



END
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This General Election, every party must commit to ending all forms of homelessness, including ending rough sleeping within five years, and to publish and implement a plan within the first year of government to end all forms of homelessness.

We are calling on political parties to put in place a plan with the interventions needed to end homelessness.

A commitment to ending rough sleeping and wider forms of homelessness is defined as:



No one sleeping rough



No one living in transient, dangerous or insecure accommodation. This includes people squatting, living in cars, tents and non-residential buildings. It also includes people who are 'sofa surfing'



No one living in temporary forms of accommodation without a plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and safe accommodation



No one homeless as a result of leaving a state institution such as prison or the care system



Everyone at immediate risk of homelessness gets the help that prevents it happening.

In order to meet the commitment, we believe a plan to end homelessness must include the following:

Increasing the supply and access to affordable housing for people at risk of, or currently experiencing, homelessness:

This includes:

- Growing investment in social housing, to meet the requirement for building a minimum of 90,000 social homes a year over the next five years at social rent levels.
- Delivering investment of £12.8 billion a year is required to substantially increase the supply of social rented and other types of affordable home over the next 10 years.¹
- Revising national allocations guidance to ensure homeless people are not excluded from social housing.
- Increasing security in the private rented sector by legislating for indefinite tenancies and limit annual rent increases to a maximum of an inflationary measure for the duration of the period.

Increasing investment in welfare assistance to help prevent people becoming homeless

This includes:

- Returning Local Housing Allowance rates to at least the 30th percentile of market rents.
- Increased flexibility to lift the benefit cap in specified circumstances related to homelessness.
- Exempting the following groups of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness from the Shared Accommodation Rate: people made a Housing First offer, all care leavers, people fleeing domestic abuse, prison leavers moving on from Approved Premises, and people leaving supported housing or who have a history of sleeping rough.
- Ensuring that people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, receive financial support whilst waiting for their first Universal Credit payment that does not increase homelessness risk or levels of debt.
- Allow Universal Credit deductions to be set at affordable levels. This could be achieved by granting an automatic three-month delay on any Universal Credit deductions for anyone identified as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

¹ National Housing Federation (2019) Capital grant required to meet social housing need in England 2021-2031. This report estimates the subsidy requirement for councils and housing associations to deliver a programme of 80,000 social rented and 57,000 intermediate tenure homes over a ten year period.

- Tailored support should be made available to everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness while moving on to Universal Credit. This should include funding for Housing and Homelessness Specialists in Jobcentres as part of Universal Support.
- Ensuring that all EU nationals receive sufficient access to housing and welfare support and assistance to prevent and end their homelessness. Following Britain's departure from the EU, this should also include people who are not initially able to secure 'settled status.'
- Provide greater legal clarity to prevent tenants in receipt of housing benefit being discriminated against with regards to lettings.

Greater support for non-UK nationals at risk of homelessness

This includes:

- Extending the move-on period for newly recognised refugees to at least 56 days and make the providers of asylum support accommodation subject to a statutory duty to refer people leaving asylum support accommodation who are at risk of homelessness to the local housing authority.
- Ensuring that legal aid is available for the areas of law that will help to prevent or relieve homelessness for migrants. This includes immigration cases and early legal help for welfare benefits, debt, employment and housing advice. There should be additional provision for national roll out of the Street Legal project which provides this type of advice for people sleeping rough and are vulnerably housed, alongside a short term offer of accommodation.

Steps should also be taken to ensure that all non-UK nationals are provided with at least basic provision of temporary accommodation to prevent anyone from sleeping rough and that support is provided to resolve their immigration status as quickly as possible.

Ensuring that homelessness services are fully funded and fit for the future

This includes:

- A new programme to provide guaranteed, long term funding for services which prevent homelessness and help people off the street quickly.
- A 'somewhere safe to stay' legal duty to ensure that everyone who is at risk of sleeping rough is provided with emergency accommodation and an assessment of their needs, and that a longer-term plan is put in place to ensure that anyone who is homeless, or at risk of homelessness is provided with an offer of settled housing.
- Investment of at least £9.9bn over a ten-year period, in addition to the investment required in the welfare system and increases in housing supply. This should include extra resource for local authorities to deliver the Homelessness Reduction Act. This would deliver benefits worth £26.4 billion.

Ensure a cross departmental approach to tackling homelessness

This includes:

- Introducing new duties to prevent homelessness within each government department to ensure that all relevant public authorities are required to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness. This would ensure, for example, that the Department for Health and Social Care takes a strategy lead in addressing health inequalities for homeless people by making existing health services more accessible and providing specialist services where needed.
- A cross-government shared outcomes and performance framework for all homelessness provision alongside ring-fenced funding to ensure that investment is delivering the best value for money.
- Cross departmental plans to end homelessness should be formulated with the sector and people with lived experience of homelessness.



