



Together
we will end
homelessness

How Crisis' work relates to the Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all UN member states in 2015 provide a shared commitment to sustainably ending poverty while recognising that this must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequalities and spur economic growth while tackling climate change.

Crisis is the national charity for people who are homeless, and at the centre of our work is the belief that everyone should have the right to a safe and secure place to live, aligning our values with the wider global goals.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

Ending homelessness as a global priority

Homelessness has reached record levels, with more people than ever being forced to experience the danger and indignity of living without a place to call home. On any given night **203,000 households in England alone are facing the worst forms of homelessness**, including rough sleeping, sofa surfing and living in unsuitable temporary accommodation such as hostels, shelters and B&Bs. Rough sleeping has risen 25 per cent since 2012 and projections show that the most acute forms of homelessness are expected to increase by one third between 2020 and 2024.

In March 2020, the biggest global crisis of our time brought the injustice of homelessness into sharper focus than ever before. Having a stable home quickly proved itself to be the determining factor in our ability to protect ourselves from coronavirus. People experiencing homelessness, and particularly those sleeping rough or in overcrowded shelters and hostels, were among the most exposed to the dangers and inequalities that the pandemic posed.



Crisis' work contributes to achieving a number of these life-changing SDGs

1. No Poverty



End poverty in all its forms everywhere

The Issue

The constant pressures of low incomes and high living costs can push people into homelessness. Strengthening our welfare system helps people to withstand these pressures and helps to solve homelessness when it does occur. **Lack of access to safe, stable, affordable housing is one of the main drivers of homelessness.**

How Crisis is responding

Last year, we helped more than 8,000 people who used one or more of Crisis' services, including finding safe and secure housing, accessing employment and starting education and training opportunities. We offer one-to-one support, advice and courses, which help people find a home and settle in, get new skills and find a job, and help their health and wellbeing so they can start their journey out of homelessness.

Crisis previously led the successful campaign to restore Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to cover the cheapest third of rents. Now, we are pushing back against new freezes to LHA rates, recommending reforms to the Benefit Cap, and challenging cuts to Universal Credit and Discretionary Housing Payments, which threaten to push households on low incomes into further financial precarity.

Housing-led approach and Housing First

Crisis has been calling for a move towards a 'housing-led' approach to tackling homelessness. This means that where homelessness cannot be prevented, people should be housed into permanent accommodation as quickly as possible and given the holistic support they need to keep their home.

Housing First is a highly effective, housing-led response targeted specifically at people facing multiple disadvantages (often called 'complex needs', including a history of rough sleeping, addiction, offending and/or mental and physical health problems). It works at sustainably ending homelessness for this

highly vulnerable group where the conventional hostel pathway so often fails, and even exacerbates existing issues for the individual.

Both the Scottish and Welsh Governments are committed to the principle of a housing-led response to homelessness and are taking steps towards embedding Housing First as the standard response for people with complex needs and for all homelessness support to meet the principles of housing-led approaches.

In England there is no such Government commitment, so our influencing is focussed on ensuring the [Westminster Government commits to making Housing First the standard offer for people with complex needs.](#)



Rough sleeping is the most extreme and visible experience of poverty and injustice in the UK.

3. Good health and wellbeing



Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages

The Issue

Addressing health inequalities

People who are homeless experience significant health inequalities, including much higher prevalence of physical and mental health issues. For example, we know that people who are homeless are three times more likely than the general population to live with a chronic health condition. We also know that homelessness has a significant impact on people's life expectancy. **The average age of death for people experiencing homelessness is just 45 for men and 43 for women, compared to an average of 76 years for men and 81 years for women** amongst the general population.

Despite this, people experiencing homelessness often face many barriers to accessing healthcare. Health-related issues can be a cause or consequence of homelessness, with the lack of a safe and stable place to call home often causing a further deterioration to an individual's physical and mental health, and it can be harder to end someone's homelessness if their health needs are not addressed.

How Crisis is responding

In Birmingham and Newcastle, our services are part of the #HealthNow partnerships with Groundswell, working together to help ensure people experiencing homelessness can

access vital healthcare. Through our Crisis at Christmas centres, we were directly offering people facing homelessness the option of receiving the coronavirus vaccine.

Crisis also advocates for the Westminster Government and the NHS to improve approaches to homelessness and health. The Covid-19 pandemic sharply exposed just how much homelessness is a public health issue, and we led on influencing the Government to ensure people who are homeless were prioritised for the vaccine, working closely with others in the homelessness and health sector. We have recently been leading a coalition with Pathway, Groundswell, St. Mungo's and other organisations to [amend the Health and Care Bill](#) to ensure health reforms consider the needs of people who face the poorest health outcomes, including people who are homeless. We are continuing to advocate for the new commissioning structures within the NHS, such as Integrated Care Systems, to ensure they identify and meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Going forward, we plan to continue campaigning for the health and social care system to play its full role in ending homelessness. This includes exploring the need for greater involvement from health and care in the provision of Housing First, to ensure we can effectively end the homelessness of people with the most complex health needs. We will also be conducting policy work that explores the role of the health system in preventing homelessness.

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In my volunteering role, I have seen first-hand the additional hurdles faced by members trying to move out of homelessness if they have complex medical needs. By combining expertise and resources, Crisis and Pathway should be able to improve outcomes for many.

Lou Whittle, Crisis Housing Volunteer

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8. Decent work and economic growth



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

The Issue

Recent changes in the labour market and economy have led to an increase in low paid, unpredictable and insecure work. **996,000 people are on zero-hour contracts** and this has more than quadrupled in the last ten years. There has been a steady rise in in-work poverty, more than half (56%) of people trapped in poverty are in a working family and this proportion has increased from 39 percent over the last 20 years. This is against a backdrop of rising housing costs in many areas of Britain. For households in the lowest income quintile, housing costs have increased disproportionately especially in the private rented sector. For many people these combined pressures of low pay and high living and housing costs have increased the risk of homelessness. In the last 12 months, 60,660 households who were either at risk of or experiencing homelessness in England had at least one person in the household in work - 22 per cent of all households approaching their local authority for assistance.

How Crisis is responding

Our research into the impact of in-work homelessness

It is vital that the employment options people experiencing homelessness are supported to access enable them to move out of homelessness for good by providing a stable income and decent working conditions.

Crisis recently conducted research about the scale, experiences and impact of in-work homelessness across Great Britain, which found that low wages, unpredictable and insecure work – alongside a lack of affordable housing – can actually create and sustain homelessness. The research shows that significant reform is needed to improve pay, support at work and investment in affordable housing options. Doing this will ensure that work provides people with the ability to build a better life in a home of their own and bring an end to the indignity of homelessness.

We will be publishing a Best Practice guide for employers on supporting people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Supporting people to find and sustain decent employment

Through our services we also work to support people to find and sustain employment that will help them to move out of homelessness for good. This can be especially critical for non-UK nationals who have restricted access to benefits and other support to help them if they are homeless or on the brink of homelessness. Crisis recently commissioned research looking at homelessness amongst EEA nationals living in Britain which found that losing a job, struggling to find secure and adequately paid work and a lack of income were all critical factors in the situation of EU nationals experiencing rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness.

To help prevent homelessness wherever possible and ensure no one is put at greater risk of homelessness because of their immigration status, Crisis is calling on the Westminster Government to bring forward funding for a bespoke package of housing and employment support for EU citizens who are rough sleeping, or at risk of rough sleeping, and whose needs are not being met by current programmes. In order to effectively reduce the numbers of EU citizens experiencing rough sleeping, this package of support should include provision of emergency accommodation and support to find and sustain stable, consistent and properly paid employment.

Working with Jobcentres to ensure people experiencing homelessness are appropriately supported

As well as calling for investment in benefits so that they are able to help prevent homelessness, we work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to encourage them to identify, prevent and alleviate homelessness. Jobcentre Plus staff support people during what is often one of the most difficult times of their life, so the DWP has unique access to individuals who are on the brink of homelessness and would benefit from help to avoid homelessness altogether.

We are influencing DWP to introduce the lessons we have learned from a series of pilots with [Jobcentres in Crisis Skylight](#) locations. These lessons are summarised in a report that recommends a series of changes in DWP policy and practice. Based on this, we are currently working with DWP to encourage them to improve data-sharing and to resource homelessness specialists.

Modern slavery and homelessness

We also know that there are deep links between homelessness and modern slavery. In 2021 Crisis published [the first comprehensive study](#) on the links between modern slavery and homelessness. The research found that when people were first 'recruited' or coerced into exploitation, the most common living arrangements were either sofa surfing or rough sleeping. However, whilst the exploitation was ongoing, two thirds of victims were living in accommodation provided by or linked to their exploiters. This shows that people experiencing homelessness aren't only

more exposed to exploitation, but that modern slavery itself is often also a housing issue. It exploits people's need for accommodation and can then turn that accommodation into a means of control.

The government offers support for survivors of modern slavery through a system called the National Referral Mechanism, or NRM. However, we found that even for people who have been through this system, only a fifth had secured stable accommodation by the time that support ended. In the worst cases, survivors who are forced back into homelessness might find themselves being re-exploited again and again, as people facing homelessness continue to be targeted by perpetrators.

Crisis is working with other homelessness and modern slavery organisations as part of a modern slavery taskforce, led by the Home Office, to urge progress on these issues and break the link between homelessness and modern slavery.

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Effectively nurturing entrepreneurship and creating new opportunities for people to secure an income is crucial. Members need sustainable livelihoods to be successful in tackling homelessness.

Lucky Lowe, Crisis Volunteer

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We gave £3.2million to local organisations tackling homelessness amidst the pandemic in 2020/21

11. Sustainable cities and communities



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

The Issue

Lack of access to safe, stable, affordable housing is one of the main drivers of homelessness. **In Crisis' plan to end homelessness we set out the main housing-related measures that governments in England, Scotland and Wales should introduce to tackle homelessness.** This includes increasing investment in the supply of social rented housing, overcoming social housing allocations barriers, improving security of tenure and conditions in the private rented sector and ensuring Housing Benefit covers the cost of rent.

We know that significant investment to increase the supply of social housing is critical to preventing homelessness however the Government has not been willing to expand social housing stock to the levels needed to address the housing crisis, especially in England where the problem is most acute. People experiencing homelessness often find it particularly difficult to access the social housing.

How Crisis is responding

Crisis has set out a significant programme of work that aims to address this issue, and consider how the problem of the lack of suitable, affordable housing can be tackled in a way that will help end homelessness and ensure everyone can access a safe, secure and affordable home.

Our grants were started last year, to support local, frontline organisations tackling homelessness and the pandemic. Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 we granted more than £3.2m to over 230 organisations in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Sums from £5,000 to £105,000 were awarded to address a diverse and critical range of emergency and long-term needs. These included: stopping people going hungry; supplying workers with PPE; setting up communication links for people experiencing domestic abuse and ending the homelessness of refugees and asylum seekers.

13. Climate action



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact

The Issue

The effects of climate change are likely to particularly impact people experiencing homelessness and force others out of their homes. We know that homelessness, and especially rough sleeping, is detrimental to people's health and extreme weather events make this even more severe, and potentially deadly. Extreme cold and extreme heat can both be significant problems and Crisis is urging the Government to transform the way we approach homelessness to ensure that everyone is protected from the dangers of sleeping on the streets. **During the pandemic, homelessness was treated as a public health issue and we saw the huge difference this made to helping people access safe accommodation and the support they needed to leave homelessness behind for good.** Crisis is calling on the Government to produce a comprehensive cross-government strategy that will ensure homelessness is prevented from occurring wherever possible and transform our approach to homelessness so that if it does occur it is rare, brief and not repeated.

How Crisis is responding

At Crisis, we recognise that in delivering life-changing services and campaigning for change our work also has an impact on the environment, which arises mainly from energy use, travel, waste generation, water use and the use of non-renewable resources. We are therefore committed to minimising the negative impact of our activities on the environment to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

An independent assessment of Crisis' environmental impact will be completed in 2022. We will use the results to inform our first sustainability strategy including our contribution to achieving science-based targets to tackle climate change. We also plan to address the issue of extreme weather and its impact on people who are homeless, including through service provision and policy change.

Together with Shelter and Homeless Link, we have also written to the Government calling for it to make a new era of net zero social housing a reality to achieve the country's climate change goals and vision of levelling up.



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