



Crisis

Everyone Home

Laying the foundations to
**end rough sleeping and
homelessness** for good.

“I want to meet my daughter and be her Dad. I love my flat and don’t ever want to lose it. Without Housing First, I would be dead.”

Paul

Homelessness is a crisis that we know how to end.

Not manage. Not ease. End.

Everything starts with a good home. What a good home gives us is hard to put into words. Somewhere to raise our children, to return from work, to sleep without fear. It is the foundation our lives are built on – but for millions of us, that foundation has been pulled away.

The country is caught in a housing trap. We chase spiralling private rents through the benefits system and we freeze the help when it becomes unaffordable. Families are made homeless and councils are left to foot the bill. It is the sharp end of the cost-of-living crisis and it is costing our economy an estimated £5bn per year¹. We are spending vast sums – and getting misery in return.

But unlike many of the big, intractable problems that society faces, this one is different: we know how to end it. We have years of evidence, both nationally and abroad, of what is effective.

A housing first philosophy is the way: a secure home first, and the support to keep it. A simple concept, which Finland has adopted nationally with extraordinary success.

¹ Unpublished analysis of homelessness data in England



It's a philosophy the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has recognised as a cornerstone of successful approaches to homelessness.

The speed with which homelessness responds to political intervention is rare. 450 people across Greater Manchester, whose circumstances were the most complex and challenging, were taken in off the streets and into homes of their own. 9 in 10 of them are still there. And we see these results replicated in Liverpool City Region, the West Midlands Combined Authority and many other Housing First services across the UK. This approach really works.

Homelessness needs strong national leadership, but it isn't solved from the top down – it is solved street by street, town by town, city by city. That's why Prime Minister Andy Burnham's 'first instruction' to government to end rough sleeping in England is so transformative. It sets a clear, national priority across government. And it has been swiftly followed up by funding and a national drive for Mayors, local authorities and partners to come together, and support everyone sleeping rough or at imminent risk, with a route off the streets by Christmas. Not only that, but the Prime Minister has made clear he wants this drive to support all people sleeping rough to become permanent national policy, year round.

During the pandemic, *Everyone In* showed what political will can do – but only for a moment. A large proportion of people who were supported cycled back onto the street once the emergency funding, hotel rooms, and political will ran out, because being taken off the street isn't the same as building a life that doesn't lead back to it.

The Prime Minister's bold vision to end rough sleeping leans into what was successful with *Everyone In*. That intervention was life-saving for many. It provided people with somewhere safe to stay; to go from constant survival mode living on the streets, to beginning to hope for a future. People were able to access vital GP appointments, eye care, dental care, get prescription medication safely and for some, move into a settled home.

Now we have the chance to get this right permanently, not just for a focused time. To finally build the infrastructure of a homelessness system that actually puts ending rough sleeping and homelessness for good – for everyone - within reach. *Everyone Home* sets out how.

It's a credible, evidenced based plan that lays the foundations needed to end rough sleeping and homelessness for good.

Ending homelessness isn't a cost – it's an investment

Every year, we are spending billions on managing homelessness. Imagine if, instead, we spent that money on ending it.

Building on what the Westminster Government has started

As Prime Minister, Andy Burnham's first instruction to end rough sleeping was unequivocal. It was a clear recognition of the immorality of a society tolerating – even in danger of accepting – rough sleeping as an intractable problem. A first instruction to end rough sleeping refuses to accept that and instead defines the kind of country we want to be.

A country where everything starts with a good home – and therefore a good home should be in reach for **everyone**.

“When you're on the street everything is too hectic, you can't do anything. But when you've got somewhere to live, you can have a routine. Structure.”

Simon

And in its first month under a new Prime Minister, the Government has taken swift steps to make that vision a reality. With funding to deliver settled homes for people sleeping rough who need the most help, and a commitment for the national drive to bring people in off the streets this winter, to become permanent national policy.

The potential of this shift – ending homelessness with settled homes – is transformative. For decades, governments have treated a secure home as the top of a ladder – something that people earn once they've proved they're 'ready'. But climbing that ladder from a doorway on a street is all but impossible. We set people up to fail. A national housing first philosophy would turn that ladder the right way up. **A home would no longer be the prize to aspire towards, but the foundation from which people rebuild their lives.**

The ruinous economic impact of the housing crisis

An independent Rapid Evidence Assessment, drawing together the best available evidence, puts the direct cost of homelessness to central and local government at approximately £5bn a year² – and rising fast. **The direct costs of one person rough sleeping alone is estimated at £27,757 for one year.**

The vast majority of public spending goes not on solving the problem, but on attempting to manage it. **At least £2.9 billion is swallowed by temporary accommodation every year³** – a figure that rose by nearly a quarter in a single year and will rise further if the approach to tackling homelessness does not change. We are spending more and more, only to maintain the grim status quo.

But the true cost of homelessness is far higher than the public accounts show. The knock-on losses – to health, to family stability, to disrupted schooling and educational attainment, to people's ability to work – run to hundreds of millions more. **The review found lost productivity from emergency accommodation alone costs us over £700 million in a single year.** Given the extent of hidden homelessness, and how under-reported it is, this cost is likely to be a significant underestimate.

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² Unpublished analysis of homelessness data in England
³ MHCLG local authority expenditure data 2025-26

Giving everyone a home would be one of the best investments we could make

The most expensive thing this country can do about homelessness is what it does now – to pay, over and over, to manage a crisis it could be ending. There are far better ways to spend public money.

The evidence review shows, consistently, that the biggest value for money comes from prevention, rapid access to a settled home, and support that goes with it – not from crisis response.

- **Prevention pays.** Stopping 40,000 people from spending a year homeless would save an estimated £370 million – just over £9,000 per person.
- **Local Housing Allowance is part of the prevention picture.** Uprating Local Housing Allowance in line with rents would prevent arrears, eviction and homelessness. While the Department for Work and Pensions estimated that returning Local Housing Allowance to the 30th percentile of local rents from April 2024 would cost around £1.3bn in 2024/25, rising gradually to £1.7bn by 2028/29, the savings generated through homelessness prevention would be far greater.⁴
- **Housing First works, for people and for the economy.** For those with the most complex needs, it returns benefits well above

its cost, and the government's own evaluation of national pilots projected in future it would save roughly £2 for every £1 spent. A national roll out of Housing First would cost around £182m a year to deliver.

- **A settled home eases the load on the NHS.** Unscheduled hospital care for people who are homeless costs around £126m a year. Specialist discharge teams alone save millions and free up thousands of hospital bed-days.
- **Long term and secure housing is fundamental to reducing homelessness.** OECD evidence shows that countries with stronger affordable housing systems experience lower levels of long-term homelessness and reduced reliance on emergency accommodation.

This also highlights the importance of tracking outcomes of the money that is invested in addressing homelessness over the short and long term. This is not about tracking activity but instead focusing on how effective interventions are at making sure homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring. By understanding the impact at a local authority, combined authority and national level, areas can learn from each other so homelessness is truly reduced, not just simply managed.

⁴ Based on previous cost benefit analysis conducted by [Alma Economics](#)

The plan: laying the foundations needed to end rough sleeping and homelessness for good

Having a Prime Minister committed to ending rough sleeping and taking immediate action to turn that commitment into reality is a huge step forward.

This can be the start of something monumental. A fundamental shift in how we tackle homelessness, with national, regional and local government working together with local partners to ensure a safe and settled place to call home is within everyone's reach.

Beneath the homelessness crisis sit five systemic challenges – and five big foundations need to be laid to fix them. *Everyone Home* sets out how this can happen.

“If it wasn’t for Housing First, I’d still be in a hostel and probably dead by now. It’s the only service that has really worked for me.”

Teddy

Foundation 1. A new homelessness and rough sleeping unit

Homelessness is the archetypal cross-cutting problem, with the necessary solutions needing join up across housing, health, welfare, justice, immigration and local government. Left to any single department it's like wading through treacle – and left to Westminster alone, it will struggle to succeed. We won't end homelessness from behind a desk in Whitehall. Homelessness will be solved street by street, town by town, city by city, by the people who know their own communities – but in the past, those people have been held back by a lack of funding and imagination from the centre.

As Prime Minister, Andy Burnham has made ending rough sleeping a personal mission. **Establishing a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Unit in the heart of government to drive forward that mission, empowering and enabling local areas to deliver it, will be key to its success.** By carrying the Prime Minister's authority and bringing Departments and local leaders together around a shared vision of a national housing first philosophy, the Unit would give the places closest to the problem the autonomy and the funding to achieve it.

An important role of the Unit would also be to track the outcomes of money that is invested in addressing homelessness over the short and long term, so it is clear what interventions are effective to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurrent.

This is not about going against the spirit and indeed power of devolution, but about central government having an active role in supporting progress and problem-solving with regional and local leadership.



This is how the last serious fall in rough sleeping was achieved – when the Prime Minister Tony Blair backed the Social Exclusion Unit and then the Rough Sleeping Unit, rough sleeping fell by two thirds. A new Unit for today's ambition must be led by a trusted, credible figure who understands the housing first philosophy – whether that's a Minister, an independent expert, or both. The Treasury would be involved from the start, while mayors and local leaders would sit inside the Unit as leaders in delivery.

We know that short-term success in getting people off the streets is possible – but the true test is whether this can be sustained in years to come. Achieving this will require relentless focus that matches the scale of the ambition.

Foundation 2. Repairing the public housing stock

The most fundamental issue will also be the slowest to fix – the supply of new homes that people can afford is just too low. Britain has lost almost 1.5 million council homes since the 1980s and around the same number of people are now on housing waiting lists. If you don't give people a good home, what chance have they got of having a good life?



In recent weeks, there have been welcome government announcements to address this – additional powers and support for councils to bring back empty homes into use; powers so councils can acquire existing homes for social rent; and a new duty that will mean when councils refer homeless households to housing associations, they will need to house them unless there is a good reason not to. This package of measures, when introduced, has the potential to be transformative.

To realise the long-term impact of these interventions, there must continue to be momentum and focus on new supply of social rent homes. The first allocation of the £39bn Social and Affordable Homes Programme is a significant start, and government can look to build on this by bringing forward further investment from this programme, and making it easier for councils to borrow to build.

But we also need to think differently – and bigger. Even with these interventions in place, we risk not being able to deliver the homes quickly enough. Modelled on international successful examples like the Y-Foundation in Finland and Provivienda in Spain **our solution is to establish a national not-for-profit housing company**. This should be focused solely on purchasing, renovating and developing the settled, truly affordable homes we need to end rough sleeping and homelessness. Homes England and the National Housing Bank could be immediately tasked with establishing a housing vehicle, run as a not-for-profit organisation, accessing the funds required to set up and begin acquiring stock within six months.

This will be critical to ending the persistent reliance on temporary accommodation, as well as making housing more affordable to everyone. More homes to move into is the foundation everything else in this plan is built on.

Foundation 3. A housing first philosophy

A safe and settled home is the foundation we all need to thrive in every area of life. This is at the heart of the housing first philosophy. Making this a reality means moving from a system built around transitional supported and temporary accommodation to one where people have their own home with the support they need to keep it.

For years, people facing the hardest circumstances – serious mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, time spent in institutions – have been written off by the system as “too complex” to house. In Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, and the West Midlands this was proved wrong through the roll out of Housing First. The task now is to take that approach nationwide and apply the core principles of the Housing First approach to the whole homelessness system by:

Rolling out rapid rehousing transition plans in each local authority, based on local need, creating clear plans for moving people on quickly into secure homes and shifting the reliance from costly temporary accommodation over time.

Expanding Housing First nationwide, providing person-centred support and a safe home for people facing the most significant challenges.

Shifting funding to in-tenancy support for people with low support needs to help move them quickly out of homelessness into a home of their own.

The Prime Minister’s vision of a permanent, national policy to support everyone sleeping rough, to build on the national drive by this Christmas, is very welcome. For this to be successful long-term, it needs to be **underpinned by legislation, and backed by sustained investment in good quality emergency accommodation that is accessible to everyone when they need it**. This should genuinely mean everyone, so this is based on need alone and people are not excluded on the basis of legal tests like priority need or their immigration status. Our ambition is to move to a response where homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurrent, but there will always be a need for emergency provision in times of need at a much smaller scale.



“The first night in here I may of wept a little. I was wondering around the rooms so much, I did not believe it was mine.”

Ollie

Foundation 4. Ending the housing trap

The private rented sector needn't be a threat to ending homelessness. Handled right, it can be one of the biggest parts of the solution.

But right now, the country is in a housing trap, chasing rents in the private rented sector through the benefits system. And when governments try to control these costs by freezing Local Housing Allowance, it makes families homeless and places unfunded pressures on councils when they have to pay for temporary accommodation. As a result, too many people are pushed into the worst housing at the bottom of the market, or turned away at the door.

A fairer private rented sector can be realised, by:

- **Restoring Local Housing Allowance** to cover at least the cheapest third of local rents. Currently fewer than 2%⁵ of properties are affordable for those on housing benefit across Britain, leaving people stuck in temporary accommodation, sofa surfing or rough sleeping, unable to move on with their lives.
- **Building on the Renters' Rights Act to drive up the quality of rented homes** by introducing a property MOT through the new private rented sector database so tenants can have confidence they will be renting a safe and decent home.
- **Making it easier for good landlords to rent to people leaving homelessness** by bringing together a group of experts to investigate the potential for scaling up social purpose models and the potential role of rent stabilisation and tax incentives.
- **Rolling out solutions we know work in the private rented sector to prevent and end homelessness** like tenancy deposit guarantee schemes and supporting employers to set up interest free loans for employees to help them access a private rent home. Years of evidence shows how effective support to access the private rented sector can be in moving people out of homelessness and stopping people being forced onto the streets.

⁵ Crisis (2026) [No Home to Go to: How frozen Local Housing Allowance \(LHA\) rate are causing homelessness](#)



Foundation 5. A decisive shift towards prevention

The kindest, cheapest way to end homelessness is to stop it from happening in the first place. Yet today, prevention falls almost entirely on hard-pressed councils, only stepping in at the point of crisis. Stopping homelessness before it starts means sharing that responsibility across the whole of government.

The Government's National Plan to End Homelessness published in 2025, recognised this and committed to put prevention at the heart of public service. It included important targets to ensure no one leave prison or hospital into homelessness. In recent weeks, Housing Secretary Angela Rayner has also committed to introduce legal reform across public services and government departments to better collaborate and prevent more people becoming homelessness. These measures taken together are a strong foundation for prevention.

Now is the time to build on this momentum and ensure we take every opportunity to stop homelessness before it starts by:

- **Overhauling the homelessness laws** that have failed people for half a century to make sure they really work to prevent homelessness and support people into a settled and secure home. This could include setting up an Expert Review Panel, like in Scotland and Wales, and look at not only if prevention duties need to go further, but also how national policy to end rough sleeping can be underpinned by law. Abolishing "intentional homelessness" and "priority need" would end the rules that turn people away at the door. Scotland and Wales have already done it, England can follow. Abolishing priority need should be looked at urgently, to achieve the Prime Minister's mission to end rough sleeping.



- **Expanding the programmes that are proven to work to ensure no-one leaves hospital, care, asylum accommodation, the armed forces or prison into homelessness.** Scaling up initiatives with an existing evidence-base like the specialist hospital teams pioneered by Pathway to prevent people being discharged from hospital onto the streets; Critical Time Interventions for people leaving prison, an internationally proven intervention based on a housing first philosophy; and models like Centrepoin's interventions for young people leaving care, will mean transition points become the opportunity to prevent homelessness rather than the trigger for it.
- **Breaking the link between immigration, asylum and homelessness** by commissioning an independent and rapid report into the causes and solutions to homelessness in these cases with the objective to implement system wide changes and stop destitution. In the immediate term, evidence-based solutions such as improving integration support offered to people in asylum accommodation, commissioning immigration advice and extending the move-on period from asylum accommodation for newly recognised refugees to at least 56 days so that people have more time to find a place to live and to enter work.

A strong plan for prevention can be the difference between managing homelessness and finally ending it.

Ending homelessness: A promise that can be kept

The Prime Minister has set the stakes high, making clear that the moral mission as a country is to end rough sleeping and mobilising action, immediately.

This isn't a standing start. We achieved an incredible response before when the government recognised rough sleeping for the emergency it is, during the Covid-19 pandemic. What we didn't manage to prove is that a government can turn that emergency response into permanent, structural change.

That's the opportunity in front of us now. Bold ambition and leadership like this comes along once in a generation – it's vital we continue working together on the long-term solutions that will do justice to the Prime Minister's vision. The solutions for ending rough sleeping long-term are the solutions to support an end to all forms of homelessness, and now is the moment to seize this opportunity for change. People experiencing the horrors of homelessness should have nothing less.



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