238771/1804_a_life_in_limbo_costings_summary.pdf

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Since 2002, local authorities have had a duty to house young people aged 16 to 17, care leavers aged 18 to 20, and people considered vulnerable because they've been in care, the armed forces or prison, or because they've experienced violence, or the threat of violence. However, there are many young people who become homeless who are not considered a priority for housing.

A rapid response among this group is key to ensuring that their homelessness is brief and does not become ongoing. Research has found that people who become homeless at a younger age are more likely to face ongoing problems and that young homeless people are more likely to be vulnerable to poor physical and mental health; and risk-taking behaviour, such as self-neglect, self-harm, suicide, and substance use.[86]

Better data is needed on the number of young people who are homeless in the UK to fully understand the scale of the problem as currently no accurate counts are taken. Government figures for 2015/16 show that, in England, 12,930 people aged 16 to 24 were considered as in priority need and owed an offer of settled housing.[87]

However, it is likely that the scale of the problem is much greater than that portrayed through official figures as they only record those young people accepted as statutorily homeless. Centrepoint estimates that around 86,000 young people approached their local authority for help with housing in the UK in 2016/17.[88] Of these 58% didn't receive a statutory housing duty or any prevention or relief support.[89]

Furthermore, young people are often unaware of how to access help and many end up experiencing hidden homelessness. Young people who find themselves homeless commonly use informal living arrangements, such as staying with friends or family in overcrowded accommodation.[90]

Research carried out in 2017 found that one in five young people in the UK had sofa surfed at some point in the previous year. It found 225,000 young people in London had stayed in an unsafe place because they had nowhere safe to call home.[91] Young people are overrepresented among the hidden homeless and only one in five young people aged between 16 to 24 seek help from the council. Those that do present often fail to be recognised as vulnerable, despite being in danger.[92]

The causes of homelessness among young people are often different from the wider homelessness population. Relationship breakdown is the most common cause of loss of stable accommodation among young people. Homeless Link's 2018 report, *Young and Homeless*, found that being asked to leave the home was a causal factor of homelessness in 49% of cases.[93]

As highlighted by the APPG's year one inquiry on prevention, care leavers are also at particular risk of homelessness. Once the local authority's statutory duties and responsibilities cease, care leavers can face homelessness due to increased support needs, a lack of transitional support on leaving care and the lack of a support network in the form of relatives to rely on. Research tells us that one third of care leavers become homeless in the first two years immediately after they leave care[94] and 25% of all homeless people have been in care at some point in their lives.[95]

Increasing restrictions on young people's access to welfare has created additional barriers to housing, which has left young people more vulnerable to homelessness. The Government announced in March 2018 that the Housing Benefit element of Universal Credit would be restored to people aged 18 to 21. It is hoped that the decision to reinstate Housing Benefit for 18 to 21 year olds will help encourage landlords to let to younger people.

86 Mental Health Foundation: The Mental Health Needs of Homeless Children and Young People, Updates, Volume 3, Issue 22, August, 2002
87 Centrepoint (2018) *More than a number: The scale of youth homelessness in the UK*. London: Centrepoint
88 Centrepoint (2018) *More than a number: The scale of youth homelessness in the UK*. London: Centrepoint
89 Centrepoint (2018) *More than a number: The scale of youth homelessness in the UK*. London: Centrepoint
90 McCoy, S. (2018) *Danger Zones and Stepping Stones: Phase Two A quantitative exploration of young people's experience of temporary living* London: Depaul UK
91 London Assembly Housing Committee (2017) *Hidden Homelessness in London* London: London Assembly.
92 London Assembly Housing Committee (2017) *Hidden Homelessness in London* London: London Assembly.
93 Homeless Link (2018) *Young and Homeless 2018*. London: Homeless Link
94 M. Stein and M. Morris (2010) *Increasing the Number of Care Leavers in 'Settled, Safe Accommodation* London: C4EO.
95 P. Mackie and I. Thomas (2014) *Nations Apart? Experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain* London: Crisis

However, changes to the Shared Accommodation Rate, introduced in 2012, restricted Housing Benefit and the housing element of Universal Credit that single people aged under 35 can receive. This means that single people aged under 35 are only able to claim the amount for a single room in a shared house, rather than a self-contained flat. The rate does not apply to those aged 25 or over who are prison leavers subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, or who can prove that they have lived in homeless hostels for at least three months and accepted rehabilitation or support services prior to moving to the private rented sector. Care leavers under 22 are also exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate. Eighty per cent of providers and local authorities surveyed by Homeless Link in 2018 thought that the Shared Accommodation Rate was having an impact on young people's ability to access and sustain accommodation.[96]

The APPG for Ending Homelessness, heard how a lack of access to affordable housing had been exacerbated by the changes to the Shared Accommodation Rate, especially in the case of certain groups of young people who found sharing more difficult. For example, prison leavers and LGBT young people could struggle to find suitable shared accommodation.

Case Study

The APPG heard evidence from Jodie who experienced homelessness as a teenager. She moved between hostels, sofa-surfed and slept on the streets. This had a severe impact on her mental health and left her feeling low.

Jodie contacted St Basils who found her emergency accommodation and helped her off the streets. The charity also provided her with practical support, such as budgetary advice and equipped her with the necessary skills to succeed in life and that would prevent her from facing homelessness in the future. St Basils also helped her access education and study for a diploma in healthcare to support her ambition to become a nurse.

She was supported into a flat of her own, giving her the safe haven she had always dreamed of. Because of the support St Basils have given her, Jodie is now looking forward to either pursuing a career as a nurse or helping other young people off the streets.

In recent years, the Government has invested in specific funds and policy initiatives that aim to develop positive accommodation options for young people. For example, the Fair Chance Fund provided £15m funding targeted at tackling homelessness among young people with the most complex needs. In addition, the Positive Pathway Framework now informs the development of homelessness prevention and housing services for young people in around two thirds of local authorities. However, young people are still at a far higher risk of homelessness than older adults.[97]

A crucial element of the context for youth homelessness in England, and the wider UK, is that younger single people, especially if they are living outside of the family home, now face highly disproportionate risks of poverty.[98] The *Homelessness Monitor: England 2017* suggests that the 'dramatic deterioration in young people's fortunes' associated with unemployment, declining benefit protection and rising private sector rents is arguably the most prominent poverty 'story' to emerge in the UK in recent years.[99] Young men under 25 are the group most likely to be destitute in the UK today.[100]

Positive Pathway Framework

The Positive Pathway Framework was developed with the advice of local authorities, social landlords, homelessness agencies and young people. It is based on national data and research, policy direction, what works well and learning from visits to local authorities and other agencies.

Stage one of the framework focuses on ensuring young people at risk of homelessness and their families receive timely, accurate information and advice about housing

96 Homeless Link (2018) *Young and Homeless 2018*. London: Homeless Link
97 Watts, B., Johnsen, S., & Sosenko, F. (2015) *Youth homelessness in the UK: A review for The OVO Foundation*. Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University
98 Padley, M. & Hirsch, D. (2014) *Households Below a Minimum Income Standard: 2008/9 to 2011/12*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, p.3
99 Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wilcox, S. & Watts, B. (2017) *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2017*, London: Crisis.
100 Fitzpatrick, S. Bramley, G. Sosenko, F., Blenkinsopp, J., Johnsen, S. Littlewood, M. Netto, G. & Watts, B. (2016) *Destitution in the UK: Final Report*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

options. The aim is to empower young people and their families to plan transitions to independent living without support from specialist services.

Stage two delivers early intervention targeted to reach households where young people are most likely to be at risk of homelessness by linking all local services working with young people and families at risk.

Stage three of the framework, the 'pathway hub', provides wraparound support for young people at the point of crisis. Where safe, young people are supported to stay in the family home. However, where emergency accommodation is needed this is delivered in a way that supports young people's learning or employment.

Stage four of the framework focuses on ensuring that where a young person cannot return home, there is good quality accommodation and support available to them in the form of supported housing or Housing First.

Stage five looks at ensuring there is a range of safe, decent, affordable housing options for young people both shared and self-contained, in the private, social and third sectors. This should include integrated education, training and employment support for young people to ensure they can access work as a longer-term way out of homelessness.

St Basils have also developed a youth justice accommodation pathway to ensure young people do not become homeless after exiting the justice system and alongside Barnardos, have developed a Care Leaver Framework to ensure young people in the care system do not need to experience homelessness. With both approaches the emphasis is on preparing young people for housing before they exit public institutions and ensuring that an accommodation plan and appropriate move-on support is put in place. The framework enables joint working across services in touch with young people to ensure gaps in provision and support are identified and addressed.

Housing-led approaches are less established as an approach for young people and it is vital that they consider their distinct set of needs. For young people, more frequent moves, returns to family, or shifting roommate situations can be age-appropriate choices, and this should be reflected in successful housing-led approaches for this cohort. A longitudinal study is underway in the US to develop a stronger evidence base for the use of housing-led approaches for young people.[101]

In the US, the Department for Housing and Urban Development has established a rapid rehousing approach to addressing youth homelessness through its Continuum of Care Programme. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programmes have established promising practices for rapidly moving young people into permanent housing, offering short-to-medium term financial assistance and providing developmentally appropriate case management and services.[102]

In Canada, a Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) model has been developed, which follows a distinct set of principles aimed at making Housing First relevant to youth homelessness. A small number of organisations in Canada have experience of developing and delivering HF4Y. The outcomes of those projects have been positive and the experience of these organisations has informed the development of principles and guidance.[103] The goal of HF4Y is defined as, not simply being about providing housing stability, but supporting young people and facilitating a healthy transition to adulthood.

The main core principles of HF4Y (as developed in Canada) are:

1. A right to housing with no preconditions
2. Youth choice, youth voice and self-determination
3. Positive youth development and wellness orientation
4. Individualised, client-driven support with no time limits
5. Social inclusion and community integration

101 Youth Action Hub (2018) *Evaluation Study of a rapid rehousing program for young adults* https://youthactionhub.org/research/evaluation-study-of-a-rapid-re-housing-program-for-young-adults/
102 Social Care Institute for Excellence (2018) *A rapid evidence assessment of what works in homelessness services*. London: Social Care Institute for Excellence.
103 Stirling, T. (2018) written evidence submitted to the APPG for Ending Homelessness' year two inquiry into rapid responses to homelessness

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While the emerging evidence from these organisations demonstrate that HF4Y is an effective intervention for young people, further work is underway to test its efficacy and strengthen the evidence base, using randomised control trials in a number of places.[104] In 2017, The Rock Trust set up the first Housing First for Youth project in the UK. The two year pilot is being developed in partnership with Almond Housing Association and is being developed in West Lothian for people leaving care. The pilot aims to build up further evidence of the success of a Housing First approach for young people.

The 2017 FEANTSA report on youth homelessness argued that access to affordable housing without preconditions is essential, but that the varied needs of young people in difficulty must be taken into consideration so that the process of inclusion through housing is as appropriate as possible. It recommended that HF4Y as a human-rights based approach is essential for any youth homelessness strategy.[105]

The model shows how any housing-led response to youth homelessness must account for young homeless people having different needs than the wider adult population. It should recognise the importance of incorporating a youth offer for young homeless people that provides wraparound support to help with the transition to adulthood.

The reluctance of landlords to let to young people and the lower rates of Housing Benefit create potential logistical problems for the roll out of a housing-led model for young people in the UK. Nonetheless, there are examples of rapid rehousing models working well for young people in the UK. These include Help to Rent projects, which can support young people to access the private rented sector. Evaluation of the MHCLG funded Sharing Solutions programme shows how Help to Rent projects can support people in receipt of Housing Benefit who are only eligible for the Shared Accommodation Rate.[106] Of 172 tenancies set up by January 2015, only 19 ended negatively. Furthermore, the programme delivered a saving of £5.21 for every £1 of grant funding. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates that around 1.5 million more young people aged 18 to 30 will be pushed towards living in the private rented sector by 2020.[107] Consequently, Help to Rent schemes are increasingly relevant to addressing youth homelessness.

Albert Kennedy Trust – Rainbow Starter Pack
The Albert Kennedy Trust's Rainbow Starter Pack provides young people with everything they need to enter the private rented sector, including costs associated with rent, deposit, moving costs and buying white goods, which means they can get settled more quickly. Support with subsistence costs means young people can remain in education, training or employment whilst maintaining their accommodation. The charity has spent £12,000 on Starter Packs which have enabled young people to stay in the private rented sector.

New Horizon Youth Centre – Project Vista
With Project Vista, New Horizon Youth Centre (NHYC) set out to create low-cost shared accommodation for homeless young people (aged 18-25) in partnership with Network Homes. The project provides a genuinely affordable accommodation option for young people in housing need who are in precarious and/or low wage employment, and who might otherwise not have sufficient income for private rented sector or hostel rents, or would be at risk of losing their job due to homelessness. Project Vista aims to provide these young people with stable housing to help them improve their employment circumstances and save for a move-on deposit.

In the period June 2016 to November 2017, Project Vista housed 41 homeless young people, who were either sleeping rough, in emergency accommodation or about to become homeless. Eighteen of the 21 young

104 Youth Action Hub (2018) *Evaluation Study of a rapid rehousing program for young adults* https://youthactionhub.org/research/evaluation-study-of-a-rapid-re-housing-program-for-young-adults/
105 FEANTSA (2017) *Locked out: Housing solutions for vulnerable young people transitioning to independence*, Available at: http://www.feantsa.org/download/report-chloe-eng5472656428791867789.pdf
106 Batty, E., Cole, I., Green, S., McCarthy, L. & Reeve, K. (2015) *Evaluation of the Sharing Solutions programme*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University.
107 Clapham, D., Mackie, P., Orford, S., Buckley, K., Thomas, I., with Atherton, I., McAnulty, U. (2012) *Housing Options and Solutions for Young People in 2020* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

people who have moved on from Project Vista did so successfully. Twelve accessed shared accommodation in the private rented sector, five returned safely to the family home after reconciliation and one took up student accommodation. Each had managed to build up enough savings to afford a move-on deposit and were in sufficiently paid or stable employment to be able to rent privately. In 2017, the project won the London Homelessness Award.

Depaul UK, Sheffield

Depaul UK run housing-led services in Sheffield, which help young people aged between 17 to 24 and young parents aged 16 to 21 out of homelessness.

The services offer young people a safe place to stay, providing a step into stable housing and helping them get their lives back on track. The dispersed accommodation service helps people live independently in the community with floating support. Support includes managing accommodation, budgeting, accessing training, education and employment and improving wellbeing. Support is generally offered for up to a year. The charity also runs a transitional landlord service for young parents through which properties are provided in partnership with Sheffield City Council. The tenancy is transferred to the client once support from Depaul is no longer needed. This helps young parents form community links and support networks locally, and provides young people with more security and the opportunity to invest in a home. The schemes have seen encouraging results and could work particularly well for care leavers or LGBT young people who might struggle to live in shared accommodation.

Research by Depaul has revealed the scale of harm that young people in temporary living arrangements can be subject to. A quantitative survey of 712 homeless young people (aged between 16 and 25) found that 55% of young people experience harm while in temporary living arrangements, with a fifth of young women experiencing sexual abuse or exploitation.[108] The report concluded that service provided accommodation, including supported accommodation, is safer than the informal alternatives of staying with strangers or friends of friends. However, the research also found that young people were more likely to be offered support addressing their needs in age-specific accommodation projects than in standard temporary accommodation settings, such as B&Bs or all ages hostels.

Refuge closures and cuts to local authority budgets have impacted upon the availability and quality of services. Referral criteria has meant that often only young people with high support needs can access certain services. As such, there is a gap in provision for young people who may require only a short-term intervention, breathing space and family mediation.

Nightstop, Depaul UK

Nightstop provides young people, aged between 16 and 25, facing a crisis with a bed for the night in the homes of vetted and trained volunteers. It prevents young people from sleeping rough, 'sofa surfing', or staying in unsuitable accommodation where they would be at risk of abuse. They may then move on to another host before being found more stable accommodation, or return home if that is the best option for them. In 2017 Nightstop delivered a safe space to stay on 11,070 nights for 1,403 young people. One hundred and thirty guests were care leavers, 97 were asylum seekers or refugees and 87 were LGBTQ. A third of young people who used Nightstop in 2017 were in education, employment or training. Nightstop provided them with a stable platform to continue this learning and work. Seventy-two per cent of young people either returned home or moved into long term sustainable accommodation, including private renting and supported accommodation. The Nightstop UK network comprises of 29 services throughout the UK and one service in Canada which are all accredited by Nightstop UK. There are four Depaul run services in London, South Yorkshire, Manchester and the North East. The other 26 Nightstop services are run through local community, housing or youth based organisations.

108 McCoy, S. (2018) *Danger Zones and Stepping Stones: Phase Two A quantitative exploration of young people's experience of temporary living* London: Depaul UK

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Although the movement towards a housing-led approach to tackling homelessness is expected to see a reduction in the need for short-term, emergency accommodation, this type of accommodation will always be a vital component of any homelessness response. It is therefore concerning that the future of funding for age-appropriate supported housing services for young people is currently at risk. The inflexibility of Universal Credit to respond to short stays in emergency accommodation and higher costs associated with some forms of supported accommodation have led to a review of the current funding model.

The current Government proposal would transfer the rents and eligible service charges into a ring-fenced pot, administered by local authorities. This would include very short-term emergency accommodation, and all supported housing with an intended stay of less than two years' duration. There is concern that this would reduce funding available over the long term if the ring-fence is withdrawn in future. It would also reduce the ability of providers to raise finance to invest in improving or maintaining the quality of existing services, or building new supply.

Currently, the majority of homelessness services for young people are provided through supported housing and it is an essential part of the homelessness safety net. It is therefore important that the future of existing housing, which is currently providing a vital lifeline to tens of thousands of young people, is not put in jeopardy by the Government's spending review. The current timeline for the changes – to be delivered by 2020 – risks jeopardising essential homelessness services without appropriate alternative provision in place. Any youth homelessness strategy should recognise the importance of good-quality age-appropriate emergency accommodation as part of a rapid response by providing a safe, temporary living option for young people facing homelessness, before moving into permanent accommodation.

It should also address the importance of education, training and employment support as part of a youth housing offer. For young people, this support is vital to them being able to sustain housing, exit homelessness successfully and prevent repeat homelessness. More than 40% of homeless young people are not in education employment or training. Only 5% are in employment and 29% have no qualifications.[109] The disruption caused by homelessness can mean young people discontinue their studies or lose employment. Lack of qualifications and work experience can also make securing well-paid jobs much harder. Addressing education, training and employment needs is therefore essential to enabling young people to exit homelessness and this should be supported through housing. The roll out of the Youth Obligation for 18 to 21 year olds who make a new claim to Universal Credit provides an opportunity to support young homeless people into work by linking it to rapid rehousing approaches. Under the Youth Obligation, young people who make a claim to Universal Credit and are in the All Work-Related Requirements Conditionality group will receive intensive work focused support from day one of their claim. If still unemployed and claiming Universal Credit after six months, they will be referred to work-related training or guaranteed work experience. Linking this additional support to a housing offer for young people would help them access employment and sustain accommodation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The Government should invest in a range of rapid rehousing models tailored for young people. These should be underpinned by education, training and employment support.**
   The APPG for Ending Homelessness heard how young people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness face additional barriers to accessing safe accommodation options.

   Low wages, insecure work (often part-time or on zero hours' contracts) and lower rates of Housing Benefit, alongside high housing costs, can make it difficult for young people to afford housing. The proportion of young people (aged between 20 and 29 years old) spending more than 40% of their income on housing in the UK was 56%.[110]

109 End Youth Homelessness (2018) https://www.eyh.org.uk/en/our-work/
110 FEANTSA (2017) *Locked out: Housing solutions for vulnerable young people transitioning to independence* http://www.feantsa.org/download/report-chloe-eng5472656428791867789.pdf

Often young people are homeless due to family breakdown meaning they can find themselves with no safety net, locked out of housing with landlords reluctant to rent to them and no means of securing financial backing, education, training and employment support. Due to low wages and poor job security, young people can find themselves unable to rent in the private rented sector, but with too much income to access hostel accommodation. There is a lack of age-appropriate temporary accommodation for young people and many resort to unsafe temporary living arrangements. Furthermore, young people can find themselves stuck between homelessness and education, training or work. This can make it harder to resolve homelessness and enter secure employment and housing, meaning young people become stuck in the homelessness system. Rapid rehousing approaches can be used effectively for young homeless people for whom the main barrier to permanent accommodation is financial or the lack of a security network through which to find a guarantor or offer a reference. Research has shown 80% of landlords would be more willing to let to under-35s with a rent deposit scheme.[111]

It is vital that rapid rehousing schemes for young people consider their particular needs, for example the support required to maintain a first tenancy, or with addressing mental health needs or a relationship breakdown. It should incorporate a 'youth offer' whereby wraparound support - including with employment, education and training - is provided to help with the transition to adulthood. The new Youth Obligation provides an opportunity to link training and employment support to rapid rehousing approaches for homeless young people. Offering young people rents at a lower level should also be considered as part of a youth housing offer to support the continuation of training and education and account for lower rates of Housing Benefit and pay.[112]

2. **All young people who have experienced homelessness should be exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate. This builds on the APPG for Ending Homelessness' year one recommendation that care leavers be exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate up to the age of 25.**
In the APPG's year one report on prevention, we recommended that care leavers under the age of 25 be exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate. Currently, care leavers are exempt until the age of 22. In making our case for this, we highlighted how care leavers did not have the option to live at home, and had often had very challenging upbringings and suffered traumas other people their own age may not have experienced. As such, this could make sharing more difficult. These same arguments can be equally made for homeless young people. Currently, you are exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate if you are over 25 and can show that you lived in homeless hostels for at least three months and accepted rehabilitation or support services before moving to the private rented sector. This exemption should be extended to homeless people under the age of 25 and the requirements to have lived in a hostel for at least three months and have already accepted rehabilitation or support services removed.

It is inappropriate to require young people, who can struggle to access appropriate hostel accommodation, to have lived in a homeless hostel for at least three months for this exemption to apply. Housing First has demonstrated success in providing homeless people with secure and stable accommodation before enabling them to seek help addressing their support needs. In line with the principles of Housing First, the requirement for homeless people to have already accepted rehabilitation or support to be exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate should be removed. It is also an unsuitable requirement for homeless people with low-level needs who face financial and practical barriers to housing. Landlords can be reluctant to rent to young people and homeless people, and research has shown the Shared Accommodation Rate is having an impact on under-35s' access to private rented sector accommodation.[113] Young people who have experienced homelessness and are subject to the Shared Accommodation Rate are therefore at a particular disadvantage. Extending the exemption to all homeless people under 25 would support a rapid rehousing approach to tackling youth homelessness by removing one barrier to the private rented sector for this group.

3. **Each local authority should have a 'homelessness hub' for young people to access the support they need in one place.**
The APPG heard evidence on the importance of ensuring good quality wraparound care for young people at the point of crisis. Young people often end up experiencing hidden homelessness, unaware of how to access help. Through a homelessness hub, support and advice services in relation to housing, employment, education, training, welfare and mediation can be offered in one place. A homelessness hub in each local authority would help ensure young people at the point of crisis have easy access to the appropriate advice and support for them. For example, this might be support to return home, floating support to help maintain tenancies or rapid rehousing. It is important that these hubs have strong links with youth services, schools and social services in the community and that they are well publicised and easily accessible for young people.

4. **The Government should invest in age-appropriate emergency accommodation, including nightstops and crashpads, to ensure young people are prevented from sleeping rough before entering permanent accommodation. This should include ensuring that future investment in the funding of supported accommodation is protected.**
Age-appropriate accommodation can play an important role in the rapid rehousing process by providing a safe, temporary option for people facing a crisis or with no access to alternative means of support. Within a rapid rehousing approach, schemes such as nightstops and crashpads can provide short-term emergency accommodation for young people whilst their housing plan is developed. They can also provide space for mediation allowing young people to return to the family home when it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. Supported housing is the biggest provider of homeless services for young people and is an essential part of the homelessness safety net. It is vital that the future of existing housing, which is currently providing a vital lifeline to tens of thousands of young people, is not put in jeopardy by the Government's spending review.

5. **National Government should commission a study into the effectiveness of Housing First for Youth. This could be part of the work of the three Housing First pilots being run in England.**
Housing First remains a less established approach towards tackling youth homelessness, however programmes in Canada and the US have shown initial positive results. They have also highlighted the need for a Housing First option for young people to consider the specific needs of this group. This study could be carried out as part of the work of the three Housing First pilots being run in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and the West Midlands.

6. **Government at both a local and national level should use the more comprehensive data on local need, which should arise from the *Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)*, to improve wider housing and homelessness policies so homelessness is resolved more quickly.**
With new data collection processes coming into force, there is scope to better understand the needs of young people experiencing homelessness or the threat of homelessness by local area. A clearer understanding of local need can inform wider policy development affecting homeless young people, such as the future funding of supported housing, and help ensure services are in place to provide a rapid response to homelessness.

111 Pattison, B. & Reeve, K., (2017). *Access to homes for the under-35s: The impact of Welfare Reform on Private Renting*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University.
112 Clapham, D., Mackie, P., Orford, S., Buckley, K., Thomas, I., with Atherton, I., McAnulty, U. *Housing Options and Solutions for Young People in 2020* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
113 Homeless Link (2018) *Young and Homeless 2018*. London: Homeless Link

CONCLUSION

Evidence received throughout the course of this inquiry has made clear the importance of a rapid response to homelessness.

Migrants and young people constitute a significant proportion of the homeless population, yet both groups face significant barriers to resolving their homelessness. Hidden homelessness is common among migrants and young people who may be less likely to seek support from local authorities either due to a lack of knowledge of how to do so, or out of fear of the consequences of doing so. Consequently, they have often reached crisis point before support is sought. They are also left particularly vulnerable to exploitation as they are forced into informal living arrangements or to seek support from people who may abuse the situation.

Both cohorts also face significant practical barriers to resolving their homelessness. For migrants, this is often due to difficulties resolving their immigration status and a lack of access to support whilst they are going through the process of regularising their status. For young people, a lack of affordable accommodation options; insecure, low paid work; and Housing Benefit restrictions can make exiting homelessness especially difficult. Using evidence collected from sector experts and people with lived experience of homelessness, this report demonstrates how these practical barriers can be overcome to rapidly resolve homelessness among these cohorts, reducing the cost of homelessness to both the individuals concerned and the public purse.

Rapid rehousing models are increasingly being looked at as effective ways of quickly and permanently addressing homelessness and should be an element of any homelessness strategy. Following the successful adoption of such models in other countries this report also makes recommendations for how rapid rehousing can form part of a rapid response to homelessness in the UK.

The APPG for Ending Homelessness calls on the Government to take action and make the much-needed changes to ensure homelessness is resolved as quickly as possible. A joined-up strategy to rapidly respond to homelessness should be a part of any cross-government plan for tackling rough sleeping and homelessness. The Government has committed to ending rough sleeping and tackling homelessness. However, this will only be possible if it is resolved as quickly as possible when it does occur to prevent people from becoming trapped in a cycle of homelessness.

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Ewa Wilcock, Polish Domestic Violence Helpline Manager
Fiona Carrick-Davies, Family & Community Co-ordinator, Surrey Square Primary School
Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit
Homeless Oxfordshire
Hope for Justice
Hope for Southall Street Homeless (HSSH)
Housing Justice
Jesuit Refugee Service UK
Jodie Ward, St Basils Youth Voice
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
Leeds Migration Partnership
Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
Liberty
Michael Bates, Caseworker, Head of Services for Birmingham Community Law Centre
Michael, Path service user
Migrants' Rights Network
NACCOM Network (The No Accommodation Network)
National Housing Federation
New Horizon Youth Centre
nia (ending violence against women and girls)
NOAH Enterprise
No Recourse to Public Funds Network, Islington Council
Oak Foundation
Olallo House
Plymouth Access to Housing (Path)
Policy Research Unit
Porchlight
Praxis
Prison Reform Trust
Project 17
Refugee Council
Refugee Rights Europe
Safety4Sisters North West
Southall Black Sisters
Southwark Council
Southwark Law Centre
Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
Street Link
The Children's Society
Virgin Money Foundation
Walsall Council
West London Housing Partnership
Yorkshire and Humber and North East TB Control Board
Yvonne Keene, Community Nurse Specialist
Zeinab Mummin, Service Coordinator, Syrian Resettlement Scheme, The British Red Cross