

CIH submission to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness (APPGEH) inquiry into progress towards the Government's rough sleeping target

Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the professional body for people who work in housing, the independent voice for housing, and the home of professional standards. Our mission is to support housing professionals to create a future in which everyone has a place to call home.

We welcome the opportunity to submit evidence to this important APPGEH inquiry into the Government's progress towards its manifesto commitment to 'end the blight of rough sleeping by the end of the next Parliament' in 2024. Since this welcome pledge in 2019, the homelessness landscape in England has changed significantly, but we know that considerable further action is needed to make this shared ambition a reality and capitalise on the progress made so far. This has never been more pressing than in the current context of the rapidly growing cost of living crisis.

1. Review of the commitment to end rough sleeping in England by 2024 - where are we now?

Do you think the Government will meet its manifesto commitment to ending rough sleeping by 2024? Please explain your reasoning in less than 500 words.

No. Whilst the manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024 is most welcome, rough sleeping is a symptom of wider problems, including a shortage of genuinely affordable housing and a welfare system which is not supporting people on low incomes to meet their housing costs (including the freeze on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, the benefits cap and Universal Credit (UC) failing to keep up with inflation). **Long term investment in prevention is the key to ending homelessness including rough sleeping.** Without significantly greater support for homes at social rents, good quality supported housing and significant changes to welfare policies, we do not consider that the government will be able

to meet its stated objective of ending rough sleeping by the end of the next parliament.

In addition, efforts by the government to end rough sleeping are also significantly undermined by flawed understandings and measurements of rough sleeping. The most recent [government snapshot](#) of rough sleepers estimated that 2,440 people were sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2021. Whilst the government snapshot provides a useful year on year comparison it also significantly underestimates the scale of rough sleeping. The Greater London Authority (GLA) publishes data about rough sleepers in London collected from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) database. [London CHAIN data for 2020/21](#) found that 11,018 people were in contact with rough sleeping services and outreach workers just in the capital, and this number has increased each year since 2017/18. This is a significantly different figure than is given in the government snapshot. Furthermore the [Public Accounts Committee Report in 2021](#) found that over 37,000 people were given emergency accommodation during the pandemic through the 'Everyone In' scheme, nearly nine times the official estimate of people sleeping rough before the pandemic. **The government cannot successfully end rough sleeping if it so severely underestimates the scale of the problem.**

i) What does successfully ending rough sleeping in England look like?

The experience of rough sleeping is damaging for individuals even for one night, and the longer someone is sleeping rough the greater the risks they face to their safety and physical and mental health. **CIH consider that ending rough sleeping in England requires a robust system that prevents people from arriving at the crisis point of rough sleeping in the first place.** When rough sleeping does occur, it should be brief and non-reoccurring - which can only be achieved through the provision of suitable and sustained recovery support (including for those not well served by generic provision for example people fleeing domestic abuse, young people and people who identify as LGBTQ+).

We welcome that the Centre for Homelessness Impact is working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to develop a definition of what it will mean to end rough sleeping in England. We support the definition developed through [this work](#) which says that rough sleeping will be ended when every local area ensures that rough sleeping is prevented wherever possible and, where it cannot be prevented, it is rare, brief and non-recurring. We look forward to further detail on a high-level framework to capture and track progress towards achieving this definition.

ii) How can we best measure this?

As already noted, the data measurement needs improving to ensure that the scale of the problem is not underestimated, the issues are better understood, and the tools can be developed from this data to make efforts most effective. Whilst not without its own limitations, currently the most robust and comprehensive rough sleeping data in the UK comes from the CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network). It records multi-agency information, including outcomes for individual rough sleepers. It is through this data that the success of interventions like [No Second Night Out](#) (NSNO) in London were able to be tracked. Developing a CHAIN-like system across each nation in Great Britain remains a good option to address inconsistencies in rough sleeping data and to improve on the quality and value of the data collected.

In research undertaken for Crisis, Heriot-Watt University has developed the concept of 'core homelessness', focused on those experiencing the most extreme homelessness conditions; including people sleeping rough but also those staying in places not intended as residential accommodation (for example - cars, tents, sheds etc), living in homeless hostels, refuges and shelters, placed in unsuitable accommodation (for example B&Bs) and sofa surfing. Based on triangulations of multiple survey and administrative data sources, measurements of core homelessness provide a valuable vehicle for comparing trends over time and within GB countries. As demonstrated in the [UK Housing Review published in 2022](#) (figure 2.5.5) England has markedly higher core homelessness rates, at 0.94 per cent compared with 0.65 per cent in Wales and 0.55 per cent in Scotland. This

reflects the different housing market supply-demand positions in the GB countries, but also to some extent the implementation of different policy approaches over time. [The 2022 Homeless Monitor Report](#) considers core homelessness and makes the prediction that, assuming no significant amendment to existing housing, homelessness and social security policies are made, overall core homelessness will rise to be one-third higher in 2023 than it was in 2019 with the largest rises in rough sleeping and sofa surfing.

What progress has been made, and what government action to tackle rough sleeping since 2019 do you think has been most important/ impactful?

We have seen important government action to tackle rough sleeping since 2019. CIH welcomed the steps the government took during the Covid-19 pandemic to accommodate people sleeping rough and to financially manage the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic which could otherwise have put many more at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping. This included supporting residents in their homes and changes to the welfare system. **It is extrapolating the learning from these actions which is crucial to ensuring they are impactful in the long term; particularly given the immediate and severe cost of living crisis we currently face.**

The 'Everyone In' scheme is undoubtedly an important and impactful action taken by government. This has been extensively documented over the last few years with widespread agreement that the initiative saved many lives amongst those who were rough sleeping and rapidly reduced the numbers of people sleeping rough. Everyone In was a step-change in how the government tackled rough sleeping and showed how much progress can be made with direct funding and policy action.

Whilst tackling rough sleeping was already a high priority pre-pandemic, the public health emergency sharpened and accelerated this focus and opened options that had seemingly not been there before. It marked a real point of clarity from central government to local government about what ought to be happening. For individuals for whom Everyone In supported off the streets successfully with

essential services like health and support to apply for benefits, who were then able to move on to more secure permanent accommodation, the positive impact of Everyone In cannot be underestimated.

As part of 'Everyone In' and the related pandemic support measures put in place, CIH particularly welcomed the temporary lifting of rules on people with 'no recourse to public funds', limited leave to remain or otherwise not entitled to benefits or housing assistance for the duration of the pandemic, and the unconditional housing of this cohort. This was vital in keeping these individuals safe from the pandemic and away from rough sleeping. Changes to the welfare system in the pandemic were also successful and impactful in preventing rough sleeping, particularly uplifts to LHA and the £20 per week increase in UC. The moratorium on evictions was also critical in keeping households in their homes. However, there were significant gaps in this help. Some people impacted by the household benefit cap saw no increase in their income to help with the pandemic. People who lost their job at the start of the pandemic were impacted by the cap if they were still out of work, or only working a few hours a week, many months later. The government withdrew the £20 uplift to Universal Credit that had been a lifeline to many struggling to meet daily costs.

At a time of world instability, direct government action is essential. However, **we are very concerned that the lessons from tackling homelessness and rough sleeping during the pandemic have not been learned. As things stand, their positive impact will be eroded, with progress unravelled as we see a rolling back of many of support measures - during a cost of living crisis - which will mean many more people are forced into rough sleeping.** The [2022 homeless monitor report](#) from Crisis predicts that without significant welfare benefit changes aimed at reducing destitution, rates of core homelessness and rough sleeping will rise by a third. These findings are supported by the homelessness commentary chapter in [UK Housing Review 2021](#), which predicts that without changes in policy there will be further increases in core homelessness in the longer term, particularly in London. The protections put in place during the pandemic helped thousands of people off the streets and prevented many more from facing homelessness. To see that progress reversed would be tragic and comes at great cost to individuals and to society.

The government's investment, via the 2021 spending review, for councils to continue their homelessness prevention and rough sleeping initiatives (including securing accommodation and tailored support homelessness) was most welcome. However, the lack of investment in housing-related support that CIH called for in its [submission](#) was disappointing. We have long called on government to invest in existing and new supported housing to meet a range of needs and provide a national, ringfenced funding stream for housing related support. This, coupled with the delivery of more homes to rent, would provide secure pathways for many people out of homelessness and rough sleeping. We were also disappointed that there was no announcement on the second round of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) in the 2021 budget. However, the government announcement that it would bring forward exemptions to the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) from June 2021 for care leavers up to the age of 25 and those under the age of 25 who have spent any three months in supported accommodation, and victims of domestic abuse and human trafficking, was very positive.

In response to the Chancellor's 2022 spring statement CIH welcomed the increase to the Household Support Fund. However, as we pointed out at the time of the statement, this is not an adequate solution to support low-income families in the face of a cost of living crisis which sees the cost of essentials rising at their highest rate in a generation. It is a sticking plaster of discretionary payments which local authorities must administer and, given the application procedure, will reach far fewer people than a more targeted programme. A benefit uprating to match the cost of inflation would have done much more to support the most hard-pressed households in our society. As it stands people are facing real-terms cuts whilst costs are spiralling.

What in your view are the general lessons to be learnt from Everyone In initiative in regard to tackling rough sleeping?

The successes, limitations, and lessons to be learnt from Everyone In have been well documented particularly through the [Kerslake Commission reports](#)

which CIH contributed to. The 'Everyone In' scheme proved effective at getting rough sleepers into accommodation quickly. The [government's statistics](#) show that nearly 30,000 people were assisted off the streets by the end of September 2020. The initiative also exposed the true scale of rough sleeping; as noted above, over 37,000 people were helped through the initiative, over nine times the number of people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single day in autumn 2019; highlighting the extent of hidden homeless at a scale which surprised both local and national authorities.

Everyone In also raised awareness that health and housing are intrinsically linked. It involved unprecedented collaboration between government at central, regional and local levels, alongside work between health and local authority housing colleagues. Partnership and multiagency working, whilst not always straightforward, were real successes of Everyone In. CIH members from local authorities have told us anecdotally that they worked with a wider range of partners than usual, including health, criminal justice, housing associations and voluntary charities, and that this led to better understanding from all involved and a desire for future joint working.

Everyone In proved that rapid rehousing works for many. It was in effect a 'Housing First' model (prioritising access to accommodation over the requirement for an individual to first address any other support needs they have). Whilst Housing First is not suitable for everyone, the success of Everyone In can be seen as an argument for a wider policy approach to upscale Housing First.

Everyone In also demonstrated the value of adequate, self-contained accommodation in moving people away from rough sleeping and keeping them safe. The characteristics of hotel style accommodation have been broadly cited as giving feelings of safety and self-worth to individuals, counter to the negative characteristics of night shelters and hostels. This should change the way that emergency homeless accommodation is now planned.

As already noted, CIH particularly welcomed the temporary lifting of rules relating to people with 'no recourse to public funds', limited leave to remain or otherwise not entitled to benefits or housing assistance for the duration of the pandemic,

and the unconditional housing of this cohort. This was vital in keeping these individuals safe from the pandemic and away from rough sleeping. Changes to the welfare system were also successful in preventing rough sleeping, particularly uplifts to LHA and UC) The moratorium on evictions was vital in keeping households in their homes, although the impact when this is lifted is cause for concern.

Whilst Everyone In was undoubtedly a positive step in the right direction, it also highlighted lessons in areas of provision which did not work well. For example, it revealed the lack of capacity in some locations to provide in-person trauma informed support services to help people to manage this period of social isolation. Submissions to the Kerslake Commission highlighted that some agencies failed to realise how great the support need was for some and emphasised that **accommodation alone is not a solution to rough sleeping**. The emergency response was less effective at meeting the needs of those who were not the 'typical cohort' familiar to the service (i.e. adult males), including young people, women and the LGBTQ+ people. A lack of tailored provision meant these groups did not come inside or were placed in mixed environments which were unsuitable and placed them at risk from harm.

It is important to remember that for all the great good that Everyone In did, it did not do anything to tackle how people become homeless in the first place nor stop it happening again to other people. **Everyone In also showed the limitations of short-term housing solutions.** [Research by Shelter](#) found that by February 2021, 77 per cent of the people helped under the scheme were not living in settled accommodation (somewhere they could stay for at least six months), 22 per cent were still living in emergency accommodation such as hostels and B&B rooms, and 23 per cent were no longer being accommodated at all, which suggests they may have returned to the streets or sofa-surfing. Short-term solutions leave people in precarious housing circumstances where a return to sleeping rough may only be a matter of time. To end rough sleeping for good requires safe, settled accommodation and personalised, ongoing support for people with complex needs.

How do you think Everyone In could have been made more effective in terms of policy, law, and/or funding?

As noted above, Everyone In was successful in getting people off the streets but less so in keeping them in settled accommodation. Any attempt to address rough sleeping will have only limited effectiveness if it only offers a short-term solution. Additional funding needs to be directed towards move-on accommodation and the support needed for former rough sleepers to sustain tenancies.

Whilst the initial direction and funding for Everyone In has been highly commended, the impetus on rough sleeping has not maintained the same momentum. The 2021 Spending Review specifically mentioned ending rough sleeping but provided less funding than previous years. In addition, as already noted, many of the admirable and effective government actions during the pandemic, such as providing emergency housing, halting evictions and the temporary lifting of Universal Credit payments have come to an end just at a time when millions of people face high housing costs and rises in inflation and energy prices. If action is not taken this will effectively undo all the good achieved by Everyone In.

The Government has promised in its 2019 manifesto to end rough sleeping by expanding successful pilots and programmes such as the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and Housing First (HF):

i) What merits and limitations does the RSI have, and what impact do you consider it to have had on funding efforts to end rough sleeping?

Since 2018 RSI has been providing important support to allow councils and their partners to reduce the levels of rough sleeping through specialist service provision to help people off the streets. Unlike previous years where funding has been annual, 2022 saw a welcome move to a multi-year settlement, providing greater stability and ability to plan. However, even with this welcome support it must be recognised that councils are still having to make extremely difficult budgeting decisions and are under immense pressure. Discussion with our members has revealed a crisis of recruitment and retention across the housing sector, in particular in supported housing. Anecdotally we understand this is

being driven by high and very stressful workloads, and uncompetitive pay and conditions. Solving this problem through long-term and sufficient commissioning would help to ensure that there is an adequately staffed workforce. RSI funding has a role to play in this.

ii) What role can Housing First play in helping the Westminster Government deliver its manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping in England by 2024?

Housing First is an [internationally recognised and proven](#) way of tackling and preventing rough sleeping for people whose experience of homelessness is compounded by multiple disadvantages. Housing First focuses on a specific group of people with histories of repeat homelessness, very complex needs, experience of multiple disadvantage and for whom other services have not been successful in ending their homelessness. It should be one of a range of housing options for people who are homeless. CIH support high fidelity Housing First and believe it can play a significant role in helping the Westminster Government deliver its manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping in England by 2024.

The Housing First model has grown steadily in the UK over recent years, with the very welcome pilot schemes in the Liverpool City Region, the West Midlands and Greater Manchester, and with many more small-scale services supported through the Rough Sleeping Initiative. As part of the APPG for Ending Homelessness inquiry into scaling up Housing First Services across England the ['Voices of Housing First' report](#) was published in 2021. This report puts the experiences of people with direct experience of homelessness and multiple disadvantage front and centre, as they powerfully share how and why Housing First has helped to end their homelessness once and for all.

[Emerging evidence from the national evaluation reports](#) from the three pilots funded by the government is positive, with over 80 per cent of the people supported successfully sustaining tenancies. The Centre for Social Justice report [Close to home: delivery a national housing first programme in England](#) from 2021 draws on the learning from the city region pilots and elsewhere to map out the steps government should take to expand Housing First provision and identifies three areas for change:

- Sustainable funding for support
- Increased housing supply
- Effective national stewardship (including effective cross-departmental and multi-agency working at national and local level).

Whilst it is important to remember that Housing First is certainly not a one-size fits all solution, it does have an important role to play in helping to break the cycle that sees people with complex needs and facing multiple disadvantage revolving in and out of hostels, insecure accommodation, and rough sleeping. The circa [2,000 Housing First places](#) now available are a fraction of what's needed. Homeless Link and Crisis estimate that at least [16,500 people](#) are experiencing the combination of homelessness, serious mental health needs, drug or alcohol dependency and offending behaviour that mean they would benefit from Housing First. CIH believe that to deliver its manifesto commitment of ending rough sleeping by 2024

Housing First should be scaled up and rolled out nationally as a mainstream response for people with complex support needs who are at risk of homelessness or already homeless.

What changes would you like to see in terms of national or local funding arrangements to tackle rough sleeping?

CIH encourages government to continue to treat rough sleeping and homelessness more generally as an urgent public health matter. With this in mind, government must ensure that funding is **adequate** to tackle the scale of the problem, **long term enough** to enable stability and planning, and **ring-fenced** so that it does not get absorbed into other areas at a time of many competing needs.

2. Meeting the needs of everyone sleeping rough

Which cohorts of rough sleepers do you think have been supported out of rough sleeping? Has their homelessness been ended? If not what more needs to be done for these groups?

Over recent years there has been a welcome move towards the acknowledgement that people sleeping rough are not a homogenous group - their needs vary and supporting them out of rough sleeping requires a tailored support approach.

However, whilst the acknowledgment may exist the services and/or funding are often not available for that tailored support, as we set out in the following sections.

Which groups do you feel still lack access to the support they need or a meaningful intervention and what should be put in place to successfully end their homelessness?

**In particular views on any of the following groups would be helpful:
Survivors of gendered violence/ domestic abuse**

Most homeless shelters are inappropriate for survivors of gendered violence/domestic abuse because they are mixed sex which is totally unsuitable for survivors. There also remains a severe lack of specialist supported accommodation for women to move on to, including long-term accommodation in which women can build up independence alongside specialist support.

It must also be recognised that experiences of violence and abuse intertwine with other disadvantages in the lives of women, which create additional barriers to ending rough sleeping. Women who have no recourse to public funds, and those who have children removed from their care are two such groups.

All survivors' safety and housing needs are different and therefore survivors require a range of housing and support to enable them to have the viable choice to remain in their accommodation if it is safe and they choose to do so, or to access alternative accommodation. CIH is part of the [National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group](#) (the National Group) led by the [Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance](#) (DAHA). The National Group worked together to develop the [Whole Housing Approach](#) to domestic abuse. This is a local approach that brings housing and specialist domestic abuse services together to provide a range of safety and support options for survivors in any tenure type or housing circumstances to address their housing and safety needs.

Women

A one size fits all approach to ending rough sleeping for everyone will not end rough sleeping for women. **Strategies and interventions to end rough sleeping**

must consider how women's needs are different, and how women are disproportionately impacted by domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls. The inter-sectional needs of minoritised homeless women, including those who are migrants, must also be recognised and addressed. Women who are sleeping rough need tailored housing solutions that provide the support they need. They should be housed in safe accommodation where they are not at risk of violence.

Research has shown that women experience long term or recurrent homelessness in larger numbers than first thought and may cycle in and out of rough sleeping, dispersed with informal, unsafe, and hidden places to stay. Longer term funding is needed to end homelessness for this recurrently homeless cohort of women if we are to support them to move away from rough sleeping for good. Additionally, more must be done to quantify the scale of the problem and to respond to women's hidden homelessness.

It should also be acknowledged that the majority of households in temporary accommodation are female-headed single-parent families. There should be a focus on homelessness prevention for families and changes to welfare to make housing more affordable for single parents.

LGBTQI+ groups

There remains a lack of accurate data around LGBTQI + groups in English homelessness statistics which could in turn lead to better services and an informed response. However, we do know that despite being over-represented in the homeless population, there is a shortage of specialist support available. Data collected by LGBTQ+ homeless charity AKT suggests that [almost a quarter](#) of young people aged 16 to 25 at risk of homelessness identify as either lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or non-binary. **LGBTQI+ rough sleepers or people at risk of rough sleeping need tailored prevention support and housing solutions that provide informed support. They should be housed in safe accommodation where they are not at risk of discrimination or violence.**

Non-UK nationals

The political agenda to create a 'hostile environment' for some has severely affected people from outside the UK who face homelessness in this country. This is regardless of their status in the UK, or reason for being here. The rights that non-UK nationals have to regularise their status are constantly being chipped away at, so where there may have been opportunities to help people in the past in many cases these are no longer available, including in England self-help by finding a private rented home due to right to rent. With the passing of the end of June 2021 deadline for EU nationals to apply for settled status in the UK, another tranche of the population is now prevented from renting accommodation, receiving homelessness help or benefits. **Whereas (as already discussed in our submission) there was more to help these groups in the pandemic, that has effectively ended now and this, we consider, is disastrous both for individuals and in relation to the government's targets to end rough sleeping. Finding a workable housing solution for people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) will be necessary for government to meet its target of ending rough sleeping by 2024.** There will be many people who are reluctant to come forward for any form of help because they are unsure about their rights and fear removal - including people with settled status who are experiencing domestic abuse. CIH have long stressed our concerns about the serious obstacles to helping current and former rough sleepers to obtain longer-term accommodation and support, in cases where they are not entitled to housing and benefit. Therefore, we propose that the government seriously considers restoring access to public funds on a permanent basis, regardless of immigration status, to build on the positive work to end rough sleeping during this pandemic.

Prison leavers

According to statistics from the [Ministry of Justice](#), the number of prison leavers released into homelessness fell by 37 per cent between 2019/20 and 2020/21 with pandemic measures in place. Yet, we remain in a situation where far too many people are still being released straight onto the streets, simply setting them up to fail. [Government statistics](#) show that over half of rough sleepers have been in prison or had some form of contact with the criminal justice system and that

prison leavers without a stable home are around [50 per cent more likely to reoffend](#). People leaving prison are even being known to re-commit crime to avoid rough sleeping. Whilst some limited welcome measures were introduced in [2021 by government](#), prison leavers need to be supported into appropriate accommodation. There needs to be multi-year funding for tailored support that meets their specific needs and allows housing providers to provide supported and/or social housing.

Veterans

People leaving the Armed Forces may struggle to navigate the system or can miss out on specific support that they are entitled to because they are not identified as veterans. [The Royal British Legion's long-held estimate](#) is that somewhere between three and six per cent of homeless people have an armed forces background, but there are concerns that some homeless veterans are rendered "invisible" by the way statistics are collected.

The 2021 budget announcement of £10million (in 2021/22) to help veterans with mental health needs to access services and support is welcome as it is well known that poor mental health can be a barrier to accessing and retaining housing. It is important that housing providers and local authorities are equipped to make sure they are ["asking the veteran" question](#) when assessing prospective tenants, so that appropriate support can be provided for their needs.

Care leavers

There has been welcome attention by government and others on care leavers' risks of homelessness over recent years, including the publication of good practice guides, duty changes, and over £700,000 (in 2020/21) to 21 local authorities with the highest number of care leavers at risk of rough sleeping, and grant funding (2021/22) to local authorities with the highest number of care leavers in certain categories. However, significant gaps in policy and practice to support these young people remain, and much more is needed. Nobody should become homeless as a result of leaving care and we must improve outcomes for these young people in society. Support to prevent care leavers becoming homeless is vital. All local authorities need a joined-up process between the Housing and

Children's Services Departments, and sufficient funding to provide suitable and appropriate emergency accommodation and support for young care leavers who become homeless. We know that young people in general were a group whose needs were not adequately considered in the Everyone In response. Submissions to the [Kerslake Commission Interim Report](#) noted there was a lack of youth specific provision, meaning many did not access emergency accommodation due to concerns over safety, or did enter and were exposed to unsafe situations.

Those with complex needs

The more complex needs someone has, the more help they will need to move on from homelessness and rebuild their lives. Prolonged periods of rough sleeping have a significant impact on people's mental and physical health. We know that many people who experience rough sleeping struggle to access the support services they need, and a lack of appropriate accommodation acts as a barrier for getting people off the streets. Getting people into appropriate accommodation quickly is crucially important, as is providing them with the appropriate services and support they need. The success of Housing First schemes is testament to this - prioritising getting people quickly into a stable home, and from this point addressing the support needs they might have through coordinated and intensive support.

Others

There is insufficient research or analysis on the causes and solutions of homelessness and rough sleeping for groups with protected characteristics. To fill this gap, government should commission research on groups experiencing homelessness with further lenses of inter-sectional needs and societal disadvantage, for example, ethnic minorities, people who are experiencing youth homelessness, women, people who are disabled and people who identify as LGBTQ+. This can be used to develop better designed data collection methodologies for these groups, who have different experiences of homelessness and are more likely to be hidden homeless, to go on to inform more appropriate provision.

3. What is needed to prevent, secure and sustain an end to rough sleeping in England?

In your opinion, what are the main national policy and practice changes still needed to sustain and end rough sleeping in England beyond 2024?

CIH consider that it is essential to take a strategic view to prevent, secure and sustain an end to rough sleeping in England. This means recognising the broader factors that drive homelessness and focusing policy and practice changes on prevention.

Building social housing

We believe that the government should commit to building social home building at scale (90,000 new social rented homes each year for 10 years). According to the [2021 NHF Report on People in Housing Need](#) 8.5 million people in England are experiencing some of form of unmet housing need, and for more than 4.2 million of these people, social rented housing would be the most appropriate tenure to address that need. Without building social rented homes there will continue to be a new flow of people pushed into homelessness and rough sleeping. Building social homes addresses the most urgent housing needs and will ensure we shift our focus from managing homelessness to ending it.

Welfare policy reform

The government must commit to a thorough review of the relationship between housing and welfare policy to properly consider the cumulative effects of various measures. As discussed earlier in our submission, many of the broader measures introduced as part of the Covid-19 response were successful in preventing higher numbers of people sleeping rough. The reversal of these at a time of rapidly rising housing and living costs will see many more people fall into deep poverty and destitution and mean government manifesto commitments for rough sleeping are utterly unachievable. The largest rough sleeping reductions are forecast in the [2020 Homeless Monitor Report led by Crisis](#) to come from a package of welfare

benefit policies aimed at reducing destitution. In the longer term, the largest potential contributions to reduce core homelessness would come from raising the LHA, rehousing quotas for core homeless households, consistent large-scale application of Housing First accompanied by appropriate rehabilitation provision and a reduction of traditional hostel accommodation. There must also be willingness from government to address the clear tensions between immigration policies including NRPF and the impact of these on destitution and homelessness.

Support services

Prevention requires a whole systems approach with all departments, agencies and bodies working in a fully integrated way with ending homelessness as a priority. When people do reach the crisis point of rough sleeping, there needs to be the right specialist help for them to recover and be equipped with the tools to maintain their recovery. This requires appropriate emergency and move-on accommodation, which is good quality and gives the person dignity, alongside trauma informed support.

The [UK Housing Review](#) (2022) shows that approaches to move-on accommodation in Wales and Scotland have been heavily influenced by pre-Covid policy shifts towards rapid-rehousing responses to homelessness. In Scotland, this includes a significant programme of [Housing First](#) and in Wales £50 million of capital and revenue funding has been committed to rehouse people accommodated during the pandemic. In contrast in England, while funding has been made available there is concern about the transitional and short-term nature of the move-on accommodation being provided. Supported housing for working age and older people who have additional support needs is an important resource to ensure that people can live well and safely in communities, and also prevent or reduce reliance on more costly public services, especially social care and health services. With this in mind, government should invest in existing and new supported housing to meet a range of needs and provide a national, ringfenced funding stream for housing-related support to ensure the sustainability of valuable existing and new supported housing schemes.

In your opinion, what are the main local policy and practice changes needed to successfully sustain an end to rough sleeping in England by 2024? Please order these in terms of importance.

Effective partnership working is essential to homelessness prevention and relief, which in turn has the potential to improve public health, well-being and criminal justice outcomes. Partnership working can help pool resources, improve accountability across organisations, and align local systems to target support at the right people, at the right time and in the right way. To encourage partnership working, local authorities and integrated care systems should put in place joint processes for commissioning services. This should include exploring longer contracts to give time to build practice and a culture of integrated working, where needed, whilst maintaining the ability to test and pilot initiatives to respond to changing circumstances. This must be supported through longer-term funding settlements.

Should government look beyond ending rough sleeping and commit to ending wider forms of homelessness beyond 2024?

Yes. Rough sleepers form only a small cohort of the wider population of people who are homeless or living in unsuitable conditions. **Government should commit to tackling all forms of homelessness - we believe that housing is a human right, and that the government should do more to ensure that everyone has a safe and stable place to call home.**

If yes to answer c, what policies are needed to end all forms of homelessness for good, and what additional outcome measures could reflect this?

The causes of homelessness are broad and varied, so a combination of policy measures must be used to end all forms of homelessness, with an underpinning focus on prevention.

As already noted, a high level of homelessness is driven by the shortage of truly affordable housing. There are over one million households on social housing waiting lists and over 95,000 households in temporary accommodation. The

supply of affordable homes is not sufficient to meet this demand; in 2020/21 52,100 affordable homes were built, only 11 per cent of which were for social rent. [Research by Heriot Watt University](#) for Crisis and the National Housing Federation has estimated that we need 145,000 new affordable homes per year just to meet demand. **A true commitment to ending homelessness in all forms must address the catastrophic decline in social housing over recent decades**, which means that we simply do not have enough social housing for those who need it most.

Alongside this, as we have already noted, reform of welfare support will be the key to ending wider forms of homelessness. As a minimum we are calling for the following:

- Maintain LHA rates at the 30th percentile and bring LHA into the legal framework for uprating, in line with other benefits
- Abolish NRPF rules
- Reinstate the extra £20 per week for universal credit (UC), introduce for legacy benefits and update rates annually in line with living costs
- Pay half the UC standard allowance within 15 days of the claim to everyone with nil income
- Abolish the social sector size criteria ('bedroom tax')
- Abolish the £20k (£23k in London) benefit cap

About CIH

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the independent voice for housing and the home of professional standards. Our goal is simple - to provide housing professionals and their organisations with the advice, support, and knowledge they need. CIH is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation. This means that the money we make is put back into the organisation and funds the activities we carry out to support the housing sector. We have a diverse membership of people who work in both the public and private sectors, in 20 countries on five continents across the world. Further information is available at: www.cih.org.

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May 2022