

# Homes, Support, Prevention – Our Foundations For Ending Homelessness

– The All-Party Parliamentary  
Group for Ending Homelessness

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# APPG Officers Biographies



**Co-Chairs** – Bob Blackman MP and Paula Barker MP

Bob Blackman MP provides legislative insight, having been the driver behind the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) and the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act (2023).



Paula Barker MP provides in depth policy knowledge as a former Shadow Minister for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.



**Vice Chairs** – Emily Darlington MP and David Smith MP

Emily Darlington MP was previously a cabinet member with responsibility for homelessness on Milton Keynes Council and has a track record of significantly reducing rough sleeping.



David Smith MP provides frontline insight as a former leader of a homelessness charity.

# Foreword

**As Officers of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness, we are proud to introduce this report as the Government prepares to publish its Cross-Government Strategy for homelessness and rough sleeping, this is a critical chance to turn the tide that we cannot lose.**

We come to this work from different political perspectives, but we are united in one aim: to make homelessness a thing of the past. We have seen that without bold reform truly delivered across government and our public services, we will remain stuck in an unsustainable cycle, pouring money into temporary solutions instead of fixing the root causes of homelessness.

While the Government has made welcome announcements on building social homes, committing to scrap the Vagrancy Act (1824) and establishing the Inter Ministerial Group for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, we are seeing record numbers pushed into homelessness.

In March 2025 a record high of 130,000 households, including 170,000 children, in England were experiencing homelessness and reliant on temporary accommodation supplied by local authorities, including hotels and B&Bs. The equivalent of an entire city without a safe and secure home. We are also seeing more people having to sleep rough, with London recording its highest ever levels this year.

Behind these figures are real lives. In our roles as parliamentarians, former councillors, and in the homelessness charity sector, we have seen these stories unfold up close. We have heard time and time again the emotional and physical toll of homelessness: the mother fleeing domestic abuse left waiting months for a safe place to stay; the young person sofa-surfing and missed by the services meant to help them; the man struggling to recover from illness without stable accommodation and support. People held back, services overstretched, lives ruined.

But it does not have to be this way. In compiling this report, we heard what works. Some people just need a little support at the right time to prevent them falling into crisis. Some people simply need rapid access to a genuinely affordable, stable home. Others need that, plus specialist support to recover from trauma, addiction, or mental illness. All need services that treat people as individuals, not numbers. Focusing on how we meet these challenges through the design of our policies and systems so that homelessness is either prevented, or people can quickly access secure housing with the support they need, will change lives and can change our country.

Ending homelessness is necessary for the Government to achieve its other missions on growth, health and education. Secure homes give individuals the foundation to start a business, succeed at school, look after their health, and give society the foundation for better productivity, stronger communities and a brighter future.

Homelessness is not inevitable. This moment calls for real ambition from all sides of politics and we urge colleagues to support these recommendations. With the right leadership and long-term vision, we can ensure everyone has the security of a home.

The Government must marry this framework with clear, measurable outcomes in the Cross-Government Strategy for homelessness and rough sleeping. We're calling for the Government to set the overall target for this strategy to be to end rough sleeping and halve the number of households in temporary accommodation in the next ten years.

These targets are ambitious, but vital to matching the urgency and scale of this challenge, and crucially achievable if backed by the political will we know exists. The achievements of the Rough Sleeping Unit of the Blair government and the Everyone In initiative of the last administration show that progress can be made, if we choose to make it.

Finally, we are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this work. Your expertise has shaped this report from start to finish. We are especially grateful to the people with lived experience of homelessness who gave evidence to this inquiry with honesty and courage. We also want to acknowledge the essential work of charities and frontline organisations. They are often the first to respond and the last to give up, providing flexible, person-centred support in ways local authorities cannot. They truly are the oil that keeps the engine running.

*Signed by the Officers of the APPG for Ending Homelessness*

# Executive Summary: The Framework For Lasting Change

**Homelessness is not inevitable. Our systems and policy choices are letting people down and missing opportunities to give people the best chance to prevent and end their homelessness, but we can change this. Over the course of four evidence-gathering roundtables, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness (APPGEH) has heard powerful testimony and robust evidence from people with lived experience, frontline workers, and policy experts. This report sets out a clear actionable path to end homelessness for good, built on a framework of three key pillars that must underpin a sustainable and inclusive approach to ending homelessness:**

1. Rapidly rehousing people in safe, settled, and genuinely affordable homes.

At the heart of a sustainable solution to homelessness is access to secure, truly affordable housing for all. Approaches to rehousing must be fast, sustainable, and designed to break cycles of instability and homelessness. Necessary steps the Government must take to achieve this include:

- Delivering a new generation of social housing to meet need and directly address levels of homelessness.
- Scaling up Housing First and other rapid rehousing models.

- Ensuring all housing is accessible, secure, and affordable for people at risk of homelessness.

2. Improving support for people experiencing the worst forms of homelessness.

For some people facing homelessness, housing alone is not enough. People who are rough sleeping or trapped in inappropriate temporary accommodation often face overlapping challenges such as trauma, mental ill health, substance misuse, or domestic abuse. The system must respond to this complexity by:

- Embedding trauma-informed, person-centred approaches across services.
- Reforming funding to provide long-term, coordinated, and flexible support.
- Addressing structural inequalities and meeting the needs of marginalised communities.

3. Preventing Homelessness wherever possible.

The most effective way to reduce homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Achieving this demands a proactive, coordinated response across all levels of government and public services. Evidence presented to the APPG highlighted that meaningful prevention depends on three critical actions:

- Restoring Local Housing Allowance to align with real rents and prevent evictions as the most impactful immediate step.



- Driving cross-government action on prevention through the Inter-Ministerial Group and strategy.
- Creating accountability and financial levers across all public services to make sure policy doesn't have the unintended consequence of causing homelessness.

This report does not just describe a crisis, it outlines a path to end it. The tools, evidence, and models already exist. What is needed now is political will, leadership, and sustained investment. By committing to this three-pillar framework, the Government can transform how we respond to homelessness, moving from managing a crisis to ending it altogether.

The APPGEH calls on the Government to seize this opportunity to embed these recommendations into its forthcoming Cross-Government Strategy and to ensure every person has a safe place to call home.

**“This report does not just describe a crisis, it outlines a path to end it. The tools, evidence, and models already exist.”**

# Introduction

**The APPG for Ending Homelessness brings together Members of Parliament and peers from across the political spectrum who share a deep commitment to tackling homelessness. Together, the APPG's officers combine political leadership with practical experience to champion effective solutions to end homelessness for good.**

By working closely with a steering group of leading homelessness organisations, including Crisis, Shelter, Centrepoin, Homeless Link and St Mungo's, as well as a range of smaller charities, the APPG provides a vital forum where Parliamentarians, people with lived experience, and sector experts can shape national policy<sup>1</sup>. By centring the voices of those affected, the APPG ensures their insights meaningfully influence political debate.

Since its reconstitution following the July 2024 general election, the APPG has convened four in-depth roundtable sessions. These discussions have explored both the systemic challenges that drive homelessness and the practical, scalable solutions that could bring it to an end.

The UK Government has formally committed to “getting Britain back on track” to ending homelessness. Central to this commitment is the development of a new Cross-Government Strategy (CGS) on all forms of homelessness, designed to coordinate efforts across departments and local authorities. The Government has established an Inter Ministerial Group for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, with attendees from a range of departments. Alongside this, the Government's long-term housing strategy aims to the deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housing in a generation.

The simultaneous development of the CGS and the long-term housing strategy creates a rare window for joined-up policy making. Previously, homelessness and housing have too often been addressed in isolation, resulting in fragmented responses and missed opportunities.

1 APPG for Ending Homelessness, 2025, Steering Group Members, available here: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/appg-for-ending-homelessness/>

Matt Downie, CEO of Crisis, outlined at the December 2024 roundtable:

**“It’s important to link homelessness to wider programmes on poverty alleviation and housing strategy...”**

**“More social housing alone doesn’t end homelessness, it didn’t in Ireland, systems need to change. We need to not just think about the need for social housing but what we want it for. The Government’s Housing Mission outcome should be that everyone has somewhere to live.”**

Throughout the APPG’s evidence sessions, powerful testimonies brought the statistics and policy discussions to life. **Carly**, a speaker with lived experience at the December roundtable, painted a stark picture of life trapped in poor-quality, unsuitable temporary accommodation:

**“The private temporary accommodation that I was in was too small for my three children to live in. It was so filthy I couldn’t put my 9-month-old son on the floor, and the furniture was broken and unsafe. I felt like I’d failed as a parent.”**

Experts emphasised the necessity of secure housing as a foundation for addressing broader issues:

**“The moment I was in suitable accommodation was the moment that I could start getting my life together. My new home allows me to focus on my day-to-day living rather than just surviving.”**

Ahmed, person with lived experience of homelessness, March roundtable.

It is clear that having a safe, decent home is fundamental for improving health, supporting employment, and enabling people to rebuild their lives, and the Government must address this if it is to succeed in delivering on its key missions.

The APPG believes that, with political will and adequate resourcing, we can move decisively toward ending homelessness for good. This report serves as a roadmap for achieving that goal and we hope that the Westminster Government will take its recommendations into full consideration as it develops its Cross-Government Strategy for ending homelessness.

# The Current Homelessness Landscape and the Opportunity for Change

**Homelessness in Britain remains a worsening problem with levels continuing to rise to record levels, highlighting the urgent need for decisive and sustained action.**

Recent legislative and policy developments, such as the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) in 2017, the commitment to abolish the outdated Vagrancy Act, and improved access to social housing and support for care leavers, survivors of domestic abuse and veterans, have marked important progress in tackling homelessness in England. In addition, the Government’s most recent Spending Review made several notable commitments, including a £39 billion investment in a ten-year Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP), stating that the aim is for at least 60% of the homes delivered through this to be for social rent; the safeguarding of the £1 billion annual homelessness budget, and a £950 million allocation for temporary accommodation and remediation costs. These are much welcome developments, but the homelessness system remains under significant strain, and urgent, coordinated action is still required.

Homelessness figures continue to trend alarmingly in the wrong direction. The most recent data shows that street homelessness in London hit record levels between January and March 2025, with 706 people recorded as sleeping rough, a 38% increase compared to the same period in 2024, when the figure stood at 511<sup>2</sup>.

Meanwhile, the latest Government statistics show that the number of families living in temporary accommodation increased to a record 131,140 in March 2025, up 11.8% on the previous year<sup>3</sup>. This includes over 169,050 children living in temporary accommodation in England.

One of the most critical issues highlighted during the evidence gathering exercise was the overreliance on emergency accommodation, particularly hostels and temporary accommodation (TA) and how this often ends up being anything but temporary. Many individuals remain trapped in TA for prolonged periods, enduring poor-quality, unsafe, and unstable conditions. Government data further highlights the scale of the crisis, showing that the most common length of time households with children spend

2 Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) report for January to March 2025. Available here: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports/>

3 MHCLG, Statutory homelessness in England: January to March 2025. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-january-to-march-2025/statutory-homelessness-in-england-january-to-march-2025>

in temporary accommodation is over five years, affecting 18,200 families, or 22.5% of all such households.

Lived experience testimony from Carly and others vividly illustrated these realities:

**“Temporary accommodation used to mean weeks but now it means months or years for some people.”**

Carly, person with lived experience of homelessness, December roundtable.

**“I lived in a hostel for two years. I had many sleepless nights on the floor and felt unsafe. It was traumatic.”**

Michael, person with lived experience of homelessness, February roundtable.

The cost of failing to address homelessness is vast, both financially and socially, and the impact is seen across multiple areas of government. At the March roundtable, **Vicky Davis** from the National Audit Office highlighted that councils spent a staggering £2.3 billion on temporary accommodation in 2023/24 alone. The consequences extend far beyond housing: people who are homeless or rough sleeping are twice as likely to reoffend upon release from prison compared to those with stable accommodation<sup>4</sup>. The health impacts

are equally concerning. Eighty child deaths have been linked to conditions in temporary accommodation, while 85% of the people forced to sleep rough is classified as either frail (40%) or pre-frail (45%), a rate dramatically higher than in the general population. Shockingly, this includes one in five people under the age of 35 (frailty is usually associated with the over 65s), as noted by **Alex Bax** of Pathway during the March session.

The threat or experience of homelessness also severely undermines people’s ability to secure and maintain employment, trapping many in a cycle of poverty and instability<sup>5</sup>. This evidence reaffirms the importance of the Government’s approach to a cross-departmental strategy and ensuring joined-up policy making. Breaking down the silos between departments is essential to tackling the complex, interconnected drivers of homelessness, from health and justice to housing and welfare. APPG officers have consistently highlighted this. Paula Barker MP has stressed the need to dismantle Government silos, while Emily Darlington MP has seen first-hand, through her experience in local government, the negative consequences when services fail to work together effectively.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Justice, Proven reoffending statistics: January to March 2023. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-january-to-march-2023/proven-reoffending-statistics-january-to-march-2023>

<sup>5</sup> LSE & CASE, Insecure lives: The growth and impact of multiple insecurities. Available here: <https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cr/casereport159.pdf>

**“Councils spent £2.3 billion on temporary accommodation in 2023/24 alone.”**

National Audit Office

**“Temporary accommodation has been linked to the deaths of seventy-four children.”**

**“85% of people forced to sleep rough are either frail or pre-frail.”**



# The Foundations of a New Approach to Homelessness

**The evidence gathered throughout the APPG roundtables consistently emphasised the urgent need to move away from short-term crisis responses toward a sustainable homelessness system with an ample supply of secure, affordable homes and person-centered support.**

**The fundamental premise is clear: homelessness can only be ended when everyone has access to a safe, stable home, coupled with the tailored support necessary to maintain it.**

**David Smith MP** reinforced this point, emphasising that lasting solutions require both housing and support to work hand-in-hand. He noted that while some people simply need rapid access to stable and truly affordable housing to move on from homelessness, others may require more intensive, ongoing support tailored to their individual needs to help them keep their home and rebuild their lives. This is particularly true for people who have experienced homelessness for long periods of time and people who have faced complex or long-term challenges.

Ending homelessness is not possible without a significant increase in the supply of genuinely affordable, secure social housing. The Government's announcement of the Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP) represents a vital opportunity to deliver the new generation of social homes

required to underpin this transformation, without it, efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness will continue to be undermined by a chronic shortage of suitable homes. However, as discussed in the February roundtable:

**"It is essential that the long-term housing plan and the homelessness strategy are joined-up so people experiencing homelessness can access these homes and make ending homelessness an outcome of the increased supply of homes."**

Paula Barker MP

To ensure the SAHP directly supports an end to homelessness, the evidence gathered demonstrated we must embed it within a broader, strategic approach built on three pillars:

1. Rapidly rehousing people in safe, settled, genuinely affordable homes with appropriate support where necessary.
2. Providing urgent support to tackle the worst forms of homelessness.
3. Preventing homelessness before it occurs.

These three pillars are explored in more detail below.

## 1. Rapidly Rehousing People in Safe, Settled, and Genuinely Affordable Homes

The evidence gathered by the APPG repeatedly highlighted that secure, truly affordable housing is the essential foundation for all further progress. Without this, individuals face near-impossible barriers to overcoming poverty, poor health, or unemployment.

The best way to provide this is with a social home. **Emily Darlington MP** noted; *"Homes are the foundation for a good life and social homes are a vital part of the housing mix."*

Time and again, people with lived experience of homelessness spoke powerfully about the transformative impact that having a social home had on their lives; offering not just safety, but stability, dignity, and the foundation to rebuild their futures.

**"This year was a game changer because the council found that they had a social home available for me. My children now have space, I'm no longer afraid of complaining to a private landlord and getting evicted, and my abusive ex does not know where they live."**

Carly, person with lived experience of homelessness, December roundtable.

**"I will never be the same person after experiencing homelessness and I am so grateful to be living in a social home. More people should have access to this safe, stable form of accommodation."**

Manoel, person with lived experience of homelessness, April roundtable.

**"I am incredibly grateful to have my social home."**

Jess, person with lived experience of homelessness, April roundtable.

Participants noted that survivors of domestic violence were particularly affected by the lack of social housing. Combined with the lack of refuge places this leaves many people fleeing domestic abuse to face homelessness or unsafe placements.

However, while increasing the supply of social and affordable housing is essential, it is not sufficient on its own to end homelessness. These homes must also be genuinely accessible to people at risk of homelessness and paired with the right support to help people sustain their tenancies and rebuild their lives.

**Emily Darlington MP** noted that we must move beyond the false dichotomy between providing housing or support; ending homelessness often requires both, working in tandem. This principle is echoed in the Government's recently announced Civil Society Covenant, which recognises the need for stronger partnership working between government, local services and the voluntary sector to tackle entrenched social challenges.



Ending homelessness will depend on this kind of collaborative, joined-up approach.

### Housing First: A Proven Model

Housing First is a model for addressing homelessness that implements the principle of providing immediate, settled housing to individuals experiencing homelessness who are considered as having complex support needs including with mental and physical health, trauma and substance misuse. Along with a safe, affordable home, intensive, tailored support services are provided, without requiring people to meet preconditions like sobriety or participation in treatment programs. It has been shown to be very effective, including in pilots in some regions in England where tenancy sustainment rates are above 90% amongst tenants who would otherwise spend years in and out of hostels, and rough sleeping.

The APPG heard compelling evidence of Housing First's effectiveness at both small and large scales:

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) shared evidence from its Housing First programme, demonstrating how a well-resourced, multi-year approach can lead to meaningful outcomes for people facing multiple disadvantages. Between 80-90% of people supported through Greater Manchester Housing First have sustained their tenancy over the pilot period, and the scheme has been found to save the public purse £15,880 per person per year. A year on from entering Housing First, individuals are also seeing health benefits, such as reductions in anxiety and depression

prevalence and increased access to General Practice (up from 60% to 92%).

Paul Dennett, the Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester responsible for housing, told us:

**“Housing First in Manchester has taught us that support is critical for sustaining tenancies. It is also critical to support people to become more active in the labour market and economy more broadly. It includes drug and alcohol services, mental health services, welfare rights and debt advice services, and skills and employment services.**

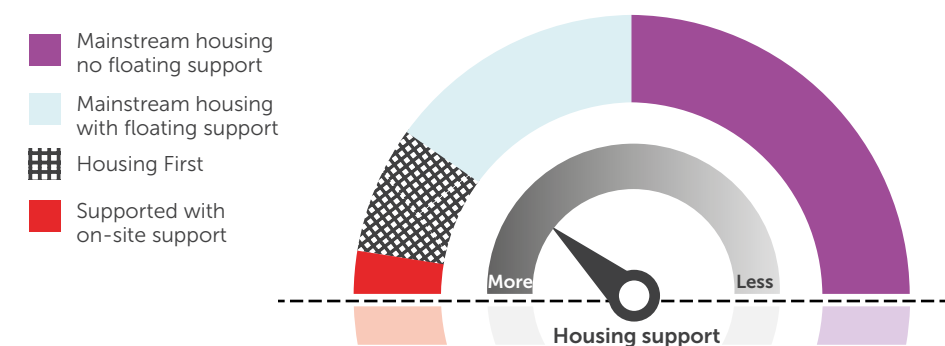
**“Housing First works, and the Government knows this. There is a huge opportunity now to roll this out across other regions.”**

Internationally, Finland's nationally scaled Housing First programme stands as a beacon, achieving near elimination of long-term homelessness amongst people sleeping rough. Since its introduction, long-term rough sleeping in Finland has declined by over two thirds (68%) between 2008 and 2022<sup>6</sup>, and it is estimated that providing housing and support for one homeless person will save the country between €15,000 - €52,000 per year<sup>7</sup>. In Helsinki, rough sleeping has significantly reduced with the implementation of a

6 A change of government and policy direction in the last 12 months has led to a small increase in homelessness across Finland which further supports the evidence base that to be successful it is about implementing Housing First as a systems change approach which requires integration with prevention, support services and affordable housing supply.

7 Juha Kaakinen, 2023, *HOME Report on the measures needed to end homelessness by 2027*, available at: <https://ysaatio.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Kotiin-Kaakinen-2023-en-final.pdf>

### Scotland's housing-led approach where homelessness has not been prevented



Source: Adapted from a graph originally devised by Homeless Network Scotland based on evidence of requirements for each form of housing for people experiencing homelessness in Scotland.

city-wide strategy that has halved all forms of homelessness by 2023.<sup>8</sup>

In Finland, Housing First has proven so effective that its principles now underpin the broader system-wide response to homelessness. What began as a targeted intervention is now embedded across housing and support services, shaping approaches to prevention and people in crisis at every level of government. In Greater Manchester, the Mayor Andy Burnham has ambitions to shift to a similar approach and in Scotland, the Scottish Government has implemented some of these elements as part of their national strategy on homelessness. These examples show that the principles of Housing First can be applied across the homelessness system as a foundation for lasting, structural change.

### Beyond Housing First: Rolling out Rapid Rehousing

While Housing First is a leading approach for a specific cohort of people who require additional, long-term support to maintain their tenancy, the principles

behind the model can be adapted to other approaches, which are sometimes called housing-led or rapid rehousing approaches. The principles that have been adapted include prioritising access to a stable, affordable home with access to flexible, person-centred support for as long as it's needed, giving people choice and control over their lives.

The graph above, taken from the work of the Scottish Government to adapt Housing First principles across its homelessness system, shows where Housing First sits in a wider, housing-led approach.

As part of implementing a housing-led approach in Scotland, the Government has required local authorities to introduce Rapid Rehousing Plans, which focus on minimising the time families spend in temporary accommodation and moving people quickly into settled housing.

Speaking about her research on this approach, **Professor Watts-Cobbe** from I-SPHERE (Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research) at

8 <https://www.hel.fi/static/helsinki/kaupunkistrategia/kasvun-paikka-strategian-arviointiraportti.pdf>

Heriot-Watt University highlighted how this local authority-based model should form part of a wider ending homelessness strategy in England, given the challenges we see around reliance on temporary accommodation. She said:

**“According to official statistics, there has been a paradigm shift in responses to homelessness and there is an ongoing commitment despite local authorities being under extraordinary pressures.”**

Professor Watts-Cobbe noted that, key to the initiative’s success, is ensuring that stays in often unsuitable temporary accommodation are brief and minimally damaging. She said:

**“People experiencing homelessness want ordinary mainstream homes like the rest of us and by getting them into housing and giving support where it’s needed, experiences of homelessness can be brief and minimally damaging...”**

**“It is about trying to address those unintended negative consequences, recognising that spending months or years in the limbo of temporary accommodation is unacceptable.”**

However, Professor Watts-Cobbe emphasised that a major barrier to delivering rapid rehousing effectively is the chronic shortage of genuinely affordable housing. Without addressing this constraint, the model risks falling short of its potential. She stressed the need for any rapid rehousing approach to be implemented alongside a significant and sustained increase in affordable housing supply:

**“England should adopt a rapid rehousing response, integrate it into local authorities’ strategic obligations around housing and homelessness, provide sufficient long-term funding for its implementation, put monitoring in place from the outset, and do it alongside other enablers of a housing-led approach such as improving supply and looking at social security benefits.”**

One example of success in adopting a housing-led approach in England where there has been availability of council housing is the Sefton Families scheme, run by Riverside Housing and Sefton Council.

At the February roundtable the APPG heard about the **Sefton Families** scheme, run by Riverside Housing and Sefton Council. This supports 10 families per year that have a history of failed tenancies, providing them with a two- or three-bed furnished home alongside person-centred support to help them to maintain their tenancy. Crucially, the engagement with support has no bearing on the security of the tenancy. Families involved in the

scheme, many of whom had experienced long-term instability, trauma, or had previously cycled through temporary accommodation, were able to rebuild their lives once given the security of a settled home. Paula Barker MP said, *“one of my constituents was supported by one of these tenancies and it has been life-changing for them”*. The scheme also demonstrates that investing in tenancy sustainment and targeted support not only transforms lives but also delivers substantial public savings. For every £1 spent, the programme generates savings of £3.36, equating to approximately £25,000 saved per family each year.

### Recommendations:

Our evidence shows that expanding Housing First and rolling out rapid rehousing approaches are integral to ending homelessness. To achieve this, the Westminster Government must take an active and coordinated role in driving their implementation. This requires both strategic leadership and sustained investment including:

- **The National Rollout of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing Models:** The Government should commit to embedding Housing First and rapid rehousing as core components of the national homelessness response. This means providing long-term, ring-fenced funding for local authorities and service providers to deliver high-quality, flexible, trauma-informed support, backed by access to settled housing. This must include a commitment for funding that will allow for at least a national roll out of Housing First. A clear national framework, coupled with local flexibility and accountability, is essential to ensure consistency and impact in the delivery of both Housing First and rapid rehousing.

- **A Step Change in the Delivery of Social Housing:** The new Social and Affordable Homes Programme, which aims to deliver 180,000 homes for social rent over ten years, alongside allocations in the recent Spending Review, provides a useful starting point. Only with a significant increase in the supply of genuinely affordable housing, and measures to ensure social housing reaches people in greatest need and directly addresses the scale of homelessness in an area can we create the foundation needed for Housing First and rapid rehousing to succeed.

## 2. Urgent Support to Tackle the Worst Forms of Homelessness

The APPG’s discussions made clear that housing alone is not enough to end homelessness. Some people experiencing homelessness face multiple and connected challenges, including poor mental health, trauma, substance dependency, domestic abuse, and systemic exclusion. These challenges cannot be addressed through a safe home alone, though it is the best start. To support people to thrive, we also need a holistic, person-centred system that delivers tailored, compassionate, and integrated support. This means embedding trauma-informed approaches across all services and ensuring that support is flexible, coordinated, and sustained for as long as it is needed. Ideally, we would have a homelessness system built not around managing crises, but around meeting people’s individual needs, and supporting long-term recovery and stability.



Evidence from **Homeless Link** and the **National Audit Office** highlighted the key barriers to achieving a system that sustainably ends homelessness for all. These included:

- The current system works in silos with funding based on a person's background, demographics or experiences which are often complex and overlapping. **Sophie Boobis** of Homeless Link said: *"we need a system and strategy that enables a whole system approach and for services to be connected"*.
- The system is made of many small, competitive funding pots requiring time-consuming tendering processes. Homeless Link said, *"this has pushed many of the smaller specialist providers to the limit and led to a rise in more generic service offers which are often not suitable for people from particular backgrounds or those with particular support needs"*. This was echoed by the NAO.
- Local government is not sufficiently funded to meet growing demand for homelessness services. The NAO noted that the temporary accommodation subsidy loss for local authorities was £205 million in 2022/23, up from £40 million ten years prior. It cited LHA rates remaining the same over this time whilst the cost of providing accommodation has increased as the main cause of this shortfall.
- There is currently no comprehensive or transparent record of government spending on homelessness, particularly in relation to the Enhanced Housing Benefit. Homeless Link's 'Reset Homelessness' campaign found that £2.1 billion is spent annually on temporary accommodation, with a substantial proportion of this funding

going to private companies rather than towards long-term solutions. For instance, £25 million is reportedly paid to Travelodge each year, and hundreds of millions more goes to private landlords.

However, it must be acknowledged that aspects of the current support system are not fit for purpose. In particular, even when people can access temporary accommodation it is often of very poor quality and can be actively harmful to live in. A recent report by the APPG for Temporary Accommodation found that in the last 5 years temporary accommodation had been cited in the deaths of 74 children<sup>9</sup>. This highlights the poor and sometimes dangerous quality of the accommodation available, which makes it harder for people to rebuild their lives.

**Chris Hancock** from Hastings Council set out that this poor quality is at least in part due to local authorities struggling to afford temporary accommodation of any kind. The subsidy they receive for temporary accommodation is based on 2011 Local Housing Allowance rates, and has therefore been frozen for 14 years. Mr Hancock had calculated that this freeze alone had cost Hastings Council £1.4bn. He set out that if the subsidy was increased, they would be able to afford better quality and more secure long term housing, reducing B&B and hotel use.

### Examples of Good Practice

Despite challenges, there are encouraging examples of good practice, some of which were brought to the attention of the APPG.

Brent's Single Homelessness Prevention Service provides targeted and tailored support for refugees transitioning out of asylum accommodation following a

decision on their claim – a critical point at which many face a heightened risk of homelessness. Since launching in August 2023, the service has supported over 200 individuals, successfully preventing all but one from sleeping rough.

Meanwhile, Crisis' Built for Zero initiative aims to reduce chronic homelessness through data-driven, local system redesign. The initiative is adopted from an approach in the United States. It empowers local communities to identify the barriers to ending homelessness in their area, test service improvements and evaluate their effectiveness. In Calderdale, for example, where Crisis is working with the council on a Built for Zero approach, data revealed that most people were being rehoused from temporary accommodation into the private sector. In response, staffing was reallocated to focus on helping people secure suitable private tenancies. Since July, this has led to a 51% reduction in B&B use – projected to save £1.5 million annually – and a 21% cut in overall temporary accommodation costs.

Finally, after finding that nearly two-thirds of the people they supported had experienced multiple traumas, Oasis Community Housing adopted a trauma-informed approach. This includes prioritising the individual's experience, ensuring physical and psychological safety, and using housing-led, recovery-focused interventions. Oasis achieves this through ensuring staff have small caseloads (1–5 people) so that they can develop relationships, as well as through trauma-informed service design, and monitoring frameworks that reflect these principles.

## Recommendation: Funding Reform to Provide Person-Centred Support at Scale

To move from isolated good practice to nationwide impact, the Government must therefore reform the homelessness funding system. According to evidence gathered from Homeless Link and the National Audit Office, this should include:

- A systemic review of funding for homelessness services to enable a shift towards person-centred support and prevention.
- A long-term, consolidated, ring-fenced funding system for homelessness services that should span government departments allowing for joined-up, person-centred support.
- Long-term, flexible investment that enables councils to shift from crisis response to prevention. The Government's commitment to multi-year local government finance settlements from 2026/27 is a welcome step, as is the Transformation Fund announced in the 2025 Spending Review which offers a vital opportunity to support local authorities in embedding truly preventative approaches. To maximise its impact, access to this funding should be streamlined, sustained, and coordinated with other homelessness prevention measures, such as **the proposed consolidated Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Grant**, so that councils can confidently invest in long-term solutions rather than short-term fixes.

Beyond reforms needed to ensure the delivery of person-centered support, in the immediate term the Government also needs to lift the cap on the temporary accommodation subsidy so it reflects the real cost of providing provision in 2025 and reduces the use of poor quality temporary accommodation.

<sup>9</sup> <https://householdsintemporaryaccommodation.co.uk/reports/child-mortality-in-temporary-accommodation-2025/>

## Embedding Inclusion into Homelessness Services

Ending homelessness for good means ending it for everyone. Services must therefore be designed to recognise and respond to diverse needs rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. Throughout the roundtable series we heard countless examples where the current system is failing to support groups at high risk of homelessness.

**Lucy Campbell** from the Single Homeless Project told us that women experiencing homelessness are underrepresented in Government data and often face unsafe placements, particularly survivors of violence and abuse, who may be housed in mixed or unsuitable accommodation<sup>10</sup>.

LGBT+ individuals and people of colour<sup>11</sup> face discrimination that heightens their risk of homelessness and undermines their ability to access support. Testimonies highlighted how systemic racism, homophobia, and transphobia intersect with housing insecurity, making it harder for people to navigate services designed with a one-size-fits-all approach. For example:

**Manoel**, a mixed-race man with lived experience of homelessness, described facing racial discrimination when seeking help from his local authority. He recounted a particularly distressing incident while viewing temporary accommodation with his Black partner, where they were told by the person showing them round that they should shave their heads – a deeply dehumanising and racially charged comment. This experience left them

feeling unsafe and unwelcome, and with the knowledge that the landlord held the power to make him homeless again, Manoel ultimately felt unable to accept the accommodation offered. This highlights how racism and a lack of cultural sensitivity within housing services can directly prevent people from accessing the help they need.

Particular concern was raised around how the current system fails people with complex needs who are at high risk of homelessness, such as those experiencing mental health challenges, substance use disorders or escaping violence. Vulnerable groups including Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities, women fleeing domestic abuse, and LGBT+ individuals<sup>12</sup> often face additional barriers including unsafe placements, discrimination, and gatekeeping, and a lack of person-centred services exacerbates this issue.

**“When I was in temporary accommodation, I was housed with people who were using and encouraging me to use drugs even though I was battling addiction and trying to get back on track. The place was damp, the water was not clean and all I could smell was sewage. It made me isolate myself from everyone”.**

Ahmed, person with lived experience of homelessness, March roundtable.

The April 2025 roundtable discussions focused on these issues, emphasising that systemic reform must address these structural inequities and provide tailored, culturally competent support.

**“LGBTQ+ young people face significantly higher risks of housing insecurity than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. They are more likely to stay in unsafe environments, to sofa surf, and to experience periods of rough sleeping. Many encounter barriers to accessing stable housing, particularly those with a history of domestic abuse, who often struggle to secure priority status. Despite these elevated risks, very few housing services are tailored to meet the specific needs of LGBTQ+ youth – leaving many without safe or appropriate support options.”**

Adam Pemberton Wickam, CEO, akt, April roundtable.

**Laura**, a young LGBTQ+ person with lived experience of homelessness, shared their experience of being forced to remain in a “chaotic” and “hostile” home environment marked by familial domestic abuse. Despite the severity of their situation, Laura was *unable to access the support they needed* because they were not granted priority status in housing applications.

**Jess** shared her experience of experiencing homelessness as a young person after a breakdown in her relationship with her parents. She spoke about feeling lost and unsafe as she moved between B&Bs and friends’ sofas, struggling to navigate life without a support network. Despite eventually finding supported housing and returning to college, she highlighted how being under 25 made it harder to access financial and emotional support. Jess described being expected to survive on less Universal Credit simply because of her age, while older people living at home received more. Long waiting lists for youth mental health services left her without help during critical moments and attempts to move forward were undermined by barriers within the benefits system, including being penalised for trying to work.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community needs are also undervalued in homelessness responses. Local areas often do not have enough caravan pitches, council operated areas where members of the community can reside alongside one another. For instance, London has had a net loss of two pitches since 1996<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, when members of the GRT community experience homelessness, local authorities focus on moving them into “bricks and mortar housing”.

This may lead to members of the community being labelled “intentionally homeless” because they have refused housing, they do not feel is culturally appropriate or to the use of unauthorised caravan sites because members of the community feel that they have exhausted all other options.

<sup>10</sup> Single Homelessness Project, 2025, *Women’s Rough Sleeping census*, available here: <https://www.shp.org.uk/information-hub/for-professionals/women/rough-sleeping-census/>

<sup>11</sup> Crisis, 2024, “Where do I belong, where is home?": *Experiences of racism and homelessness*, available here: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/locphmpf/200924-racism-and-homelessness-full-reportv9.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> akt, 2025, *There’s no place like home*, available here: <https://www.akt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/akt-No-Place-Like-Home-Research-report-lgbt-youth-homelessness-2025.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/LGT-RSG-UN-CESCR-Submission-13-Jan-2025.pdf>



**Recommendation:** To ensure services help end homelessness for everyone, no matter what their background, the Government should:

- Revise the homelessness code of guidance to require housing teams to work with local experts and to take account of intersectionality.
- Improve its collection of homelessness data on groups who face high risks of or from homelessness such as young LGBTQ+ people and women.
- Abolish Right to Rent checks. This law has already been found by the High Court to cause racial discrimination, and the Government has the opportunity to do this via the Renters Rights Bill currently progressing through Parliament.
- Ensure appropriate support is available for the GRT community when they experience homelessness, and appropriate housing for that community is part of planning policy.
- The Cross-Government Strategy must reflect the recommendations of the Women's Rough Sleeping Census<sup>14</sup> and the Youth Homeless Collective<sup>15</sup> and include specific chapters for addressing youth and women's homelessness to reflect the distinct challenges these groups face and the specific interventions needed to prevent or relieve their homelessness. The strategy is a critical opportunity embed understanding and accountability to address the disproportionate impact of homelessness and its drivers across all marginalised communities.

<sup>14</sup> [SHPS Womens Rough Sleeping Census](#)

<sup>15</sup> [planforthe136k](#)

### 3. Preventing Homelessness Before It Occurs

Prevention remains fundamental to ending homelessness sustainably. The landmark Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 has opened up support and assistance for significantly more people facing homelessness. However, issues with a lack of housing options due to a lack of genuinely affordable, good quality homes, and not having enough staff or funding means that many local authorities find it increasingly challenging to deliver support under the HRA. Councils are now under unprecedented pressure and the responsibility for preventing homelessness cannot rest solely on their shoulders. A truly effective response requires coordinated support across the entire public sector.

**Paula Barker MP** said: *"Prevention cannot just be the responsibility of MHCLG, it needs to be truly cross-departmental to ensure homelessness doesn't occur when interacting with the state and department's policies aren't directly causing homelessness".*

**Sophie Boobis** of Homeless Link said: *"There must be a shared responsibility for prevention across government with preventative measures being taken wherever the causes of homelessness are appearing".*

The Government's announcement of £100 million to improve homelessness prevention is a welcome and important step, reflecting growing recognition of the value of early intervention. However, to fully embed prevention across all relevant services, such as health, justice, and social care, further cross-departmental

investment will be needed. The recent Spending Review presents an opportunity to build on this momentum by introducing dedicated, long-term funding that supports a truly joined-up approach to preventing homelessness before it occurs.

#### The Most Impactful Immediate Step: Restoring Local Housing Allowance

Many speakers at the APPG's roundtables emphasised that one of the most effective immediate steps the Government could take to reduce and prevent homelessness would be to restore Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, so they accurately reflect real rents in the private rented sector.

The availability of affordable rental properties has plummeted. Crisis analysis of DWP data has found that while the uprating in 2024 successfully eliminated the shortfall between LHA and rent for 320,000 households, its impact was less than it could have been due to delays in implementation and ongoing rent inflation across the sector. Currently fewer than 3 in every 100 homes listed for rent in England are affordable at the LHA rate, down from 12% in 2021–22 immediately after the last uprating. We are already well below previous levels of support with this year's freeze through to 2026 amounting to a real-terms cut to the support people receive<sup>16</sup>.

Crisis' Homelessness Monitor Wales report clearly demonstrates that low LHA rates are a direct driver of eviction and homelessness. The Monitor's modelling also found that increasing LHA is among the most impactful policy interventions for reducing core homelessness<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Crisis, Fewer than three in every 100 privately rented properties listed in England are affordable for people on housing benefit. Available here: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/crisis-media-centre/fewer-than-three-in-every-100-privately-rented-properties-listed-in-england-are-affordable-for-people-on-housing-benefit-crisis-reveals/>

<sup>17</sup> Crisis, *The homelessness monitor: Wales 2025*. Available here: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/50jfjpn/the-homelessness-monitor-wales-2025.pdf>

**Chris Hancock** of Hastings Council highlighted the practical implications for local authorities, stating:

**"Hastings is a town with a high proportion of people living in the private rented sector due to its history as a seaside resort. With frozen LHA rates, a low wage economy reliant on seasonal work, and increasing rents, more and more people are being left behind struggling to pay their bills..."**

**"Uprating Local Housing Allowance and the temporary accommodation subsidy would allow councils to spend less on temporary accommodation and more on preventing and ending homelessness."**

**Aiden Greenall** of Crisis echoed this, stressing the broader benefits of uprating LHA rates:

**"Permanently linking LHA to the bottom 30% of local rents would help prevent homelessness and improve health, reducing costs to the Government in the long term."**

The consensus was clear: without urgent reform to LHA, councils will continue to struggle with spiralling temporary accommodation costs while thousands remain unable to access stable housing.

## The Role of the Cross-Government Strategy and Inter-Ministerial Group in Promoting Prevention

The establishment of the Cross-Government Strategy (CGS) and the Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) on Ending Homelessness offers an unprecedented opportunity to break down silos and to embed policies and funding across government departments to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Unlike previous efforts that often relied on short-term initiatives led by individual departments, this approach promises sustained, system-wide collaboration. By bringing together ministers from across health, housing, justice, and welfare, the IMG could help ensure that every part of government is working towards a shared goal of preventing homelessness wherever possible.

However, officers expressed concern that the IMG has met only a few times. To deliver a mission-led approach, the Government must fully use this forum to ensure strong leadership, accountability, and cross-departmental action. Without this commitment, efforts risk remaining fragmented and reactive rather than strategic and preventative.

## Key Prevention Areas Identified

The APPG's evidence highlighted critical points where a responsibility for homelessness prevention across various government departments can make a difference:

- **Home Office & Asylum Accommodation** – Insufficient housing options and acceleration of the processing of applications in the asylum system are pushing people into homelessness. A refugee with lived experience of homelessness told the APPG that, as a single person, she was frequently told she was ineligible for support, leaving her with nowhere to go. She shared that clearer guidance, and consistent communication could have made a significant difference, helping her navigate the system and avoid falling into homelessness.  
**Recommendation:** Whilst the temporary extension of the move on period from asylum accommodation to 56 days was welcomed, experts have called for this to be made permanent. Beth from the Single Homelessness Prevention Service in Brent outlined that it takes the service on average 58 days to find somewhere to stay – demonstrating how vital this window is for preventing homelessness. The APPG supports Baroness Lister's Private Member's Bill, which would make this extension permanent, recognising it as a crucial step in ensuring people are not pushed into homelessness after leaving asylum accommodation.
- **Department for Health and Social Care & Hospital Discharge** – Alex Bax from Pathway's evidence in the March roundtable illustrated how poor discharge planning leads many people back into homelessness upon leaving hospital. Alex noted: *"Someone may be offered a room in a hostel after they have gone into hospital for an alcohol addiction. During their hospital admission they may have got sober for the first time in months and then they must go back to the hostel where everyone else is drinking. From a healthcare point of view this is a disastrous missed opportunity"*.

**Recommendation:** He called for investment in Pathway teams, and a national programme of specialist intermediate care, where people facing homelessness can stay in a recovery setting for several weeks following a hospital admission. This provides a longer period of time over which people can be supported to find suitable accommodation upon their discharge. This has a cost-positive effect. For every £1 spent on intermediate care, there are savings to the tune of £1.20 for the NHS alone and £4.30 for all public services<sup>18</sup>.

- **Ministry of Justice & Prison Release** – People released from prison are at high risk of being pushed into homelessness. Over 1 in 10 (13.1%) people released last year were released into homelessness in England and Wales<sup>19</sup>. Ensuring people have a stable home upon release from prison is critical to reducing reoffending and homelessness. Current practices often fail to meet this need adequately – the Independent Sentencing Review noted: *"the proven reoffending rate for those who were homeless or rough sleeping was double the rate of those who were in a form of accommodation upon release"*<sup>20</sup>. **Bob Blackman MP** noted that this is only expected to get worst as sentences become shorter.

**Recommendation:** The Government must ensure that everyone has a settled home and support on release, drawing on Critical Time Intervention Programmes that support people through key transition points where they are at a high risk of homelessness, such as those run by Crisis in South Wales and Merseyside.

- **Department for Work and Pensions & Young People** – Young people face unique challenges within the benefits system that can increase their risk of homelessness. Age-related benefit restrictions mean that under-25s often receive lower levels of financial support despite facing similar or greater housing costs and instability compared to older groups.

**Recommendation:** Universal Credit rates should be equalised across age groups and the Shared Accommodation Rate should be abolished, or, at a minimum, the age limit should be lowered to under 25. The Housing Benefit taper rate should also be amended so that for young people living in supported accommodation don't have to sacrifice their home to take on more work.

Jobcentres are also a key contact point for people who are may be more at risk of homelessness. They should be equipped to identify and support those at risk of homelessness through staff training, risk assessments, and coordinated safeguarding with health and housing services.

- **All Government Departments** – The CGS should introduce a duty for all departments to consider the impact of new policies on homelessness to prevent unintended consequences that drive more people into homelessness.

18 Pathway, 2025, *Street discharge*, available here: <https://www.pathway.org.uk/issues/street-discharge/>

19 The Rt Hon David Gauke, 2025, Independent Sentencing Review, available here: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67c583a868a61757838d2196/independent-sentencing-review-part-1-report.pdf>

20 The Rt Hon David Gauke, 2025, Independent Sentencing Review, available here: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67c583a868a61757838d2196/independent-sentencing-review-part-1-report.pdf>

# Conclusion

**The APPG for Ending Homelessness extends heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to this evidence gathering roundtable series, including those who shared evidence, offered expert insights, and most importantly, those with lived experience who bravely shared their stories. Their voices have shaped this report and strengthened its call for action.**

Across the UK, the homelessness crisis is growing. The number of people trapped in temporary accommodation has reached record highs. Rough sleeping is on the rise once more. Services are overwhelmed, and too many people are falling through the cracks of a fragmented system.

But this is not inevitable.

The evidence presented to the APPG reaffirms a powerful truth: we know how to end homelessness. With the right political will, long-term investment, and coordinated national leadership, we can build a system that ensures that homelessness becomes rare, brief, and non-recurrent for everyone, no matter their background.

This is a pivotal moment. We have a window of opportunity to change direction from managing a growing crisis to building a future where homelessness is no longer part of our society.

Ending homelessness will not be easy. It will require bold choices, long-term commitment, and sustained collaboration across government, public services, and communities. But the cost of inaction, to lives, communities, and the public purse, is far greater.

With the right leadership, we can turn ambition into action. We can deliver a system that provides what people need most: a safe home and the support to keep it. A society where no one is left behind.

Let this be the moment we choose to act.

# With Special Thanks To

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St Mungo's, Shelter, Homeless Link, Housing Justice, Centrepont, YMCA, NHF, Pathway, CIH, St Basil's, Salvation Army, The Passage, Connection at St Martin's, St Martin's in the Field, Changing Lives, Glass Door, Justlife, AKT, Depaul, Revolving Doors, Shared Health Foundation, the Bevan Foundation, START Homeless Outreach Teams, Only a Pavement Away, New Horizon Youth Centre, Single Homelessness Project, Expert Link, Action on Empty Homes, Homeless Oxfordshire, Emmaus, Oasis Community Housing, The Foyer Federation, Restart Lives, District Councils' Network, and the Psychology in Homelessness Network.

