



# Homeful

Main report

## Homeful: exploring housing-led approaches to resolve and prevent homelessness

Jo Richardson with Felipe Moreira

March 2023

# Acknowledgements

The Homeful campaign and project saw the very best in the social housing sector. I am grateful to everyone who participated in the research and all those who participated in or donated to the fundraising campaign. Together we raised over £54,000 to support the work of the charity group End Youth Homelessness across the whole of the UK.

I am grateful for the expertise and advice of the research 'sounding board' members throughout the process. The organisations who ran *Homeful* workshops with residents and community members were invaluable, as too were those who provided information for the practice examples in this report. Grateful thanks are due to residents and community members who shared their lived experience.

Finally, thanks are due to the Chartered Institute of Housing for their support throughout my presidential term, and to De Montfort University for allowing me the space and support to undertake the project.

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**Thank you all.**

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*“Acute shortages of decent, affordable homes cause homelessness and ruin lives.”*

We all need to be hopeful about meeting the nation's housing needs. But that isn't always easy. As this report so clearly demonstrates, acute shortages of decent, affordable homes cause homelessness and ruin lives.

The Homeful project, led by Jo Richardson during her term as President of the Chartered Institute of Housing, has produced a report with a clear, hard-hitting and well-argued case for significant changes to our broken housing scene. Testimonies from those whose lives have been deeply affected by their housing experiences add an extra dimension to the policy arguments.

The report contains an admirable list of important conclusions and recommendations. I was particularly struck by the easily-forgotten positive experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic, when key people from housing, health and care worked together. 'Everyone In' was a success that should not be a piece of housing history, but rather a pointer to how committed, collaborative action can really tackle homelessness head on.

I admire the emphasis on the role of today's social housing providers to remember the origins of the sector, to step forward and work together to provide secure, affordable, safe, quality accommodation and support services; so that they contribute to a more 'homeful' future.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Best". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**March 2023**

# Introduction



By **Jo Richardson**

Professor of Housing and Social Inclusion, De Montfort University, Leicester  
President of the Chartered Institute of Housing 2021-2022

In July 2021 I launched the Homeful project as part of my presidency with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH). The project's aim was to explore housing-led approaches to resolve and prevent homelessness. Not only rough sleeping, overcrowding and hidden homelessness, but all the ways in which people feel disconnected from the sense of being 'at home'.

The project's launch report<sup>1</sup> outlined some of the key challenges for society in addressing this issue – namely the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the emerging cost-of-living crisis, on top of a longer-term shortage of properly affordable, social, housing to rent. Moreover, it included emergent examples of ways in which the housing sector and public/charitable partners had worked together to provide an agile, joined-up response to an acute rough-sleeping homelessness need.

Homeful was also a charity fundraising campaign<sup>2</sup> to support the work of **End Youth Homelessness**. This focused on a 'big walk' I undertook from mid-April to the end of May 2022 along the South West Coast Path. As well as raising over £54,000, the charity walk enabled me to talk to people along the way to hear their housing stories, and to observe neighbourhoods as I passed through them. Inspired by my average daily distance of 22 miles, I invited supporters to also do 22 of something fitness related in 2022.



This final report tells the story of findings from both the research project and charitable campaign. It provides ideas for all those working in and with the private rented and social housing sector. Starting with a reflection of homelessness and social housing in the UK, the report highlights definitions of home and homelessness along with a short explanation of the methodological approaches taken in collecting and analysing data. There's a summary of the key findings across all strands of the research ahead of a more detailed themed analysis, plus some conclusions and ideas for the future.

<sup>1</sup> Available at [www.cih.org/homeful](http://www.cih.org/homeful)

<sup>2</sup> [www.justgiving.com/campaign/homeful](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/homeful)

# Homelessness in the UK

## England

In the face of rising street homelessness figures, the government in England, in 2019 committed to 'end the blight of rough sleeping' by the end of 2024<sup>3</sup>. As a result of the agile responses from across public, third and private sector organisations during the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic, this almost looked possible. Indeed, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Ending Homelessness reported in Autumn 2022 that there had been significant progress between 2019 and 2021 on reducing the number of people sleeping on the streets in England<sup>4</sup>.

However, that progress is in danger of being undermined by a range of global factors impacting on the economy, mixed with a lack of action in Westminster to secure longer-term funding to support rollout of more schemes like the three Housing First pilots. There has also been a failure to tackle the root causes of homelessness – all homelessness, not just rough sleeping.

The government's own data for England in the Quarter April – June 2022<sup>5</sup>, shows 11,810 households were accepted as owed a main homelessness duty, up 16.5% from the same quarter in the previous year. Of these households, the end of a private rented tenancy was the biggest reason, affecting 39.3% of households owed a duty. There were 94,870 households in temporary accommodation in June 2022, a reduction of only 1% from the previous year.

Increasingly people who are facing homelessness and owed a statutory duty are in work and in the private rented sector. So, it makes no sense to offer these two things – work and private renting – as solutions to homelessness, on their own. There has to be substantial social policy change to lower the cost of housing. Councils and housing associations can clearly be part of this if they're supported by government capital investment to increase the rate at which they can provide homes at a social rent substantially below market levels. Findings from the Resident Voice Index<sup>6</sup> tell us that those in social rented accommodation are already struggling with the cost of living crisis and will need further support to maintain their home and avoid homelessness.

As a result of the global coronavirus pandemic, in March 2020 the government placed an immediate and wide-ranging 'Everyone In' directive<sup>7</sup> on local authorities to provide safe places to accommodate anyone found on the streets and to provide space for people to isolate, away from shared hostel spaces. Similar approaches were taken in devolved nations. The 'Everyone In' pandemic response drastically reduced rough sleeping figures at the time, and demonstrated what could be done by organisations working together in an agile way. Much homelessness was hidden even more than before during the pandemic lockdowns, such as increased domestic and family abuse in all corners of the globe<sup>8</sup>, meaning people didn't feel safe, and therefore not 'at home'.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.conservatives.com/our-plan/conservative-party-manifesto-2019>

<sup>4</sup> [appg-housing-first-report-2021.pdf](#) (crisis.org.uk)

<sup>5</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1119847/Statutory\\_Homelessness\\_Stats\\_Release\\_Apr-Jun\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1119847/Statutory_Homelessness_Stats_Release_Apr-Jun_2022.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [The Cost of Living - Resident Voice Index](#)

<sup>7</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/928780/Letter\\_from\\_Minister\\_Hall\\_to\\_Local\\_Authorities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928780/Letter_from_Minister_Hall_to_Local_Authorities.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://prohic.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/204-26april2021-DomesticViolenceCOVID-19SystematicReview.pdf>

In 2021, the Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping set out recommendations for a new way of working to end rough sleeping. But its Autumn 2022 update report noted a number of amber/red RAG<sup>9</sup> rating progress measures against previous recommendations<sup>10</sup> (for example, that the Regulator of Social Housing should monitor housing association performance on homelessness). The APPG for Ending Homelessness says in its report<sup>11</sup> that if government is to meet its target of ending homelessness by 2024, there are three key ‘building blocks’ of (1) prevention, (2) rapid intervention and (3) support to help people who have experienced homelessness rebuild their lives. This *Homeful* report shares a number of examples that demonstrate how the social housing sector is providing these building blocks.

There is a real opportunity, at this point of housing emergency and cost of living crisis, for government (particularly in England) to put their muscle behind the social housing sector and recognise the importance of state-funded capital investment in building council and housing association properties for social rent. At present, there are a number of constraining factors still in place that the government has the power to resolve.

The *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good Strategy* published in September 2022 is a promising start. It has a package of investment behind it, including a new £200m Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme. However, it again largely addresses just the visible pinnacle of the homelessness issue, without intervening at the level only a national government can. There needs to be action at the whole system level to provide more affordable homes across society to help everyone, including families in full-time work who account for a substantial part of the recent growth in homelessness figures.

## Devolved nations and the international context

The government in England doesn’t have to look far for good practice in ending homelessness. Scotland takes a more housing rights-based approach to the issue, which places a statutory duty on local authorities to find permanent accommodation for those facing homelessness. The ‘priority need’ criterion was abolished in Scotland in 2012 for those who are unintentionally homeless.

Local authorities in Scotland are also slightly more able to access social rented homes to fulfil this function since its government ceased Right to Buy in 2016. There is a wider view of the levers to create ‘home’ including recognition of the need to look at the quality of properties used for temporary accommodation placements, through the Unsuitable Accommodation Order 2020. The combination of this alongside Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and an embrace of Housing First approaches means that Scottish policy and funding infrastructure provide ways to end homelessness, rather than just manage rough sleeping.

Homelessness Monitor Scotland 2021 statistics<sup>12</sup> show the numbers for ‘core homelessness’ much reduced compared to the figures for England, and commentators suggest this is the result of government-led strategy. The Scottish ‘Ending Homelessness Together’ plan, which has been in place since 2010 takes a holistic but detailed approach to the issue. The plan was updated in 2020<sup>13</sup> to take account of the

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<sup>9</sup> Red / amber / green

<sup>10</sup> [www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/KRSC\\_Progress\\_Report\\_0922a.pdf](http://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/KRSC_Progress_Report_0922a.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [crisis-appgeh-report-on-ending-rough-sleeping-by-2024.pdf](https://www.appgforendinghomelessness.org/crisis-appgeh-report-on-ending-rough-sleeping-by-2024.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/worst-forms-of-homelessness-less-common-in-scotland-than-england-research-finds/](http://www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/worst-forms-of-homelessness-less-common-in-scotland-than-england-research-finds/)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2020/10/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/documents/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/govscot%3Adocument/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020.pdf>

impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the evaluation of the Scotland Housing First pathfinder. The Scottish government also announced in Autumn 2022 that it would cap increases in private and social rents at 0% up to March 2023, as one intervention during the winter cost of living crisis. Although social landlords will be again able to increase rents from April 2023, private sector rent rises will continue to be capped at 0% until September 2023.

There are concerns that when these interventions end, there will still be a challenge for people facing homelessness with private landlords leaving the market as a consequence of rent controls and eviction protections. Consequently, across the UK, there's increased use of temporary accommodation as social housing supply continues to lag very far behind demand.

In Wales, legislation requires local authorities to take all reasonable steps to help to prevent or relieve homelessness for all households. In addition, anyone rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping should be accommodated in temporary accommodation. However, despite this in September 2022 there were 8,652 individuals in temporary accommodation including 2,629 dependent children<sup>14</sup> (up by 107 from the previous month). The lack of affordable accommodation for people to move onto is consistently cited as a reason behind the increasing use of temporary accommodation, especially in the private rented sector (PRS). Recent research highlighted that less than 3.8% of PRS properties in Wales are fully covered by Local Housing Allowance<sup>15</sup>.

The Welsh Government has committed to ending homelessness in Wales as part of its Ending Homelessness Action Plan (2021-2026)<sup>16</sup>. It aims to achieve this by ensuring that homelessness is rare, and when homelessness does occur it is brief and not repeated (mirroring the approach taken in Scotland). The Welsh Government is also investing £65m into a Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme to provide higher quality interim accommodation as part of the rapid rehousing approach.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) has responsibility for addressing homelessness, including (since 2010) the statutory duty to develop and publish a homelessness strategy. The strategy is taken into consideration by a variety of agencies when developing their functions. In recent years NIHE has renewed its emphasis to focus on preventing rather than reducing homelessness. The latest Homelessness Strategy (2022-27) – Ending Homelessness Together – has the headline objective that 'wherever possible homelessness should be prevented, if homelessness cannot be prevented it should be rare, brief and non-recurring'. Ending Homelessness Together highlights the need for cooperation across relevant agencies and departments to prevent homelessness, although cooperation is not a statutory duty.

Pre-pandemic homelessness presentations in Northern Ireland remained largely stable, and while acceptances continued to increase, this was primarily due to the 'accommodation not reasonable' category. This results from the unique approach of re-housing increasing numbers of older people with health needs via the statutory homelessness route. However, in recent times there has been a sharp increase in presentations by households citing loss of rented accommodation.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/homelessness-accommodation-provision-and-rough-sleeping-september-2022>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Wales-Housing-Crisis-Making-the-LHA-work-for-Wales-report-1.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-10/ending-homelessness-high-level-action-plan-2021-to-2026.pdf>

Northern Ireland has moved from a focus on rough sleeping to a broader action plan on chronic homelessness. There are high levels of concern among media, government and the public about mental health, addiction and homelessness issues. A Complex Lives initiative is underway, based on the Doncaster model<sup>17</sup> and co-designed between NIHE, Belfast City Council and other partners. NIHE's rough sleeper count recorded an increase of five people in Belfast over the year to the end of 2018 (the scale of the problem being small in relative terms to the UK as a whole). During the peak of the pandemic, the work of NIHE and homelessness charities resulted in reports of no rough sleeping at all.

We can also learn from other countries, which take a whole-system approach, with housing first as a starting premise. The long-term trend for Finland has seen a reduction in overall homelessness (remembering that Finland includes people who would be hidden in the UK homelessness statistics, which focus on rough sleeping). While there was a rise in some segments during the coronavirus pandemic, overall, the last 30 years of falling homelessness in Finland has been the result of a joined-up approach. For example, funding has been available for municipalities to develop social and health care services to reduce homelessness. The current Prime Minister of Finland aims to eradicate homelessness by 2027, and the numbers (and more importantly the national policy strategic approach) are heading in the right direction<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.doncasterccg.nhs.uk/wrapping-health-and-care-services-around-vulnerable-people/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ara.fi/download/noname/%7B0D67A61D-7980-467C-8346-287DB5768DD2%7D/166447>

## Commitments to end homelessness

Data shows that the number of people in housing need is rising and too many people are either sleeping on the streets, or in temporary, precarious or insecure/informal housing arrangements. In spite of the great strides taken in reducing rough sleeping figures during the pandemic, there is an increase since, and an increase of families in temporary accommodation and insecure housing.

If we look back to the important 1966 film *Cathy Come Home*, we may like to think we have come a long way – and in many respects we have. However, for a relatively wealthy country we still have far too many people left behind in an increasingly urgent cost-of-living crisis and an affordable housing emergency. Inspired by that film, the Homes for Cathy alliance asks that all social housing providers in England sign its **commitments** pledge:

- 1. To contribute to the development and execution of local authority homelessness strategies.**
- 2. To operate flexible allocations and eligibility policies which allow individual applicants' unique set of circumstances and housing history to be considered.**
- 3. To offer constructive solutions to applicants who aren't deemed eligible for an offer of a home.**
- 4. To not make any tenant seeking to prevent their homelessness, homeless.**
- 5. To commit to meeting the needs of vulnerable tenant groups.**
- 6. To work in partnership to provide a range of affordable housing options which meet the needs of all homeless people in their local communities.**
- 7. To ensure that properties offered to homeless people should be ready to move into.**
- 8. To contribute to ending migrant homelessness in the areas Housing Associations operate.**
- 9. To lobby, challenge and inspire others to support ending homelessness.**

A number of leading housing associations and other organisations have signed up to these commitments, but there is room for more housing providers and local authorities to join. While the socio-geo-political context in the UK makes it hard, the social housing sector has to take the lead in ending and preventing homelessness.

# What is home?

In 2019, I published a book called *Place and Identity: The Performance of Home*<sup>19</sup>. It drew on two decades of research, as well as my experience of being a housing officer and own understanding of 'home'. It concluded that a physical dwelling (whether that is a house, a flat or other structure such as a trailer on a Gypsy/Traveller site) was necessary, but not sufficient, to create 'home'. There are six other conditions that need to be in place, in addition to the existence of a physical dwelling:

- **Security:** that it is mine for as long as I need or want it.
- **Affordability:** of rent or mortgage and of the associated bills to make the dwelling function as a home, such as heating, light and broadband.
- **Safety:** of the physical dwelling, that it is not injurious to my or my family's physical or mental health; and that I am safe from others within that place.
- **Quality of space:** appropriate location, near to facilities, connected to nature and humanity, on a bus route or within walking distance to the library, the swimming pool, the school – the activities that enrich our lives.
- **Privacy:** of place for my personal space, but with porous enough boundaries to allow for:
- **Connectedness:** with humans within these walls and beyond, both in person as well as digitally enabled connectivity to mitigate feelings of loneliness and isolation.

It was this understanding of 'home' that underpinned the premise of the *Homeful* research project. I coined the word 'homeful' at the start of my campaign as the combination of 'hopeful' and 'home' and also as an antonym to homeless – a way of bringing together the six conditions of home. In one of the podcasts for the *Homeful* series, Susie Dent<sup>20</sup> welcomed the word as part of her campaign to bring back 'lost positives' in our lexicon.

There are criticisms of an assumption that 'home' is necessarily good and safe. Craig Gurney explored 'harm and the meaning of home' in his 2020 paper<sup>21</sup>, which sought to counter taken-for-granted positive attributes of home and to 'reveal a dark side of home as a place of harm'. Gurney's research is important; there are physical and mental harms caused by the condition, affordability, security and availability of a dwelling, and there is resultant harm, for some, from people who share a home. Not everyone feels safe in the place where they live.

My argument is that this feeling of insecurity or lack of safety is a form of homelessness. If any of the six conditions of home<sup>22</sup> are not met, then 'home' is lacking – the physical space is reduced to a dwelling or a box of bricks and is no longer 'home'. If the right conditions are met, then 'home' in the fullest meaning is not harmful. By definition, 'home' is a space and a feeling that is not harmful. If you are harmed, or threatened in the place where you live, you are not yet 'home'.

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<sup>19</sup> Richardson, J (2019) *Place and Identity: The Performance of Home*, London: Routledge

<sup>20</sup> <https://homefuluk.our.dmu.ac.uk/contact-us/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/200408-out-of-harms-way-craig-gurney-final.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.routledge.com/Place-and-Identity-The-Performance-of-Home/Richardson/p/book/9781032178578>



We found that resolving rough sleeping homelessness during the pandemic lockdowns brought about challenges, but also opportunities to accelerate changes that organisations had been thinking about for some time:

***“What we had to do, because of the shift in dynamics due to the pandemic, was to arrange individual hotels [instead of emergency communal rooms] due to the risk of COVID. But [communal rooms] is something we’ve been thinking of shifting [to] anyway due to matters of dignity, as we believe in long term and stable accommodation. It also provides dignity and privacy, more quality of service, having a private space, feeling safer; also we’re trying to personalise the support with volunteers, as in a communal setting this was more difficult.”*** (Interview 3)

Agility and dynamism in a new way of working and a different mindset were very strong features in the responses. There was also a reluctance to ‘go back’ to old ways of thinking and doing:

***“I do think the pandemic was an example of the world moving quickly. Because it had to, I think. We should remember that and make sure that we don’t just retreat back into everything being dependent on somebody else to get anything started.”*** (Interview 47)

Housing organisations also noted the importance of wrap-around support and early-stage interventions to maintain and secure tenancies for those already in their properties:

***“Our pre-tenancy process has been developed and refined over a number of years to ensure that all new customers are in a position where they can sustain a tenancy and at the very outset, any support needs are identified and put in place before the tenancy starts.”*** (Organisation survey 1)

Empowering housing staff to work directly with tenant and customers was something else that seemed to accelerate during the pandemic. An organisation in Scotland noted the benefits of this approach:

***“What’s powerful for me was, we’ve said to all of our frontline officers, stop following process maps, stop following kind of established rules, just whatever the customer in front of you needs to prevent homelessness, just do it. And we’ve given them a budget to do it, and things like that. What we did was, say to a lot of organisations that decision making is actually better closer to the customer.”*** (Interview 12)

When discussing homelessness prevention, the issue of domestic abuse was dominant in the narrative. This included the need for improved detection of abuse, prevention of homelessness where abuse was happening and support (including relocation support) for the victim/survivor in whatever housing outcome was the best result for them. Respondents also mentioned anti-social behaviour policies as part of a toolkit for managing and sustaining tenancies.

Housing providers discussed investing more in service provision, to allow staff to take more time where necessary, to facilitate mediation where appropriate for young people and families and to deliver Housing First where possible. Additionally, there was recognition of the need for more focused financial advice for tenants and referrals to hardship funds to support customers. They also talked about an increased level of networking with other organisations to build strong partnerships as important factors in work to resolve and prevent homelessness. ‘Tenancy First’ approaches and a move towards Housing First were also high on the agenda for housing providers.

Housing providers talked about the importance of tenancy visits to check on the welfare of tenants, and work they were doing focused on properties. For example, respondents highlighted stock condition surveys, planned maintenance programmes, development and the delivery of asset management and asset maximisation strategies. They also mentioned longer-term sustainability of ‘home’ measures such as reviews to improve property Energy Performance Certificate ratings, in line with government targets.

Partnerships emerged as vital to the approach housing providers took during the pandemic, and one they would continue to amplify for the future. One large organisation that responded to the survey described having 90 homelessness services nationwide, all working closely with local agencies, other housing associations, specialist support services, police, councils, private landlords, universities, colleges, training providers and job centres. It was noted that the funding model for homelessness services during ‘Everyone In’ created the capability to get people into accommodation, that just wasn’t possible before. It meant that all people experiencing rough sleeping homelessness could be supported, including those in the process of seeking asylum.

Another organisation, in Scotland, said that partnership was vital to resolving and preventing homelessness, and that it was something they had achieved particularly well with health and social care partners:

***“I would say out of all the stuff that we’re doing, I think our links to the Health and Social Care Partnership and the fact that our homeless strategic partnership, got all the sort of third sector organisations who are involved on that side of the table, is probably something that we do well.”*** (Interview 11)

Challenges of the ‘whole-system’ approach were mentioned, notably the fact that often the right support was contingent on the availability of services outside the control of the housing provider. Mental health stood out as an example:

***“It’s a constant challenge to get our customers access to mental health and treatment services (no criticism, they are grossly under-funded) at a time when they want to access these services. Our clinical homeless model is based on stabilising and preparing our customers for treatment, so it’s important that when we reach that stage we can access these services, as opposed to a 6-8 week waiting list.”*** (Organisation survey 3)

The challenge was amplified in rural areas. One example given was a young person who didn’t want to have to relocate from their local area to be able to access housing and professional support. Another example, this time in a city, was where a chemist had closed down and left a client worried about accessing treatment and support for drug/alcohol dependency, but the city’s Drug and Alcohol team stepped in to help. This nexus of a shortage or withdrawal of statutory services in some areas, combined with withdrawal of private businesses that are integral to health services delivery, creates a space where housing (the ‘always there’ service) is stretched. There may not be the capacity or access to professional support to help people maintain settled lives and tenancies.

When asked to reflect on the post-pandemic context for housing and homelessness services, there was an increasing sense of ‘back to normal’ and comments on a continuing lack of affordable housing stock, about which nothing had been done. Respondents also described their concern over homelessness figures rising again. One housing association talked about wanting to make sure their properties were available to people who needed them most, including nominations from the local authority register:

***“Our aim by reducing the re-let percentage down to the regulatory minimum is to support those that need to be rehoused due to a priority need in our own stock to prevent homelessness (domestic abuse, severe anti-social behaviour, etc) and to support initiatives such as Housing First projects.”*** (Organisation survey 1)

There seemed to be a determination by housing providers to not let everything go back to 'normal' and to try to retain the best of what was learned during the pandemic. This included continued use of technology to allow assessments and interactions to happen 'remotely', continued investment in and support for projects and approaches to reduce street homelessness and create secure tenancies, better understanding of 'complex needs', use of new clinical homeless models and – importantly – ensuring that the voices of young people can be heard in the system.

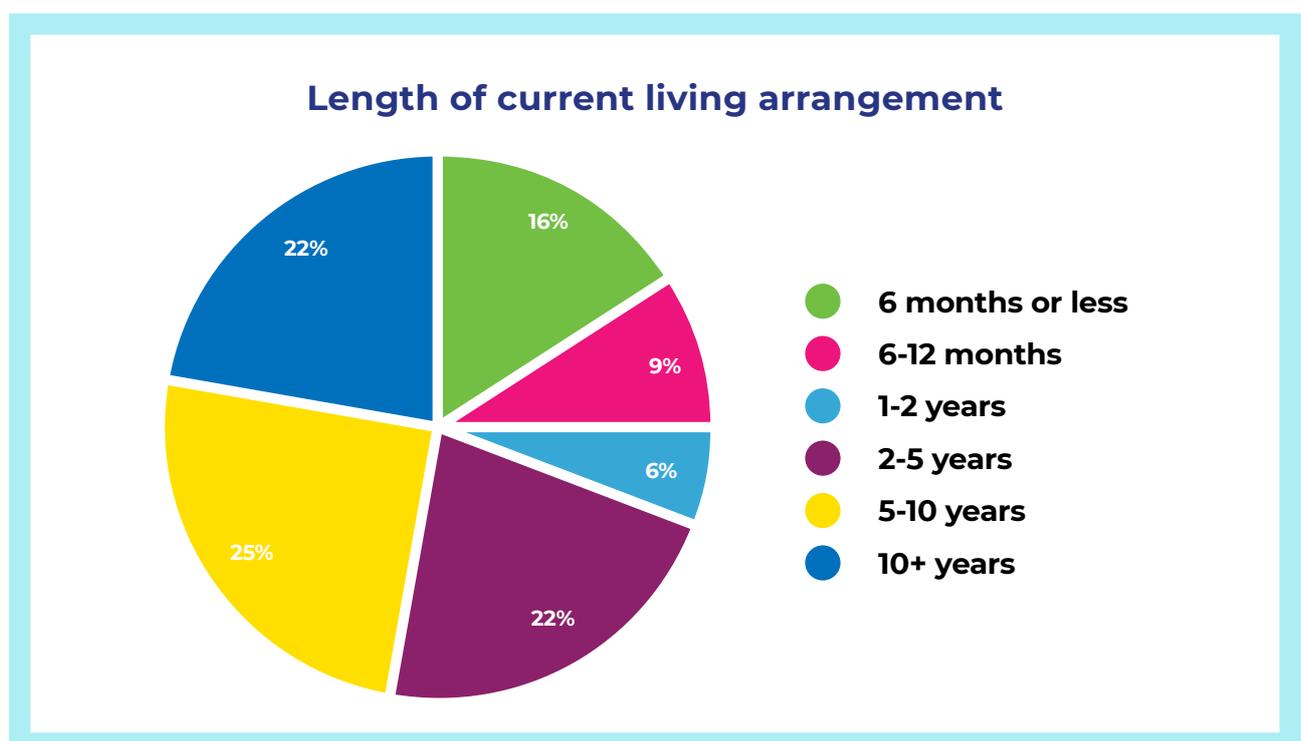
One interviewee explicitly mentioned race inequality and homelessness, noting the over-representation of black and minority ethnic people in temporary accommodation in London:

***“I strongly believe councils need to have more racial sensitivity in operating and managing housing option services. Encouraging diversity in staff might also lead to better outcomes in this sense”*** (Interview 3)

The 2022/23 CIH president put ethnic diversity in housing leadership at the heart of her campaign to encourage the sector to improve ethnic diversity at senior and board levels. This is a welcome focus to try and address the issue, but it may be that regulation is the only way to create a step change in social housing sector diversity performance.

## Tenant survey findings

We received 126 completed surveys from tenants, mostly people from the social housing sector. From these, 36 were from Wales, 68 from England and 22 undeclared. We asked respondents about the length of time they had been in their current living arrangement. The chart below shows the data for the 91 people who answered this question.



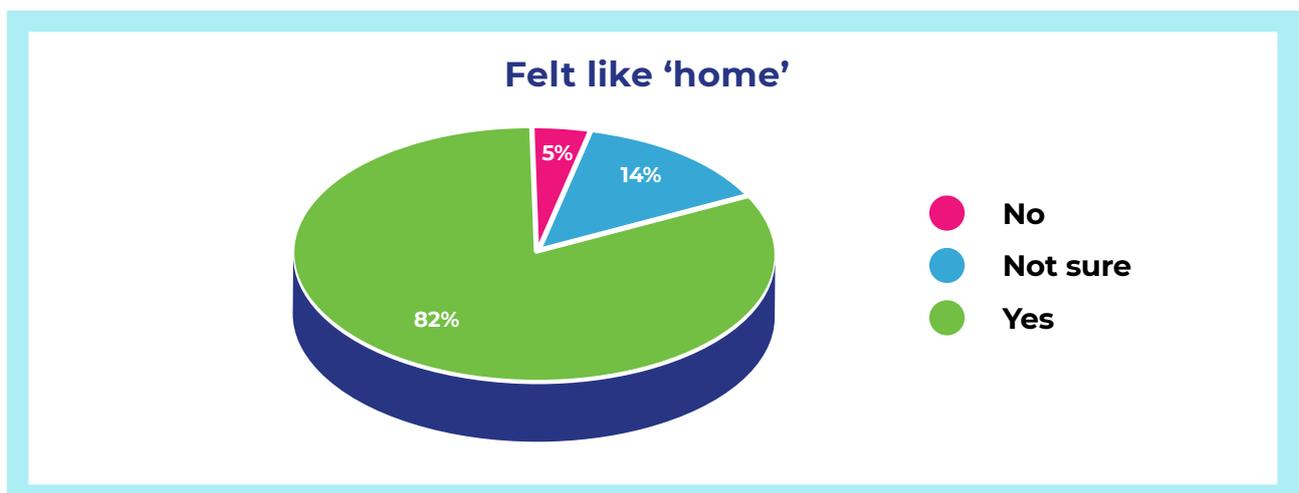
We also asked how tenants came to be in their current accommodation. Eighty-nine people answered the question by choosing from a list of pre-defined answers:



'Other' answers included:

- **Mutual swap**
- **Not able to afford private renting**
- **Joining a Help to Buy scheme**
- **Bidding through choice-based lettings**
- **Council to housing association transfer**
- **Helped or self-referred to charities (for example, St. Mungo's and St. Basil's)**
- **Hostel (four months for one respondent and six months for another)**
- **Divorce**
- **Waiting for temporary accommodation.**

The survey asked whether the place tenants were currently living in 'felt like home'. The chart below shows the responses from the 88 people who answered this question.











## Photovoice 'HOME' project

People of the Streets (POTS) is a social enterprise that amplifies the voices of people with lived experience through photographic training, support and exhibitions. During 2022 the HOME project supported eight people with lived experience of homelessness to share their stories. Photographs were displayed as part of the Chartered Institute of Housing conference in Manchester in June 2022, then Manchester Cathedral in July and at Ashton Bus Station, in partnership with Greater Manchester Transport. A virtual exhibition is available online<sup>24</sup>.



*Ollie Bream of POTS interviewing Jo Richardson on the 'HOME' exhibition stand at the CIH conference in Manchester, June 2022*

The photographs taken by the ten project participants (eight of whom had experience of homelessness, plus two Housing First key workers) captured a range of images, sometimes focusing on the condition of temporary accommodation or how they felt others perceived them on the street. One image of a pigeon was by 'Lisa', who in an accompanying audio guide<sup>25</sup> talked about why feeding the birds was so important. She said it connected her to a time in her life when she and her mum (who died by suicide when she was younger) used to make fat balls to feed the birds. Connection is one of the six conditions of home I found in my 2019 book – it is vital to that feeling of home and is important for housing providers and support organisations to understand.

Understanding what makes people feel connected and supporting them in that can only come from a place of listening and person-centred approaches.

<sup>24</sup> <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=HbSVV2EptqW>

<sup>25</sup> POTS website has further information on the HOME exhibition and the audio guides to the photo exhibits [Home Exhibit Audio Guide — People of the Streets](#)

## Home is...

As part of the fundraising aspect of the *Homeful* campaign SoCrowd<sup>26</sup> arranged an online social media competition for anyone to reply on Twitter in order to complete the phrase 'Home is...'. Whilst not a substantive element of the research, some of the key phrases in the 41 competition entries match the themes from the first workshops topic discussed above.

Pets ("*fur and fun*") featured strongly in the answers, as did "*laughter and memories*", "*comfort*", "*food*" and "*friends*." A couple of entries talked about 'work' at home, as people continued to negotiate the boundaries between domestic and work spaces. One other respondent talked about home being a "*work in progress*" – denoting the temporal nature of our relationship with 'home'.

The majority of responses to the competition were about pleasant feelings and associations – "*happy, safe and warm*." The competition was open to the public with responses from named Twitter users. The expectation was that phrases would be 'fun' and positive. But there was one response that underlined what not having a home meant:

***"Home is the most important thing in my life. Overnight I lost it and my whole world collapsed... But thankfully I had amazing support. #HomelsEverything"***

## Women's experiences of homelessness

A small Leicester-based project took place between January and July 2022, working with *In Her Strength*<sup>27</sup> – a UK theatre project started in 2020 in response to the pandemic and increased reports of domestic abuse. De Montfort University's participatory research and impact funding supported the programme, which involved women with experience of homelessness being paid to engage in training and support that resulted in a written and recorded monologue. This was adapted into a scratch production using professional actors to play the parts of the four women and share the main messages with key civic and charitable partners in the city.

The project provided a creative platform for community engagement with women's voices that are seldom heard. This had the benefit of amplifying the voices of women experiencing homelessness and an opportunity to change perceptions and reframe the wider discourse through information sharing and debate with key stakeholders in the city.

During the period of the *Homeful* Women's Voices project, there were eight workshops to support the writing, which included a trauma-informed counsellor to support the women if necessary. There was time at the end of the play for an audience Q&A.

<sup>26</sup> <https://socrowd.com/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.inherstrength.co.uk/about/>



*Homeful Women's Voices project, final production at the Y Theatre, Leicester, 7 July 2022  
(photo Jo Richardson)*

The themes that emerged across the four women's narratives included:

- **Abuse and fear of abuse**
- **Protecting children**
- **Connection and female friendship**
- **Young people not being heard by services above their parents' voices**
- **Feeling hungry**
- **Being scared to lay down at night on a bench**
- **Incomprehension at 'vagrancy' legislation**
- **Shame**
- **Multiple experiences of homelessness**
- **Living in caravans**
- **Staying on sofas at grandparents' homes**
- **Being controlled**
- **Problems with joint tenancies (*"is it homelessness if you have a roof? Is it domestic abuse if he's not violent?"*)<sup>28</sup>**
- **Hostels as an escape**
- **Poverty**
- **Lack of access to basic feminine hygiene.**

Audience feedback was that the play was 'impactful', that this sort of thing should be on the curriculum, that it helped service providers understand from clients' points of view and that it 'resonated' and was powerful.

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<sup>28</sup> To which the 'six conditions of home' and the Homeful project say a resounding – yes.

## Summary of findings

Here is a summary of the main themes we saw in the responses across the varying strands of the primary research findings:

- **Rule books were ‘torn up’ during the coronavirus pandemic** – as a result, rough sleeping was largely ended in that period.
- **Partnerships and information sharing** were the key to making things happen, particularly those that involved health and care services, as well as criminal justice.
- There was a renewed focus on **people**, rather than processes and systems.
- Organisations worked with people from a pre-tenancy stage to build in **prevention of future homelessness**, and they worked more with young people and their families.
- Housing providers noticed more **presentations of homelessness** coming from the private rented sector than before.
- **Housing providers were thinking of a ‘paradigm shift’** – a need for a ‘whole system’ approach to resolving issues rather than single-service processes, they were looking to invest more time and resources to this approach.
- **There was a renewed focus on getting the ‘basics’ right** – knowing what overall condition the properties were in (not just single repairs knowledge) and knowing how the tenant is overall (not just one aspect of their interaction with them).
- **Housing First** is a gold standard approach that works, but it is one of a spectrum of measures that can be taken to resolve and prevent homelessness.
- London and global cities have homelessness issues as a result of **overheated housing markets** and **limited affordable housing supply**, but so too do smaller rural coastal communities where there is a sense of being left behind.
- Housing providers seemed determined not to let things go **‘back to normal’** after the pandemic, but rising homeless numbers (especially in temporary accommodation) seem to be showing that we are indeed going ‘back to normal’.
- **Tenants identified with ‘home’ beyond the bricks and mortar** – talking about safety, security, community, support, friends and family.
- Tenants felt there was a role for government to invest in **more affordable housing**; they also thought a more holistic approach to affordable housing supply was necessary.
- Women, children and young people experienced a particularly stark impact from **housing precarity** and homelessness.
- The voices of **lived experience of homelessness** were valuable and vital to the design and delivery of housing and homelessness services, particularly in shaping appropriate trauma-informed approaches.

## Overarching conclusions from across the data

Some overarching themes emerged across the various data sets, which lead to some observations and conclusions for the future of resolving and preventing homelessness:

- A need for more **proactivity**, less reactivity and less paternalism.
- The importance of **lived experience** and listening to the customer when developing and delivering services.
- Tenancy sustainment is a vital element of **homelessness prevention**, and more roles should be aligned to this proactive approach.
- There is a need for housing organisations to find or win funding to deliver support services around **mental and emotional wellbeing support**, as not everyone meets the increasingly high bar set for accessing children's and adults' mental health services.
- **Joint working is necessary to resolve and prevent homelessness** – housing, health, social care and criminal justice organisations need to work together strategically. During the pandemic there were some new and strengthened partnerships with housing and health.
- **Community relationships** and conflict resolution are important parts of the approach to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies and resilient neighbourhoods.
- **There is a need for less bureaucracy and more flexibility to effect change for social housing customers.** This was seen especially with the rapid responses made during 'Everyone In' and a feeling that by stepping out of the 'rules' and usual practice, it was possible to 'get things done'.
- **If 'levelling up' is to make sense to real lives, then funding to support increasing affordable housing supply needs to be seen in rural coastal communities as well as in global cities.** Need is growing across many communities in the UK – it is not just an urban issue.
- Women, children and young people must be heard, and trauma-informed approaches should be designed into service delivery to ensure we **keep people safe and 'at home'**.

# Ideas and good practice

Taking these key summary findings and conclusions from across the different strands of the *Homeful* research, we examined some examples of emerging good practice to share ideas with the sector. These focused on seven key areas, which largely mirror the six conditions of home plus flexibility and adaptive practice particularly noting practice to resolve and prevent homelessness during the pandemic:

- 1. *Security* – proactive prevention/tenancy sustainment**
- 2. *Affordability* – responding to the cost-of-living crisis/new and increased supply of affordable homes**
- 3. *Safety* – wellbeing and support of tenants, particularly women and young people**
- 4. *Quality of space* – adapting properties to meet need/thinking about geographical places, particularly rural communities**
- 5. *Privacy* – reducing the use of temporary accommodation to meet homelessness need**
- 6. *Connectedness* – community and relationships**
- 7. *Flexibility and adaptive practice of housing providers* – joint working and innovation for a paradigm shift.**

## 1. Security – proactive prevention/tenancy sustainment

Homelessness prevention can take a range of different forms, and since the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in England, statutory authorities must step in to offer advice and support for people who are at risk of homelessness in the next 56 days. A universal approach to homelessness prevention would see a whole system working together across education, health and social care to prevent people and families from housing precarity and disadvantage.

With a shortage in affordable housing supply and a range of issues to deal with, there is still a silo approach to public organisations dealing with poverty-related issues like homelessness. So homeless prevention is normally still a reaction to impending homelessness, rather than a housing-rights based, universal social policy.

Housing First is a really important intervention that disrupts the traditional ‘staircasing’ assumption, which is based on conditions that an individual must meet. The seven key fidelity principles are:

- 1. People have a right to a home**
- 2. Flexible support is available for as long as needed**
- 3. Housing and support are separated – so that conditionality is removed**
- 4. Individuals have choice and control**
- 5. There is proactive engagement based on individual needs**
- 6. Housing First focuses on individuals’ strengths**
- 7. A harm-reduction approach is used.**

While Housing First is ultimately what good looks like, there are other approaches to resolve and prevent homelessness, which can also be used.

England has piloted Housing First in three regions (Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and the West Midlands Combined Authority). The government published a third-year pilot evaluation in September 2022<sup>29</sup>, which showed the humanity and efficacy of this approach. It reported that across the three pilot areas, at the end of November 2021, 998 individuals had been supported, of whom 78% were housed and nearly half of those had maintained a tenancy for between one and three years. Since the beginning of the pilot, a further 155 had exited the programme, meaning that a total of 1,286 people had been referred into the Housing First programme over the course of the pilot.

One of the key findings of the evaluation is a very obvious one: that the ability of organisations to adhere to Housing First fidelity principles is hampered by ‘...*limited availability of appropriate housing stock, staff shortages and uncertainties over longer-term funding*’ (pg 7).

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<sup>29</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1102005/Housing\\_First\\_Evaluation\\_Third\\_process\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102005/Housing_First_Evaluation_Third_process_report.pdf)

## Greater Manchester Housing Partnership Housing First Pilot



The Greater Manchester Housing Partnership is a partnership of 24 housing organisations across Greater Manchester with a combined portfolio of 260,000 properties. The partnership started with a tri-partite agreement between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), the housing providers (GMHP) and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (GMHSCP) – a three-year agreement was signed in early 2021 with the ambition to renew for the future. The agreement offers a commitment to the people of Greater Manchester, setting out a collective vision to create lasting solutions to complex issues and challenges centred on housing, health creation and homelessness.

The partnership has supported several of the Greater Manchester trailblazer homelessness initiatives. Between 2017 and 2020 it supported the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) - funded Entrenched Rough Sleepers Social Impact Bond – an innovative approach to work with rough sleepers to provide longer-term sustainable accommodation, employment, education, training and personalised support. Learning from the Bond was embedded within the Greater Manchester Housing First Pilot one of three national pilots in England testing the scalability of Housing First. The partnership endorsed the Housing First pilot with its members as key partners in the delivery model. Up to November 2022 the partnership saw housing providers offer 548 properties to the Housing First pilot. Across both the Social Impact Bond and Housing First projects they supported more than 600 people with a history of homelessness into accommodation.

The person-centred, flexible approach has been recognised by the partnership as key to contributing to the Greater Manchester Homeless Prevention Strategy. It follows the *Homes for Cathy* principles as a framework and has created an action plan to embed further reform into everyday practices such as evictions, allocations, meeting the needs of vulnerable tenants and a lettable standard to support people from rough sleeping or temporary accommodation into permanent, sustainable homes.

[www.gmhousing.co.uk](http://www.gmhousing.co.uk)

In Wales, Housing First operates in 15 out of 22 local authorities. Two councils have achieved Housing First Wales accreditation. A recent report by Cymorth Cymru outlines that Housing First projects have provided 245 people with homes since projects started in 2018<sup>30</sup>, with a tenancy sustainment rate of 90%.

Scotland reports that<sup>31</sup>, as at the end of June 2022 a total of 1,333 Housing First tenancies has been created overall, with 400 Housing First tenancies ongoing across 25 local authorities operating the programme.

<sup>30</sup> [www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/files/9716/5827/4776/HF\\_Wales\\_Tracker\\_-\\_Sep\\_2021.pdf](http://www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/files/9716/5827/4776/HF_Wales_Tracker_-_Sep_2021.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> [Housing-First-Scotland-2022\\_web1-2.pdf \(homelessnetwork.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-first-monitoring-report-year-two-quarter-one/)  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-first-monitoring-report-year-two-quarter-one/>

In Northern Ireland, a pilot run by Depaul in Belfast from 2014 was evaluated in 2016<sup>32</sup> to show a 79% tenancy sustainment rate across the 24 people supported by Housing First. The approach was also undertaken in Derry/Londonderry, and since the initial pilot a further 87 Housing First tenancies<sup>33</sup> were created there and in Belfast, with sustainment of tenancy after two years between 72 and 78%.

Housing First is not the only model for sustainable resolution and prevention of homelessness. We found a variety of practices across the UK.

## Case study

### Riverside Housing Group



#### Range of accommodation and support

Riverside recognises the need for a variety of types of accommodation and support, depending on an individual person's needs. The models it delivers across the country include:

- Accommodation-based services in hostel-type premises, with high levels of support via 24-hour staff.
- Rough sleeper services, including shelters and outreach.
- Housing First accommodation-based services.
- Accommodation-based services in self-contained homes, used as a move-on from more intensive support or as an earlier intervention to prevent the need for high-support services. Staff may be on site during office hours, or visit at set times.
- Gender-specific accommodation services, with interventions tailored to the needs of women, often with multiple and complex needs, recognising that many homeless women are at risk of abuse from their male partners.
- Homeless family accommodation, as a temporary solution while households are having their applications investigated and are awaiting 'decisions' from local authority housing teams.
- Accommodation-based services for people with multiple and complex needs, who will have at least three of the following needs: housing/homelessness, mental ill-health, substance misuse and offending histories.
- Community-based support for people in their own tenancies, aimed at preventing homelessness and/or sustaining tenancies after a period of homelessness.
- Specialist supported housing and advice for military veterans.
- Homes within other accommodation-based services which are suitable for couples.

<sup>32</sup> [www.nihe.gov.uk/getmedia/1914ffe7-9073-46ca-8114-14ddc8b53a77/housing-first-evaluation.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/getmedia/1914ffe7-9073-46ca-8114-14ddc8b53a77/housing-first-evaluation.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> [https://ie.depaulcharity.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/Depaul-Housing-First-Fidelity-Report-2018\\_0.pdf](https://ie.depaulcharity.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/Depaul-Housing-First-Fidelity-Report-2018_0.pdf)

- Accommodation which accepts people with dogs, who have experience of homelessness – this can regularly be a barrier for someone who is trying to end their homelessness but where property agreements prohibit dogs.
- Drop-in/advice services for people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

Over the course of the coronavirus pandemic (April 2020 to April 2022) this range of services supported 27,137 customers overall, including work with 415 people in 'COVID hotels'.

<https://www.riverside.org.uk>

## Action Homeless Accommodation Plus (A+) service



Action Homeless' Accommodation Plus (A+) service in Leicester caters for individuals and families who have experienced homelessness and who are likely to have overcome, or in some cases are still living with, additional difficulties such as domestic abuse, mental or physical health problems, past substance misuse or trauma. Clients typically display a level of vulnerability, but have low ongoing support needs. Approximately 50% of beneficiaries come to A+ following a stay in Action Homeless' temporary accommodation.

The service started in 2013, and initially used empty properties brought back into use with funding from the Government's Empty Homes Programme. Over the nine years to November 2022, Action Homeless increased the number of properties in the project to 33 and currently provides 90 people with a permanent home. Properties have been acquired on long-term leases from private landlords, and in some cases have been purchased by Action Homeless. The project underwent a major expansion during the first half of 2022 thanks to a new partnership with a private landlord, which saw 29 new units of accommodation being opened.

Housing management and support is delivered by the same team. Tenancies are managed on an individual basis, overlapping where necessary so that the team as a whole manages the portfolio of homes as a cohesive unit, ensuring harmony and resolving difficulties. The A+ team works with other parts of Action Homeless and outside agencies as required to ensure tenants' needs are met.

A+ is different from other homelessness services in that it offers homes for as long as people want them, with no timeframe or pressure for people to 'move on'. However, 40% of the clients have been resettled into independent housing since the project first opened in 2013. Feedback from beneficiaries, along with strong tenancy sustainment rates, suggests that this approach empowers people to feel more secure, become embedded in their local community and make progress towards their goals. Ultimately the project breaks the cycle of homelessness.

[www.actionhomeless.org.uk](http://www.actionhomeless.org.uk)



## Home Group

### Complex Homelessness Services

Working closely with local authorities, Home Group operates a complex homelessness service focused on the longer-term benefits for customers. Using purpose-designed supported housing, such as the Tyneside Foyer service in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, staff are able to meet both the immediate needs of a customer as well as improving their physical and mental wellbeing, improving their confidence and independence.

Staff follow a Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) approach, covering five key areas including the management of positive relationships and building a safe and responsive environment.

A 12-month study of the Home Group complex homelessness service running in Newcastle showed that customers reported a 68% improvement in their mental wellbeing (on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) and a 72% improvement in their quality of life.

The scheme also aims to support customers into the next stage of their life. At the Tyneside Foyer service in Newcastle, one of the customers was helped to apply for and secure an apprenticeship at Home Group's head office. They have since been supported to progress on from the service and secure a sustainable tenancy in the city.

[www.homegroup.org.uk](http://www.homegroup.org.uk)

When it comes to preventing homelessness from within the social housing sector – namely to help tenants sustain their current home – tenancy sustainment is a key element of homelessness prevention. The housing providers we spoke with as part of the *Homeful* research were amplifying their efforts to understand tenants' needs better, and to help them sustain tenancies and a place in the wider community.



## emh

### Homes First support

emh's *Homes First* service offers fully furnished tenancies and personal support to people with experience of homelessness. One 48-year-old man referred to the service had a long history of drug and alcohol misuse and offending behaviour, triggered by childhood trauma and post-traumatic stress. He had received a number of custodial sentences and successive periods of sleeping rough, and had recently been asked to leave a probation hostel.

The accommodation that emh arranged was his first settled independent home for many years. At first he felt isolated from the community of homeless people he'd got to know and the food and drink hubs and other services he'd used in Leicester city. But the individual support he received helped him integrate into the local community where he now lives. This has helped him to maintain his tenancy for over a year, engage positively with drug services and start preparing for work.

[www.emh.co.uk](http://www.emh.co.uk)

## Bromford Housing Group Neighbourhood Coaching

# Bromford.

Shaking off traditional tenancy management approaches, Bromford's Neighbourhood Coach (NC) develops stronger relationships with customers, local services and communities. Putting people more in control of their lives and potential, it empowers long-term sustainable communities proactively. NCs assist with regular housing functions, as well as employment support, cultural development, financial assistance and much more. Working flexibly and remotely, they seek to identify their locality's context and issues, tapping into their local knowledge to improve outcomes.

Customers also participate in Bromford's approach by helping to develop its design, application, track and testing, as well as constant feedback through online platforms. NCs work with all types of tenures, having patches of 175 to 200 homes, (where before it would range from 400 to 600 or more), which allows more personalised support to customers and localities.

Bromford sees trust as vital in this new way of working. The organisation needed to let go of frontline staff rules and bureaucracy, to develop real conversations with customers without fear of repercussions – retraining 'managers' as 'coaches'. Yet, this approach has its challenges, with the need to balance its financial model, funding, stakeholders' expectations and the ability to generate social value.

An example of the NCs' successful work is a family that, after relocating 100 miles to be with relatives, and after more than a year in a steady tenancy, received a month's notice and had to move under difficult circumstances. For a while, the family lived in a caravan under difficult conditions, separated from other family members and developing health issues. They reached out to Bromford, who provided the necessary support. Soon afterwards, they had the keys for a new property, and a welcoming budget to decorate their new family home.

[www.bromford.co.uk](http://www.bromford.co.uk)

Many housing organisations are committing to the prevention of homelessness by attempting to, where possible, avoid evictions from social housing properties. In Scotland<sup>34</sup>, social and private landlords have to commit to a process of pre-action before initiating any eviction proceedings, and in Wales<sup>35</sup>, social landlords work towards a target of zero evictions into homelessness. The Homes for Cathy commitments and eviction pledge and the National Housing Federation's guidelines reinforce this approach.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-private-landlords-on-seeking-repossession-of-private-rented-housing-on-rent-arrears-grounds/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-social-landlords-agreement-2023-24#:~:text=There%20will%20be%20no%20evictions,hardship%20to%20access%20support%20available>

## 2. Affordability – responding to the cost-of-living crisis/new and increased supply of affordable homes

The cost-of-living crisis is seen not only in rent costs, but also fuel and food. Some housing organisations are getting involved in their local communities, beyond the letting of affordable properties.

### Case study

Onward

#### Onward Homes

#### Community Shop and Homelessness Reduction Project

Onward Homes works in partnership with Community Shop, making former offices available for new low-cost community shopping in four locations. Focused on neighbourhoods facing escalating affordability challenges, Community Shop gives local people access to heavily discounted food and other household products. The most recent store, in Liverpool, opened in late 2020. Membership is open to people who live locally and receive welfare support, including but not limited to Onward customers. Any money made is reinvested into a community hub, which offers cookery clubs and other support, including budgeting and interview skills sessions.

During the pandemic, Onward worked with partners in Liverpool to deliver a unique Homelessness Reduction Project. Innovative joint working between Liverpool City Council, housing associations and charitable partners resulted in more than 1,000 households escaping homelessness and moving into new homes. Onward is now working with partners to review lessons learned during the pandemic and applying them to new ways of reducing homelessness.

[www.onward.co.uk](http://www.onward.co.uk)

We know that a home is more than the physical dwelling, even when it has an affordable rent, a secure tenancy, a good-quality property and environment, there is the need for warmth and comfort to make a place 'home'. Things like curtains, carpets, cooker, washing machine, desks for children's homework are essentials. Yet End Furniture Poverty found<sup>36</sup> that it was far less likely to find partly-furnished tenancies (floor coverings) in the social rented sector (2% of lets) than in the private rented sector (29%). They also found that there was a real lack of understanding in the social rented sector that furniture is eligible as a service charge under benefits rules. Organisations that did provide furnished tenancies in the sector built in flexibility to avoid amplifying further debt issues.

<sup>36</sup> <http://frcltd.flywheelsites.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/NoPlaceLikeHomeFinalOnline-3.pdf>

In addition to looking after existing tenants who are facing affordability issues, the sector needs to increase affordable housing supply. But it is a challenging economic environment, and we cannot wait until government realises it would be better to invest more capital grant in building more affordable homes for rent, than pay billions in subsidy for temporary emergency lets in the private rented sector. A number of councils in London, particularly, have been looking at the possibilities of private finance to increase supply, and making use of grant funding to buy back Right to Buy stock for use as affordable rent.

## Case study

### London Borough of Lewisham Building for Lewisham



Lewisham's Buybacks Programme<sup>37</sup> forms part of its Building for Lewisham (BfL) programme, which delivers new homes for the borough's residents. With more than 10,000 families on the Council's waiting list and over 3,000 in expensive and sometimes poor-quality temporary accommodation, the authority must utilise every opportunity to deliver housing.

In November 2021, Lewisham's Mayor and Cabinet approved the purchase of 100 ex-council homes up to March 2023<sup>38</sup> using Greater London Assembly (GLA) grant funding. The programme has been such a success, that officers are seeking further GLA funds to continue the Programme and buy more properties.

All homes purchased through the Programme will have been bought from the Council under Right to Buy at some stage. To be suitable, properties must complete with vacant possession so that they can be given to a family on the Council's waiting list once work is complete. All homes purchased through the Buybacks Programme are occupied on secure tenancies at London Affordable Rent levels.

By November 2022 a total of 79 properties had been found – predominantly one-, two- and three-, but also some four- and five-bedroom properties. In October 2022, using the GLA Revenue Fund Award, the Council launched a marketing campaign to promote the Buybacks Programme directly to leaseholders of ex-council properties. They had more than 60 replies up to November 2022.

There is competition in the market from buy-to-let landlords. Lewisham Council had to significantly tighten its governance and approval procedures to ensure it can provide offers within three to five days of viewing properties. The Council has also worked hard to build positive relationships with sellers and estate agents. It is important that the Council is seen as an efficient and reliable purchaser to ensure that those wanting to sell have the confidence to sell their property back to the Council and not to the private sector.

<sup>37</sup> <https://lewisham.gov.uk/buildingforlewisham>

<sup>38</sup> Item 560; <https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=6492>

The Programme has purchased a mixture of owner-occupied and buy-to-let properties. In most cases (over 95%), only minor cosmetic work to kitchens and bathrooms is required to bring homes up to a lettable standard. The work is completed within 28 days on average, and the properties occupied on average nine days later. Properties must be EPC rating D or above, with work carried out to achieve this as well as fire, gas and electricity safety checks

[www.lewisham.gov.uk/buildingforlewisham](http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/buildingforlewisham)

### 3. Safety – wellbeing and support of tenants, particularly women and young people

'Home' is more than shelter. There are people who have a house or flat, even a so-called 'affordable' rental in the social housing sector, but who do not feel 'at home' because of issues of disrepair. There are also those who have disabilities whose homes have not been adapted to meet their needs.

The social housing sector is also aware of the issue of disrepair, as highlighted by campaigners like Kwajo Tweneboa and Daniel Hewitt. But housing providers need to look beyond individual cases, to patterns in the data. A culture shift is vital so that social landlords listen effectively and take accountability. The Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight report<sup>39</sup> (2021) on damp and mould underlined the need to go beyond individual complaints to a listening culture, one that takes responsibility and really listens to what tenants say. The report outlined right at the outset – in its sub-heading – that damp and mould cannot be put down to tenants' 'lifestyles', and that organisations have a duty to take reasonable care and properly address the issue.

Across all strands of the *Homeful* data, wellbeing and support was seen as an issue around the causes of homelessness, especially where people lacked support and/or had physical or mental health conditions. The research shows that social housing providers need to make sure this is part of their service offer to help sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness.

Research published by CIH Cymru and Public Health Wales (2021) examined the impact of the pandemic on homelessness and housing security in respect of health behaviours. It concluded that: '*...home is not a safe place for everyone, nor does everyone in the population have access to a home, or a high quality-housing environment*'.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Spotlight-report-Damp-and-mould-final.pdf](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Spotlight-report-Damp-and-mould-final.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Woodfine L, Green L, Evans L, Parry-Williams L, Heathcote-Elliott C, Grey CNB, Irving-Clarke Y, Kennedy M, May C, Azam S, and Bellis MA (2021). No place like home? Exploring the health and well-being impact of COVID-19 on housing and housing insecurity. Main Report. Cardiff, Public Health Wales NHS Trust Summary Report Pg 6

Domestic abuse was a key issue highlighted during the coronavirus pandemic, with a concern that during the lockdowns there would be fewer opportunities for people to seek help. As with many issues related to homelessness, it is important to get the narrative framing right. Traditionally, the term 'domestic violence' was used, but in recent years 'domestic abuse' more aptly describes the range of emotional, economic, sexual and coercive abuse that happens, not only physical violence. The charity Refuge undertook **analysis of figures** of people reporting abuse, which showed a dramatic rise of incidences during the first year of lockdowns. And the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) encouraged organisations to sign up to their accreditation, based on 'the whole housing approach' and six core principles:

- **Non-judgemental**
- **Person-centred**
- **Amplifying survivors' voices**
- **Recognising the intersection of multiple disadvantages/oppressions)**
- **Safety**
- **Co-ordinated community response.**

An **independent analysis** of the DAHA accreditation model shows the value of taking a more holistic housing approach to the issue of domestic abuse. This is not just about the cost savings of preventing homelessness, but social benefits for individuals experiencing abuse and the housing professionals trying to help them. It is also important for trade organisations and service providers to the social housing sector to look at how they can be part of a joined-up solution to domestic abuse and homelessness prevention.

## Case study

### **Morgan Sindall Property Services** **Supporting survivors of domestic abuse**



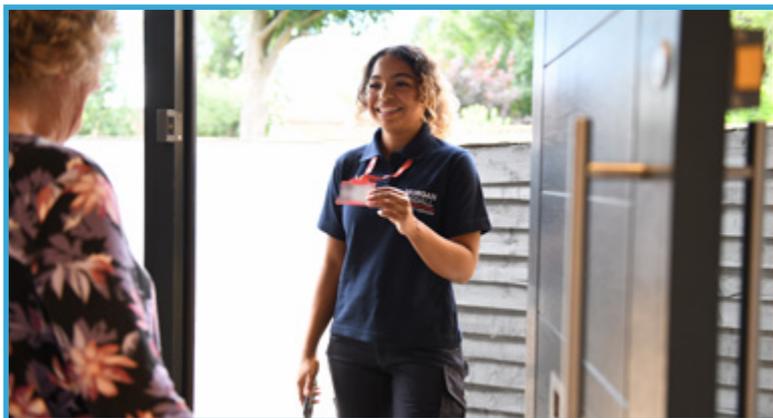
Morgan Sindall Property Services (MSPS) have evidenced their commitment to working with housing providers and subject matter experts to respond to the increased vulnerabilities being seen in communities. In 2021, MSPS developed and funded the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Contractor's accreditation.

Its implementation included the development of a domestic abuse toolkit, with training for more than 900 customer-facing and office staff to spot signs of domestic abuse and develop safe referrals pathways with clients to report concerns. Since its implementation, operatives have flagged over 200 potential instances of domestic abuse.

Survivors are often unable to obtain safe and affordable housing after fleeing an abusive environment. In 2022, MSPS launched the Phoenix Programme in partnership with Westminster City Council, Addressing Domestic Abuse, Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant and Smart Works. The bespoke programme offers female survivors a range of support options, to rebuild confidence and develop the skills to enter or re-enter the workplace.

*“Domestic abuse is the second most common reason for becoming homeless. Working in partnership with housing providers and specialist support organisations, we can develop initiatives to identify and support people who are at risk and prevent survivors becoming homeless.”*

Anneka Gill, head of transformation, Morgan Sindall Property Services.



*Practical action to support people experiencing domestic abuse (photo MSPS)*

[www.morgansindallpropertyservices.com](http://www.morgansindallpropertyservices.com)

Safety is also a crucial issue for people with disabilities, and those who care for them. Properties need to be fit for purpose and adapted to residents' individual needs.



## Longhurst Group Harry's Pledge

Longhurst Group is a founding partner of Harry's Pledge, a campaign committed to supporting people who provide care and those who need it. The campaign encourages organisations to sign up to make progress in at least one of four areas:

- Making homes more accessible
- Making workplaces and community spaces more accessible
- Supporting the unpaid carers they employ
- Influencing changes to pay and rewards for paid carers.

The aims in relation to building homes include a commitment to building more fully accessible homes, or ensuring new homes can be easily adapted for disabled people, and routinely considering accessibility within existing housing stock. In total, 57 organisations have signed up to Harry's Pledge, with over 100 offering their public support for the campaign. This includes more than 40 housing associations.

Longhurst Group customer Mike, who was supported to move into a fully accessible home in Lincolnshire in April 2022, said it has made his life easier. His bungalow includes adjustable worktops and sinks, widened doorways and corridors and a mobility scooter charging point. Mike said: *"I suffer with terminal cancer, so living here just makes my life easier. It's a beautiful place and the room sizes are perfect."*



*Mike's accessible kitchen  
(photo Longhurst Group)*

[www.longhurst-group.org.uk](http://www.longhurst-group.org.uk)

Young people were also seen to be especially vulnerable during the pandemic. Security and support are important in helping them feel safe.

## YMCA

### Supported housing campus



Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

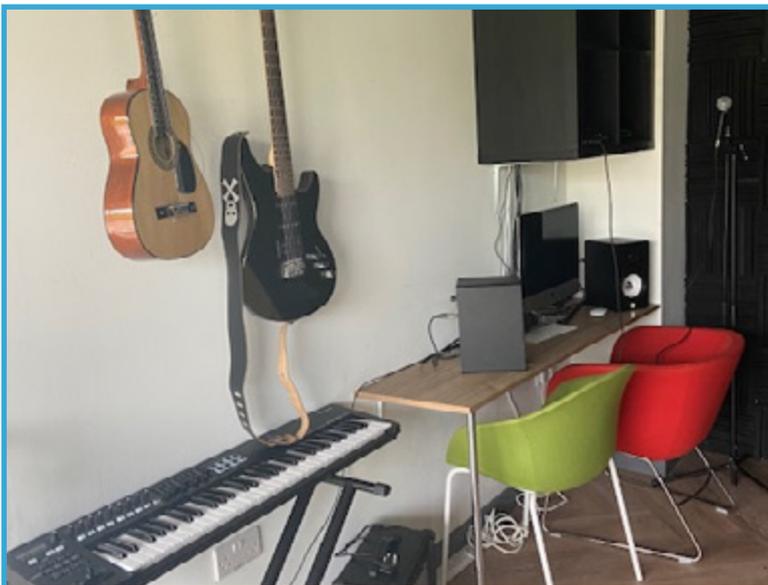
The YMCA in Milton Keynes provides a range of supported housing for young people on a new campus facility. Young people move through different stages with the support of YMCA staff. When ready to move on from the initial 'hostel' type accommodation, they are provided with next-step accommodation on campus and helped to engage with training, support and advice related to employment opportunities.

Staff take a real coaching approach at this point, listening to the strengths and skills of each young person. This results in bespoke arrangements, for example a young woman who had the opportunity to work at a stable because of her passion for horses. The team at YMCA make clear they do not just look for any work opportunities, but the right ones to meet young people's hopes and aspirations. They provide the sort of advice that a loving parent or family member would.

Eviction rates have dramatically reduced from approximately 40-50% to under 10%. This is because of a mindset amongst all colleagues that focuses on 'elastic tolerance', which links back to the approach they think a parent might take, rather than an institution with rigid rules. The approach is based on the *Human Givens*<sup>41</sup> theory to look behind the (anti-social) behaviours that might once have started an eviction process, and delve further to better understand people's feelings and the needs.

The final-stage accommodation on the YMCA campus is a larger, self-contained flat with high-quality furnishings and soft furnishing packs so the young person can make the place their home. There are also shared spaces, like the large living area which includes a cinema corner, arts space and a sound-proofed music room. The campus also has a childcare nursery and a high-quality social enterprise café, which are open to the public and provide employment opportunities for the young people.

Like many projects, the YMCA in Milton Keynes does need more access to social and affordable housing for rent. Greater availability would mean that when a young person leaves final-stage accommodation, they have a place to go to with a secure tenancy, and the safety of knowing the place is theirs so they can get on with living their lives.



*Sound-proofed music room  
at Milton Keynes YMCA  
(photo Jo Richardson)*

[www.mkymca.com](http://www.mkymca.com)

Housing disadvantage and experiences of homelessness can be especially stark for LGBTQ+ people. World Habitat's 2018 report<sup>42</sup> had a headline recommendation that all housing organisations should implement a programme of training to enable improvements in service design. The voices of those with lived experiences are incorporated more and more into the ways that social housing providers design, develop and improve their services. But it is still important to keep a focus on LGBTQ+ issues and to recognise where these intersect with other factors that can lead to exclusion and disadvantage.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.humangivens.com/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://world-habitat.org/publications/left-many-lgbtq-people-arent-accessing-right-housing-uk/>



## Tŷ Pride

### Support for LGBTQ+ young people

Tŷ Pride is a project consisting of 24/7 support for LGBTQ+ young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. It's a unique project in North Wales, which resulted from the three partners involved in setting up the project sitting on the steering group for the End Youth Homelessness Cymru report.<sup>43</sup> This identified that LGBTQ+ young people are four times more likely to experience homelessness than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. The partnership between Denbighshire County Council, Viva LGBTQ+ and the leading homelessness charity Llamau, aims to continue expand its services and facilities. It offers three supported accommodation units, a 'move-on' flat and floating support in the community. To date, more than 50 young people aged 16-25 have enquired for a space or have been referred from across Wales through different organisations. Tŷ Pride won the Equality and Diversity award at the Welsh Housing Awards in November 2022.

[www.sheltercymru.org.uk](http://www.sheltercymru.org.uk)

## 4. Quality of space – adapting properties to meet need/ thinking about geographical places, particularly rural communities

We must be expansive in our global view to provide high-quality housing that will protect the environment, and offer residents homes that keep them warm in the winter and cool in the summer, without the need for high energy use.



## Morgan Sindall Property Services

### Leaving a lasting legacy in communities

Being a responsible business is integral to Morgan Sindall Property Services (MSPS)<sup>44</sup> company purpose, operating model and strategy.

MSPS creates opportunities that make a long-lasting, positive contribution to communities and the environment. It aims to be a sustainable business by anticipating and responding to the changing needs of customers, communities, partners and employees.

<sup>43</sup> [www.llamau.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=1ab2fc66-c571-44f0-8ceb-2d1346f38303](http://www.llamau.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=1ab2fc66-c571-44f0-8ceb-2d1346f38303)

<sup>44</sup> <https://morgansindallpropertyservices.com/>

One of these ways is through a retrofit programme, developed in collaboration with clients to help improve the energy efficiency of homes, reduce energy use and create more comfortable, healthier living spaces for residents. Retrofit measures such as internal wall and underfloor insulation, secondary glazing, replacing gas boilers with energy-efficient air source heat pump and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies such as sensors can improve the quality of life for residents, identify and reduce fuel poverty and lessen reliance on fossil fuels.

With one social housing landlord, 500 homes have undergone retrofit measures up to the end of 2022. This has helped to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contributed to city and national and targets to tackle climate change.

*“Retrofitting is the way forward to make homes more energy-efficient and to save money on household bills. These measures are an impactful step forward towards having a more comfortable home and will help reduce energy bills, which we hope will be of comfort to residents during the cost-of-living crisis.”* Alan Hayward, managing director, Morgan Sindall Property Services

Alongside these retrofit programmes MSPS also hosts energy cafés once a month for residents. These provide advice and tips on reducing energy use in the home, signposting to resources if people are struggling to pay bills, and guidance on the best boiler and heating controls. The cafés also help residents to be aware of the retrofit measures available to them. Between April 2020 and March 2021, the initiative distributed fuel vouchers totalling £34,000 to residents to reduce fuel poverty.

[www.morgansindallpropertyservices.com](http://www.morgansindallpropertyservices.com)

## Milton Keynes YMCA Green Roof Project

Milton Keynes YMCA has used its roof to support environmental sustainability. Installed by the Green Roof Project<sup>45</sup> this large space hosts vegetable plots, beehives, solar panels and a garden area. The produce grown on the roof is used for fresh ingredients in the social enterprise café on the ground floor of the campus.

[www.mkymca.com](http://www.mkymca.com)

**YMCA**

Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you



*Roof of the Milton Keynes YMCA campus (photo Jo Richardson)*

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.greenroofproject.co.uk/>

## Longhurst Group

### Garden Support Fund

Longhurst Group recognised the challenges that some residents have in maintaining their own outside spaces. This was particularly noticeable during the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdowns – a time when green outdoor spaces at home were particularly important for mental wellbeing.

The Group created a Garden Support Fund scheme in 2021, which ran again the following year. Residents who met certain criteria – such as age and vulnerability – could apply for support to maintain their garden. Across the two funds, a total of 238 residents were successful with their applications for support.

One customer, Lynn, found herself struggling to look after the garden at her home in Grimsby, and reached out for some help.

*“I used to be able to do my own garden, but then I had a fall in my kitchen, which sliced all my shoulder open and I was in hospital for quite a long time with it. I’ve also got bad knees, asthma and COPD, so I could no longer do it myself. Through the Garden Support Fund, I managed to have somebody to come out and cut all my grass for me. They came whenever it needed doing really. It was a massive help – a great big help”.*

[www.longhurst-group.org.uk](http://www.longhurst-group.org.uk)

The National Housing Federation and a group of housing associations and advocacy organisations wanted to explore the challenges and issues of homelessness in rural areas and commissioned research<sup>46</sup> from the University of Kent and the University of Southampton. The interim findings published in September 2022 showed that the cost-of-living crisis and the critical shortage of affordable homes have increased homelessness in rural areas. The research found that 88% of participating housing and homelessness providers believed homelessness had increased in their area over the last year. Of these organisations, 80% felt at a disadvantage compared to those in urban areas who had more access to funding and support.

Emergency accommodation is particularly in demand in rural areas, with many poorer residents in the countryside especially vulnerable to the combined forces of the cost-of-living crisis and the volatility and cost of private rentals. The interim findings also highlighted the hidden nature of rural homelessness, with many people not recorded in official statistics while sofa surfing, or people sleeping rough in remote agricultural buildings.

A number of organisations we spoke with as part of the *Homeful* research said that the issues facing rural communities were particularly stark in coastal areas popular with tourists. During my walk on the South West Coast Path, I observed the number of properties that were empty out of the summer holiday season. In my conversations with people along the path, every single one included the issue of local housing disadvantage affecting either the person I was talking to directly or a member of their family.

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.housing.org.uk/news-and-blogs/news/nhf-joins-steering-group-to-examine-rural-homelessness/>

Many said that the private rented market was dysfunctional, and that even when a person had the means to pay the increasing rents being asked for, there was just not enough supply. I followed up this theme in a Homeful podcast interview with Catrina Davies (author of the book Homesick). She spoke of the absurdity of local people living on caravan sites inland because it was the only (often temporary) accommodation they could find, while tourists visiting the area occupied the permanent housing in seaside villages and towns.

Some of the professionals we interviewed in rural coastal communities spoke of the need to set up professional networks to come together and work out how to tackle the issue, so that ideas and good practice could be shared. Many of these areas are developing housing strategies that recognise the emergency of insufficient affordable housing for local people. Cornwall Council, for example published a new strategy<sup>47</sup> in July 2022 with multi-pronged approaches of building more council housing, utilising empty properties better, buying back properties to use for affordable housing and ensuring that new developments include new affordable housing.

In all the conversations I had with people during my walk, there was a palpable sense of frustration and anger that existing residents in these rural areas could not even find an affordable place to rent, while a large amount of second homes lay empty.



*On the South West Coast Path (photo Jo Richardson)*

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<sup>47</sup> <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-news/communities-and-housing/more-communities-and-housing-news-stories/council-strategy-sets-out-vision-for-housing-in-cornwall/>

## 5. Privacy – reducing use of temporary accommodation to meet homeless need

The notion of privacy did not arise explicitly out of the survey, interview or workshop data, but rather it was an implicit aspect of the issue of temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation for many homeless families can be overcrowded. There is a lack of privacy for individuals in the family in a shared room, and a lack of privacy as a family unit when using communal spaces like kitchens and bathrooms. While a very short period of lack of privacy may be bearable in an emergency, there are too many people living in so-called temporary accommodation for weeks, months and years.

### Case study

#### CHAMPIONS

#### CHAMPIONS

Children in Homeless Accommodations Managing Pandemic  
Invisibility or Non-inclusive Strategies

#### Temporary accommodation project

The CHAMPIONS project shows that while children in temporary accommodation (TA) are already suffering from inequalities, these have been further exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. The project's emerging findings show that a generation of children that spent time during the pandemic lockdowns in TA will carry long-lasting consequences in health, wellbeing and development. These will require specific interventions at the household level and across health, social services and education systems.

Researchers on the project found that particular impact of living in TA shows up in physical health, development, behaviour and mental health of children under five years old. Living in TA meant children were more likely to be isolated from support systems directly responsible for their health, development, and education as a result of closures of services during lockdowns and a limitation of support resources. Indirect impacts were evident in parents' parenting capacity due to COVID-19 related pressures, reduced access to outdoor spaces and prolonged exposure to poor internal housing environments.

In order for children to meet developmental milestones, to be physically and mentally well and ready for school, they need access to optimal living environment and facilities.

The pandemic and lockdowns exacerbated existing problems by limiting access to essential facilities required when caring for young children (such as a clean and safe kitchen and bathroom, laundry facilities, ventilated and pest-free spaces) and access to outdoor, safe spaces.

Lockdowns also led to further isolation of marginalised and vulnerable children. The restrictions meant limited access to environments where play and peer relationships could be established and sustained (for example, schools and children's centres). This lack of social engagement impeded children's speech development, relationship building skills and contributed to challenging behaviour, emotional difficulties and social anxiety.

Interviews with public services professionals highlighted a breakdown of services during the pandemic for this most vulnerable group. Normally, vulnerable families are supported by an integrated profile of services (housing, health, education, social care) but during the pandemic, a great deal of support fell on charities which was not sustainable in the longer term.

There are examples of good practice in supporting families with young children in TA at a local level (including integrated care, training, tracking of families, tailoring services to family needs) and effective scaling models need to be considered to amplify the potential for such good practice more generally.

CHAMPIONS developed a SHE Framework for children's rights recognising that every child, wherever they live, has the basic rights to be Safe Healthy and Educated. The project findings are conceptualised in this framework within the socioecological model to understand child health, mental health and development in TA as well as systems and support around the child. The aim is to ensure these three core pillars, which support physical, mental health, development, and doing better in the future (school readiness, lower NHS and economic burden, etc) can be applied across sectors.

[www.championsproject.co.uk](http://www.championsproject.co.uk)

## 6. Connectedness – community and relationships

Councils and housing associations need to work in partnership with one another, but also with community organisations already providing services in neighbourhoods. Where a housing provider works across different regions in the UK, it can also mean that support is given to organisations to grow in new geographical areas.

### The Guinness Partnership

#### Working with other community agencies



The Guinness Partnership works with a network of around 50 community partners with aligned values. Partners build on the support provided to residents in-house, by offering further advice, services and opportunities. For example, Guinness has partnerships with food pantries in Crewe, Sheffield, Salford, Cheltenham, Hackney, Kensington and Havant, as well as two mobile food vans. The pantries use a membership-based model, offering access to food that would cost several times more in a supermarket, in return for a small weekly fee. Together these partners helped over 3,000 households access affordable and healthy food in 2021/22. The mobile food vans enable people to access food without travel costs in areas that are more remote.

Guinness has two community spaces in Hackney – the Northwold Community Centre and the Family Centre, which are both managed by Boilerhouse Community Spaces. From those centres, local residents can obtain baby clothes and other items through a 'baby bank', a pantry, footwear from charity Sal's Shoes, and get involved in activities for young people and the wider community, such as the boxing club.

Alongside this work to alleviate hardship, Guinness has partnerships in place to help support people into training or employment with organisations including the Rio Ferdinand Foundation, Groundwork, Springboard Cheshire and many more.

*“With the cost of living in the UK increasing at its fastest rate for three decades, the work our community partners do is now more important than ever in helping people sustain a sense of ‘home.’” Alistair Smyth, Director of External Affairs & Social Investment, The Guinness Partnership.*

[www.guinnesspartnership.com](http://www.guinnesspartnership.com)



*Sal's Shoes in the Family Centre  
(photo The Guinness Partnership)*

Our communities are diverse and there isn't just one homogenous solution to the delivery of homes. Not everyone lives in accommodation built from bricks and mortar. Many Gypsies and Travellers, for example, have a cultural preference for living on a site in a trailer. There is a lack of sufficient, affordable, sites accommodation across the UK.

In Wales there is a duty placed on local authorities to produce a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment<sup>48</sup>. This assessment has to include consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community in the area. The aim of the assessment is to establish the accommodation need to be provided through residential sites or transitional sites, with a plan to meet this need.

A number of housing associations and local authorities are trying to address this and deliver more appropriate site accommodation. Since 2019, a national advisory panel of social housing providers has come together to share experiences and advice with one another and with government. The Panel is now working with Friends, Families and Travellers on a three-year project funded by the Oak Foundation to look further at improving supply. It produced [a report in 2021](#) designed to share good practice examples and to encourage more housing associations to consider delivering sites as part of their development of affordable housing.

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<sup>48</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/undertaking-gypsy-and-traveller-accommodation-assessments.pdf>

## Elim Housing Group

### Gypsy and Traveller sites

In March 2015, Elim Housing delivered two new Gypsy and Traveller sites, providing 37 affordable homes in Bath and Weston-super-Mare in North Somerset. Both sites were developed in partnership with the respective local authorities and were part-funded by the Homes and Communities Agency. In both cases, the housing association significantly benefitted from the support of key local councillors. It identifies this positive approach by Bath and North East Somerset and North Somerset Councils as one of the ‘unlocking’ factors in securing planning consent. At the Greenfields Way site, environmental features were an important feature in the design of a challenging brownfield development, including solar panels on the utility block roofs.

[www.elimhousing.co.uk](http://www.elimhousing.co.uk)



*Gypsy and Traveller site at Greenfields Way in Weston-Super-Mare (photo Elim Housing)*

## One Voice 4 Travellers

### Advocacy and support



One Voice 4 Travellers is an organisation that provides advocacy and support for Gypsies and Travellers. In 2016 it was awarded funding for a five-year Women and Girls project focusing on domestic and family violence. There were four main strands to the project:

- Group sessions where women from different generations provide peer support to one another
- Individual support for women suffering domestic violence
- Provision of two ‘safe’ caravans that can be used to help women fleeing domestic violence and who need appropriate Traveller accommodation
- Partnership working and awareness raising.

The caravans proved particularly important for Traveller women by helping to reduce the additional trauma and distress that some survivors of abuse may have faced if they had to go into bricks and mortar accommodation if that is all that was offered to them. Having a culturally safe environment reduced the fear of isolation and loneliness that many women and girls feel when fleeing domestic abuse.

[www.onevoice4travellers.co.uk](http://www.onevoice4travellers.co.uk)

## Camerados

### Friends and purpose

# CAMERADOS

Maff Potts, founder of the Camerados movement, has decades of experience working in the housing and homelessness sector. He is focused more now on the Camerados approach, which is about people more than bricks and systems. The movement offers connection and a sense of purpose – they don't want to fix anything, but have found by being there and not offering to 'help', things get better for people. One initiative that Camerados is championing is the public living room.

*"Public living rooms have sofas and cuppas, maybe some tunes, maybe some board games. They are warm, welcoming places the key distinguishing feature of which is that nobody is trying to fix you. The public realm is divided into places that sell you stuff and places that offer interventions that fix you. People in crisis often hide from this and so remain isolated at home. When one hospital changed the sign outside a public living room from 'Come in, put your feet up, be a camerado' to 'It's time to talk, Mental Health Awareness week' the number of people coming in fell from 1000 to 40.*

*People very often run away from labels and interventions. And yet when they're liberated from fixing and solutions, amazingly outcomes do happen. Sheffield Hallam University reported the following results from conversations in Public living rooms: 71% more able to cope with life; 80% feel less anxious and stressed; 92% felt more connected with others.*

*Each public living room is different. There are no 'staff', they are set up and organised by camerados for their communities and are open to all. And all of them use the six simple camerado ideas to underpin how they run - you can find these on our website - [www.camerados.org](http://www.camerados.org)*

*These principles were learnt from seven years of mistakes. Some public living rooms are pop-ups for short periods, some are at regular times each week and others are open daily. It is the goal of the movement to see one in every neighbourhood: somewhere to go to be a camerado, halfway between a stranger and a friend, people who have your back, but without any pressure on any one person."* Maff Potts, Camerados



*Outdoor public living room in action  
(photo Camerados)*

## The Wallich

### Help to accomplish bigger life goals

The Wallich is a charity based in Wales, with a user-led ethos and cultural approach that many organisations are now recognising the need for. Their three core objectives are (1) getting people off the streets; (2) keeping people off the streets; and (3) creating opportunities for people.

Chief executive Dr. Lindsay Cordery-Bruce believes housing goes beyond accommodation: *“We are helping people accomplish bigger life goals in terms of education, employment, volunteering and community integration.”* The charity’s shadow board is comprised of people with lived experience, which deepens community trust and policy influence in key decisions and strategies. There is also a recognition of the ambitions in Wales to take a whole systems approach to resolving homelessness: *“There’s a big ambition for Wales to do away with things like intentionality and local connection, it is a game changer in terms of where people sleep and where people seek support.”*

One example of the many different types of support offered includes rehousing and support of trans women after parole, providing safety and considering sexuality and gender as important factors in its support. The Wallich has also developed a privately funded network of trained, trauma-informed, counsellors who are available to residents and service users.

There are challenges to working in rural areas spread over a large geographical area. The Wallich’s outreach service recognises barriers in place for people from certain communities and regions to access services: *“We’ve been working hard on developing mobile operations, keen to take services to people rather than expect them to find them, specifically as, with rural homelessness, you might need three buses to go and access your next ‘local’ service.”*

Through strong links with other agencies, The Wallich has a welfare vehicle in place, equipped with medical room, shower and tumble dryer, which drives to towns and isolated areas. The charity also offers support to other agencies interested in taking their services out to people. A second vehicle, a harm reduction vehicle, goes out with partner agencies, focusing on substance use and mental health. The vehicle also transports services and tools, to directly address a range of needs over a dispersed area.

[www.thewallich.com](http://www.thewallich.com)



*The Wallich welfare vehicle  
(photo The Wallich)*

## 7. Flexibility and adaptive practice of housing providers – joint working and innovation for a paradigm shift

Flexibility and collaboration with partners was a strong feature across all the Homeful research data. We asked a number of organisations what they felt were the 'key ingredients' to resolving homelessness, and partnerships came out right at the top. More and more housing organisations are also seeing the benefit of a person-centred approach to designing new services, or changes in service delivery with customers through a co-produced ethos.

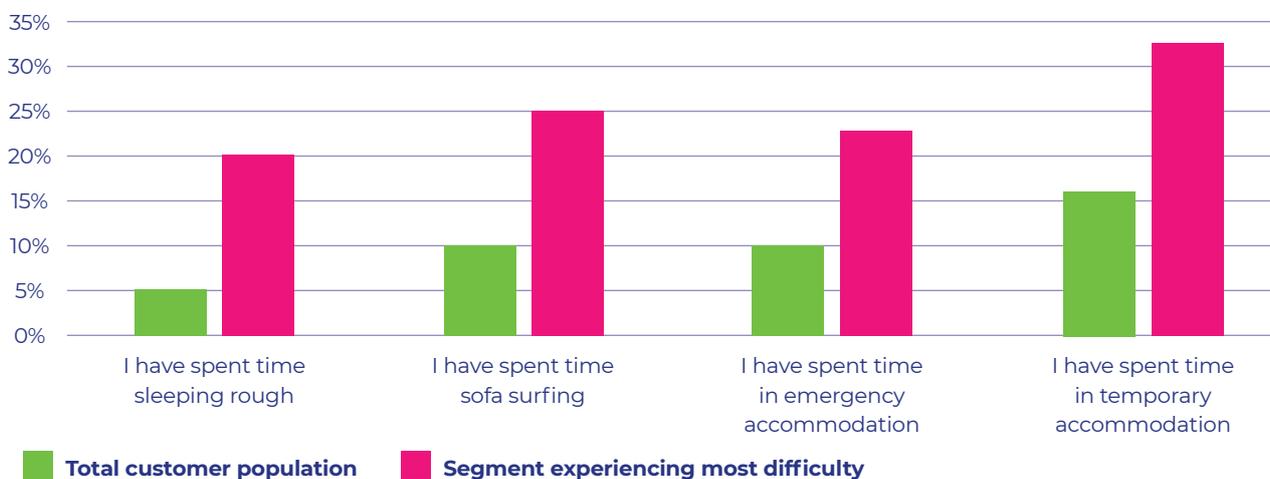
Social housing providers wishing to prevent homelessness need to look beyond the standard data they have for their tenants and really get to grips with the range of different needs.

### Case study

#### Grand Union Housing Group Psychographic data and analysis



Grand Union Housing Group has a robust strategic approach to really understanding who its customers are and more importantly what they need. The organisation believes that only by understanding who customers are, with their complexities and experiences can it develop impactful approaches to achieve positive change. Through research, Grand Union knows that a number of customers have experienced some type of homelessness:



Survey completed by GUHG, November 2021. Base: 2530 (total)

Grand Union's psychographic segmentation focuses on the complete person – their needs, capability, capacity, values, and motivations. It enables them to understand why customers behave in certain ways and how they can do things differently to get better outcomes and improve customer experience while also improving organisational efficiency.

Psychographic or behavioural segmentation provides rich and detailed information from a needs-based perspective at both a total customer and segment level. Observing differing levels of literacy, cognitive capability, developmental or learning disabilities (all potential protected characteristics in equality legislation) may indicate a need to review and redesign both offer and communication strategies to ensure accessibility.

For example, if a customer is 'ignoring' letters about accessing the home to check gas safety or about rent arrears, the psychographic segmentation will show if there might be some trauma or learning difficulties which mean a non-standard approach to communication would be more supportive for the customer and more effective for the organisation.

[www.guhg.co.uk](http://www.guhg.co.uk)

## Norfolk Homelessness Partnership Charter



Councils across Norfolk, along with other key agencies, realised that for homelessness to end, the benefits of working together realised during 'Everyone In' had to be retained post-pandemic. The Norfolk Homelessness Charter created a framework for this collective commitment and collaboration.



In July 2021, the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership had a conference to listen and discuss the findings from participatory research by NESTA. This included the voices of lived experience through surveys and listening exercises, to create a space where service providers could really hear what people with experience of homelessness were saying. Some of this was around perception and framing – for example, understanding that it is the systems that are complex, not the people with experience. The results of the consultation with people in Norfolk can be found in the report commissioned<sup>49</sup> and in the Norfolk Homelessness Prevention Strategy and the No Homelessness in Norfolk Plan.

<sup>49</sup> [www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/No%20Homelessness%20in%20Norfolk\\_%20People%20Powered%20Results%20Support%20-%20final.pdf](http://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/No%20Homelessness%20in%20Norfolk_%20People%20Powered%20Results%20Support%20-%20final.pdf)



A number of differences emerged in the new partnership approach around access to services, collaboration between partners, listening to the voice of lived experience and being proactive, but key among these was the 'person-centred' approach. The partnership has inspired all of the organisations involved to develop more community and person-centred models of delivery, more outreach and floating support – rather than expecting people to understand how to navigate a complex system to find services.

Social housing provider members of the partnership also take innovative and charitable approaches to resolving and preventing homelessness. One example is Flagship Group, which established Hopestead<sup>50</sup>, a homelessness charity to support people in the East of England. Another member, Broadland Housing Association, was one of the first in the country to take an innovative approach to helping refugees with no recourse to public funds, by letting properties at a peppercorn rent.

[www.hopestead.org/norfolk-strategic-housing-partnership/](http://www.hopestead.org/norfolk-strategic-housing-partnership/)

Some of the people in most need of housing and support are those who have 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) and for whom housing-led approaches in the social sector are ineligible for the benefits needed to pay for them. Broadland was one of the first to think about ways to make some properties available for lease to a charity, which could then let them on a peppercorn rent, as a way of still being able to help refugees experiencing homelessness. Other organisations have learned from the approach in Norfolk, including the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement (OHM) partnership.

## Soha Housing Learning and Partnerships

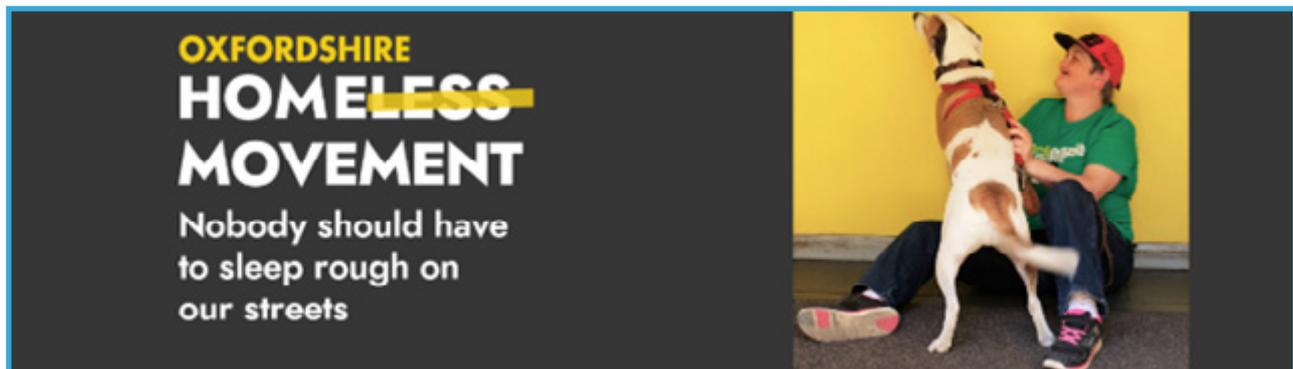


Soha Housing, a local housing association in Oxfordshire, provided 12 beds in shared housing at peppercorn rent for the OHM NRPF project delivered by local charities Aspire, Asylum Welcome and Connection Support. The project provides individualised support and advice, to help people with no recourse to public funds who were experiencing homelessness.

Edge Housing also joined the project, providing a further three bed spaces and associated support. The project currently houses 16 guests, of whom five have been helped to regularise their status. One person was offered a council home once they had secured their status and could access benefits. Private donations plus the contribution of properties from Soha and Edge Housing, enables a person-centred, supportive approach for people with no recourse to public funds. The project aims to help people in this situation to be housed and supported so they can become contributing members of society.

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.hopestead.org/who-we-are/>

The project aims to directly house and support the entire cohort of people who have NRPF status in Oxfordshire (around 20 people). But of course it helps many more than that initial number as people successfully move on, freeing up their places for others on the waiting list. The partnership approached Broadland in Norfolk to learn from their experience in providing accommodation to meet a similar need – demonstrating the importance of sharing good practice within the sector.



*Promotional material for Oxfordshire Homeless Movement (photo Soha Housing)*

[www.oxfordshirehomelessmovement.org](http://www.oxfordshirehomelessmovement.org)

We've seen in the previous section that there was a clear link between housing and health in practices to resolve and prevent homelessness during the coronavirus pandemic. Joint and agile working are vital if we are to end homelessness for good, and help people feel 'at home'.

A number of housing providers have schemes working directly with hospitals to focus on the issue of helping people to live independently at home so that they can be sustainably discharged from hospital. Similarly, there are examples of working with other institutions, such as prisons, to ensure that ex-offenders do not leave prison straight into homelessness.

## The Arc

### Recovery and support for ex-offenders

In Manchester, 'The Arc' is a safe and welcoming place for people to access various mental health and recovery-based services, and support for ex-offenders to live independently and sustainably once rehoused. Working in partnership at The Arc, The Calico Group provides creative workshops to enable service users to grow in confidence, build a new life for themselves and to be a positive influence within the community. It's a well-thought-of resource for the community it serves, and provides its users with the chance to overcome the enormous challenges that confront them by becoming physically, mentally and emotionally well.

The Calico Group continue to find new ways to promote unheard voices through creative projects. *Under The Roof of the Sky* is a remarkable documentary film, which captures the experiences of life in the city for homeless people and the enormous challenges they face.

The aim of the film is to tackle the preconceptions people have about homelessness and asks the viewer to consider that the solution doesn't just sit with Government – it starts with all of us. You can watch the film and live Q&A at [www.undertheroofofthesky.org.uk](http://www.undertheroofofthesky.org.uk)

Working in and with the private rented sector (PRS) is necessary given the shortage of affordable and social housing. The Renters Reform Bill 2022 creates opportunities for improvements in the PRS if it is enacted.

## Rentstart

### Helping people into the private rented sector

Based in Elmbridge in Surrey, the charity Rentstart helps people from homelessness into the PRS. Single adults are often only able to choose the PRS as their route out of homelessness, despite its unsuitability as an exit route. Rentstart has worked for 20 years to remove common barriers such as the significant funds needed for deposits and rent in advance, passing credit checks, having good references, finding landlords willing to accept tenants on benefits and reliably paying rent despite an at-times unreliable benefits system.

By building relationships with local landlords, the charity houses around 150 local people each year. Rentstart gives landlords stability by guaranteeing their rent and absorbing the costs of any benefit errors or financial mishaps. It offers a deposit bond, reassuring landlords they won't be paying out for damages. The service also manages paperwork and even occasional property maintenance. All of this means that the experience of working with Rentstart for many landlords feels easier, cheaper, and less risky than letting through estate agents.

Securing quality PRS housing is only the start. Once someone is housed, the Rentstart support team sets about ensuring the cycle of homelessness is broken via the award-winning<sup>51</sup>, strengths-based *Freedom2Work* project. This helps clients to find education and employment, improve their wellbeing and social connections and manage their finances. This is often done by linking in with other organisations – for example, Rentstart support workers often refer clients to the House of St Barnabas and ensure they make it to the sessions, through which they often successfully find employment. The goal is for clients to move on from Rentstart independently. The charity has plans in the pipeline to help clients build credit scores as they pay their rent.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/commonweal-and-rentstart-win-award>



*Private rented homes  
and support by Rentstart  
(photo Rentstart)*

[www.rentstart.org](http://www.rentstart.org)

A key area of supporting sustainable tenancies is helping people with lived experience into employment. One example is the GROW (Getting Real Opportunities of Work) programme which has been used by a number of organisations and charities, including Riverside<sup>52</sup> and Shelter.

## Shelter GROW (Getting Real Opportunities of Work)



Shelter's GROW (Getting Real Opportunities of Work) programme started in 2015. In 2020, it won the Homeless Link Excellence Award for Co-Production. GROW is a 12-month paid placement for people who experienced homelessness and other disadvantages. During the traineeship, GROW trainees develop trauma-informed skills based on lived experiences and help build user-friendly systems at work. They are also supported on an individual development programme, with access to training and support to help improve their skills and drive personal development.

A former GROW trainee herself, Katie Sperring-Macleod is Shelter's GROW Officer for the South of England. She plans, recruits and supports hub placements, and also facilitates sessions, inductions and provides support. Katie helps trainees overcome barriers and reach their full potential.

Her own lived experience is a great asset. Katie knows how homelessness can have negative effects on someone's life but believes this is not a defining experience for someone's future, and with appropriate support, it can be harnessed positively.

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.riverside.org.uk/new-grow-programme/>



*“One of the most valuable things is to channel that lived experience and voice, front and centre when you’re making policies. So don’t ask someone who’s never experienced homelessness to fix homelessness, because it won’t work.”* Katie Sperring-Macleod, GROW Officer, Shelter



*Shelter’s GROW project in action (photo Shelter)*

[www.blog.shelter.org.uk/2021/02/grow-exploring-new-opportunities/](http://www.blog.shelter.org.uk/2021/02/grow-exploring-new-opportunities/)

The use of existing empty properties is one key component to increasing affordable housing supply, if the right partnerships can be established. In Scotland, the Scottish Government funds the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership<sup>53</sup>, which is hosted by Shelter Scotland. The aim of the partnership is to bring the approximately 43,000 privately owned long-term empty properties back into use. The partnership objectives encourage councils to have a dedicated empty homes officer as part of a national network of officers working in this area. There are also some innovative projects noted for working with private landlords to bring properties back into use, particularly for affordable housing rent.

## Homes For Good

### Social enterprise lettings and development



Homes For Good<sup>54</sup> (HFG) is Scotland’s first and only social enterprise letting agency and social property developer in the private rented sector. It specialises in providing homes for people on benefits or low incomes, or at immediate risk of homelessness and address challenges with discrimination, access, and affordability for those who have limited housing choices.

HFG buys empty and derelict houses on the open market, renovates them, and lets them at rents based around the Local Housing Allowance rates. It consists of a small group of companies, each with its own part to play in delivering quality rental homes and addressing the significant housing needs in the country.

<sup>53</sup> <https://emptyhomespartnership.scot/>

<sup>54</sup> <https://homesforgood.org.uk/>

Since 2014, HFG has raised £20 million in social investment. It now has over 500 properties under management (300 directly owned) and works with around 130 landlords and 800 tenants in and around Glasgow and the West of Scotland. HFG also leases properties to partner organisations that support people with more complex needs.

HFG places special importance in creating a sense of home for tenants – this is reflected in the way it designs and furnishes homes at the point of renovation. They believe it is what makes them stand out in the market. As well as managing these properties, the organisation also offers flexible and personalised support to its tenants with a wide range of needs, including mental health, homelessness, and relationship breakdowns. Funding for the tenancy support costs comes from the National Lottery.

HFG wants to lead by example and have a ripple effect in the UK and worldwide, to inspire others and directly inform policies and practices in the private rented sector. It was awarded first Gold Prize in the World Habitat awards in 2023<sup>55</sup>.



*An HFG home (photo  
Homes for Good)*

[www.homesforgood.org.uk](http://www.homesforgood.org.uk)

Coalitions of agencies, collaborative campaigns and movements of resistance are also important aspects of coming together. They offer joint working towards a solution, or at least the ability to share a message of change.

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<sup>55</sup> <https://world-habitat.org/news/press-releases/2023-world-habitat-awards-winners-announced/>

## World Habitat

### European End Street Homelessness Campaign

World Habitat is host of the European End Street Homelessness Campaign (EESHHC) - a network of local city campaigns, all working with the same set of principles to end street homelessness in their communities.

The campaign works with partners who understand this challenge and recognise how their system needs to change. World Habitat (WH) is committed to not only work with those that have the necessary finance, buildings and political backing. The Campaign has seen new housing projects starting in Bratislava and the growth of the Housing First programme in Leicester. Homeless Network Scotland continue to branch out Housing First across Scotland with its Housing First Pathfinder.

EESHHC is focused on developing and improving permanent housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness. WH support frontline organisations that are delivering housing-led solutions, or working in challenging housing contexts where access to permanent housing is a challenge. Since its inception in 2015, partners linked to the EESHHC have provided permanent accommodation for over 2000 people who were previously living on the streets. WH does not record temporary solutions, such as emergency spaces or night shelter spaces, but accommodation options that provide safe, secure and sustainable accommodation with wrap-around support.

[www.world-habitat.org/publications/the-european-end-street-homelessness-campaign/](http://www.world-habitat.org/publications/the-european-end-street-homelessness-campaign/)

Councils are increasingly coming together to co-ordinate approaches. In Nottinghamshire, for example, they are building on work achieved by the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) Steering Group. For the next tranche of RSI-funded support they have recruited a programme manager to coordinate strategically and find opportunities for system change.

## Leicester Homelessness Charter

Leicester's Homelessness Charter was signed and launched in November 2018. The charter is pre-dated by the former Homeless Leicester Partnership (HeLP) and so has evolved over a number of years. The Charter brings together a wide range of people from different backgrounds into conversations around homelessness locally.

A key objective of the Charter is to ensure that the voices of those with lived experience of homelessness are at the heart of service design and delivery. In partnership with local social enterprise, Dear Albert, the Charter has established a peer network called 'The Hope Forum', which provides opportunities for people to contribute their insights and lived experience expertise to the benefit of homelessness systems locally.

The Bridge, a homelessness charity charter partner, has established a women's only peer support network in partnership with Action Homeless which provides a safe space, meaningful activities and access to support services. The Bridge also hosts The Lighthouse Project, a mentoring programme offering non-judgemental, professional mentorship that aims to increase confidence, reduce social isolation and improve mental and physical health. Mentees are individuals who are homeless and living on the street, 'sofa surfing' or living in substandard accommodation, or are at risk of homelessness.

People have often experienced trauma, which leads to difficulties engaging with services and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Meetings take place face-to-face once a week for a couple of hours for up to six months to listen, talk, assist and accompany clients to achieve personal goals. Weekly phone calls for three to six months also offer a listening ear to reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing.

Charter partners have been instrumental in securing grant income to work with people with no recourse to public funds and support people sleeping rough. A specific 'My Place' fund supports those recently settled in accommodation to make their place feel like home.



*Signing the  
Leicester Homelessness  
Charter in 2018 (photo  
Leicester City Council)*

[www.leicesterhomelessnesscharter.co.uk](http://www.leicesterhomelessnesscharter.co.uk)

# Key ingredients to resolve and prevent homelessness

Across the data collected for the Homeful project – published reports, survey and interview results and lived experience workshops – a number of ‘key ingredients’ emerged from participant responses and practice examples. We also specifically asked housing leaders what they felt were the ‘key ingredients to success’ in ending homelessness. Leaders in the housing sector focused on people and connection in the ingredients they saw during the Everyone In period during the pandemic:

- **Coalition of the willing**
- **Having the right people in the right place**
- **Accountability through agreement**
- **Political leadership**
- **Challenge (push back on the status quo or resistance) and persistence.**

Looking across the range of data from the various strands of the Homeful research, the following ingredients to end homelessness are offered as suggestions:

## UK Government

- **Lift the cap on Housing Benefit** – frontline services have been observing a rise in the number of families at risk of homelessness and a Bureau of Investigative Journalism analysis<sup>56</sup> (October 2022) shows 98% of properties advertised to let are beyond the reach of those on benefits.
- **Stop selling council homes through Right to Buy in England** – follow the practice of Scotland and Wales on this.
- **Maintain the threshold (of ten homes) for requiring new developments to include ‘affordable’ housing** – this is particularly important in rural areas where up to two-thirds of affordable housing is provided through planning gain agreements<sup>57</sup>.
- **Amplify the longer-term approach to rough sleeping funding** taken in the comprehensive spending review in 2021, but join the dots between government funding pots, both for rough sleeping initiatives and for wider initiatives to prevent homelessness linking with health, care and social justice.
- **Adopt measures to monitor housing association performance on homelessness by the Regulator of Social Housing**, as recommended by Homes for Cathy and the Kerslake Commission. The approach taken by the Scottish Housing Regulator offers a useful framework<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> [Lack of affordable lets leaves families with little left to live on — The Bureau of Investigative Journalism \(en-GB\) \(thebureauinvestigates.com\)](#)

<sup>57</sup> DCLG (2014) ‘Section 106 Planning Obligations in England 2011 – 2012, [Title \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-landlords/regulatory-framework>

- **Reflect historic values of the social housing movement in lettings policies and processes** – with housing associations to reflect on barriers in systems and processes in order to take an increased amount of homelessness nominations from local authorities in their properties.

## All four UK governments

- **Invest in social housing** through better capital grant provision to increase supply.

## Social landlords

- **Adopt a more robust risk appetite** among councils to consider alternative models of funding (including private finance) to build social housing for rent.
- **Continue to focus on ‘the basics’** to ensure social landlords know the state of repair for all properties, and know the wellbeing of all tenants.
- **Housing providers to renew their focus** on ‘joining the dots’ and piecing together separate service level information for a whole system/whole household view that goes beyond the basic 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- **Ensure minimum professional educational standards** for qualified housing professionals to work in the social housing sector, based on the CIH values-led professional standards. Incorporate these into recruitment, appraisal, CPD and promotions criteria in the social housing sector, so that all employees understand the purpose of the organisation and focus on outcomes for tenants.
- **Properly listen to and understand tenants and customers** through data collection and analysis/segmentation. Find out what they need to create and maintain ‘home’.
- **More organisations to sign up to the Homes for Cathy principles**, particularly in thinking about preventing homelessness from within the sector.
- **Incorporate Harry’s Pledge in understanding what makes ‘home’** and consider the needs of people with disabilities and their carers in the design and allocation of affordable housing properties.
- **Recognise the importance of furnishing a property** to help make it a home and provide facilities to help the home ‘perform’ for residents – offer furnished social tenancies to help end furniture poverty.

We must remember that homelessness is the result of social policy failure to address poverty in the face of high rental and house prices. The solution to homelessness has to come from a social policy initiative to bring rental and house prices into equilibrium with incomes for all. This will be achieved through a mixture of providing more properly affordable state-funded housing, by raising incomes and by not capping benefits.

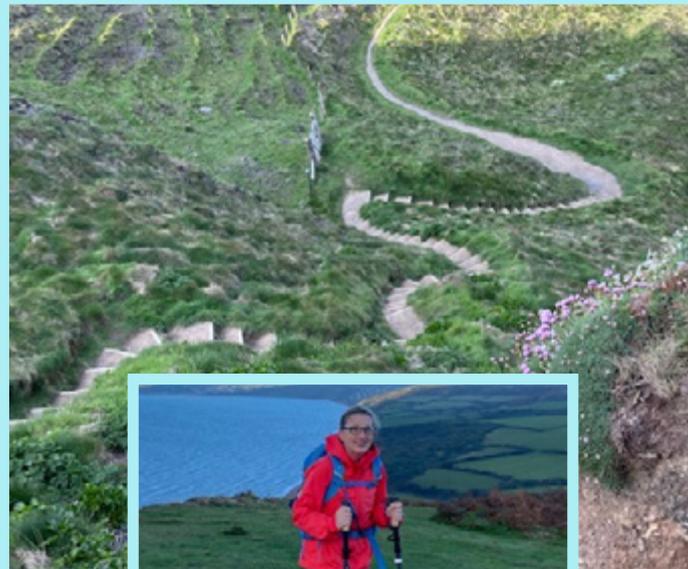
# Jo's fundraising walk



**35,000** metres of climbs and descents  
(equivalent to four Mount Everests)



**630** miles



**12** ferries



**880** gates



**436** stiles



**26,000** stairs up & down



**135,000** calories burned

**1,718,651** footsteps



**+12,000**

feet fallen at pace, in a skydive with 21 housing colleagues

**£54,108 raised**

[www.justgiving.com/campaign/homeful](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/homeful)





## Contact us

To find out more about Homeful and the housing-led approaches to homelessness featured in this report, please visit [www.homefuluk.our.dmu.ac.uk](http://www.homefuluk.our.dmu.ac.uk) or [www.cih.org/homeful](http://www.cih.org/homeful).

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