

IF TOMORROW
YOU LOSE
EVERYTHING
WHAT WILL IT
TAKE TO REBUILD
YOUR LIFE?

A PLACE TO CALL YOUR HOME



TAKE A STEP
Help end homelessness

TO **END HOMELESSNESS** WE NEED TO CAMPAIGN TO GET THE RIGHT NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES IN PLACE.

The support available to those facing homelessness also needs to be as effective as possible.

In 2010, Homeless Link outlined the steps government and charities needed to take together to end homelessness.

But faced with rising homeless numbers, service cuts and the biggest Government reforms in a generation, we decided to take stock.

In the summer of 2012, Homeless Link launched a debate to refresh the steps needed to end homelessness.

The consultation looked at a range of key issues, including how we can:

- Target services at those who are most at risk and most in need

- Make preventing homelessness the business of health, criminal justice and other agencies
- Ensure that people get the best support possible to never be homeless again
- Better deliver choice and control to clients

Debates took place at national and regional events, at focus groups and on-line. We spoke to everyone, from people who have been homeless to CEOs.

We'd like to thank the 300 agencies and individuals whose views shaped this document, and helped us to encapsulate thinking across the sector.

TAKE **A STEP**

THE JOURNEY TO ENSURE YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE CALLED HOME **WON'T BE EASY.**

It will involve both big and small steps by individuals and organisations to move us along the road to ending homelessness.

Homeless Link will continue to campaign to help improve the policies, services and attitudes that are needed to help end homelessness.

But we appeal to you to also play your part.

IF TOMORROW YOU LOSE EVERYTHING WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO REBUILD YOUR LIFE?

AN AMBITION WE CAN ALL SHARE

ANYONE CAN BECOME HOMELESS.

It harms individuals, damages communities – yet in most cases it can be prevented.

Is this acceptable in modern Britain? **If it happened to you**, what help would you expect?

OUR VISION IS OF A COUNTRY FREE OF HOMELESSNESS

where you have a place to call **home** and can expect the support you need to keep it.

TO ACHIEVE THIS AMBITION WE NEED TO...

BEING HOMELESS

Being homeless is often associated with not having a roof, but it is much more than that.

You may end up sleeping rough – but for every person on the streets there are many living out of sight in a B&B, sleeping on the sofas of friends and family, or unsafely housed in squats or other places where there is no legal right to occupy.

The consequences of homelessness are severe, no matter what form it takes.

WHAT IS A HOME?

We asked people who have been homeless what having a home means to them.

MY HOME

- It's safe, secure, private and in good quality accommodation
- I can eat, sleep and rest there, store my belongings and make it personal
- I can afford to stay
- I have a positive sense of my identity, feel I belong and am part of the community
- I've got a base from where I can achieve my dreams, build relationships and get the support I need
- I feel able to manage and overcome my problems

1

ACT FASTER TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM LOSING THEIR HOME

2

ENSURE IF YOU BECOME HOMELESS, IT'S FOR THE SHORTEST TIME POSSIBLE

3

PROVIDE THOSE WITH COMPLEX PROBLEMS WITH THE LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION AND HELP THEY NEED

4

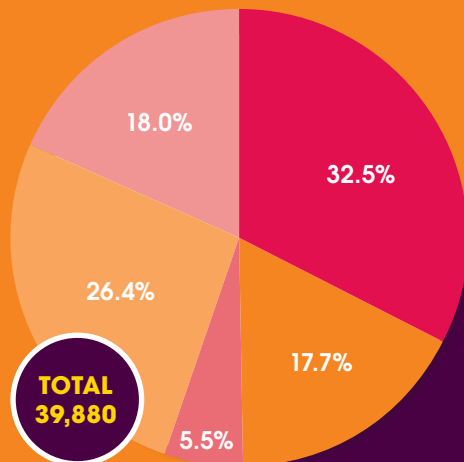
SUPPORT PEOPLE TO REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL AND AVOID HOMELESSNESS IN THE FUTURE

MANY CAUSES ONE RESULT

Let's say tomorrow, you lose everything. Your job, your family, your support network. The last thing to go is your home.

THERE IS NO SINGLE REASON WHY SOMEONE CAN END UP WITHOUT A HOME.

Personal circumstances and factors outside your control have combined with a single result. You have no place to call your own.



THROUGH THE GAPS

You have arrived at this point at the end of a long chain of other life events. Issues have compounded. You could not cope. Even if you were getting help for some of your problems, the agencies that helped you didn't act together. You have slipped through the gaps.

WIDER FORCES AT WORK

The current housing shortage affects the poorest and most vulnerable more than anyone. You soon find that the housing market will not work for you.

WHY PEOPLE LOST THEIR HOME IN 2012¹

- Friend or relatives no longer able to provide support
- Relationship breakdown
- Mortgage or rent arrears
- End of rented or tied accommodation
- Other



Jane

“I've moved around, never had a proper home. I rented but the conditions were crap. I stayed with friends mostly and was often in violent relationships. I drifted to London, got a job, which included somewhere to stay. Being made redundant ended all that. I was living on a warehouse floor until my arrest.”



The costs of deposits, rents and service charges are rising faster than incomes, reducing everyone's choices about where they can live.

This leaves you pushed to the margins of the housing market, along with others on low or no incomes. You are vulnerable to rent increases, often in poor quality accommodation, and open to exploitation.



¹ Local authority homelessness acceptances in England Q1-1-Q3 2012

THE COST OF NOT CARING

Two things are certain...

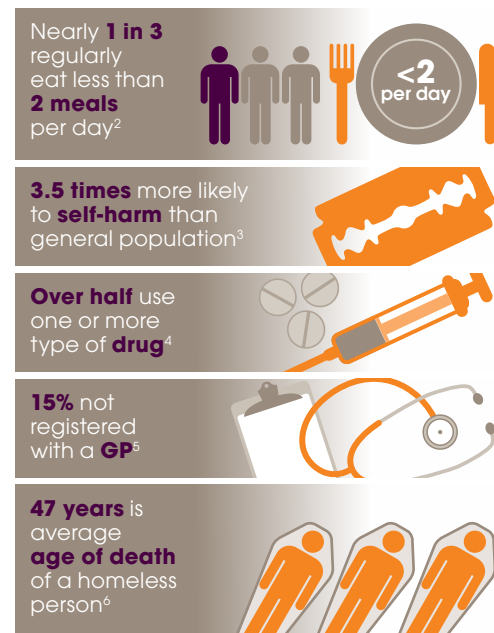
1. WITHOUT HELP, IT IS UNLIKELY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO REBUILD YOUR LIFE.

2. THE LONGER YOU ARE LEFT WITHOUT HELP, THE MORE DIFFICULT IT WILL BECOME TO GET BACK ON YOUR FEET.

TO YOU

With no place to call home, you find it difficult to get a job, maintain social networks, and access everyday services like your bank and GP.

You feel lonely and rejected. You are exposed to crime and poor health. Many in your position will turn to substance misuse as the only opportunity for escape.



TO YOUR COMMUNITY

The longer you are homeless, the more complex your problems are likely to become. These are issues that will often have a negative impact on the community around you.

We know from one study on the experiences of homeless people with complex problems, that there is a:

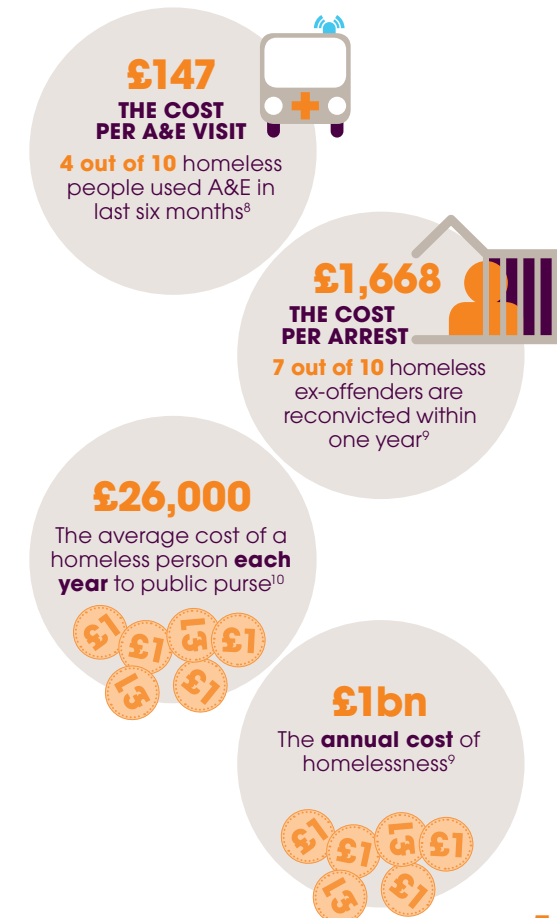


Chris

“When I lost my home, I spent the next four years on the streets. If I’d carried on it would have killed me. Every day, I was downing two dozen cans of super strength and was in and out of hospital with all sorts of problems. I needed help but more than most services could cope with. I came this close to ending it all.”

TO THE TAXPAYER

Addressing the immediate and long-term costs of homelessness, can be significant.



2, 3, 4 and 5. National Homeless Link Health Audit, Homeless Link, 2010. 6. Homelessness Kills, Crisis and University of Sheffield, 2012. 7. Understanding Complex Lives, JRF, Homeless Link, ECRC, DCLG, TSA, 2011. 8. Personal Social Services Unit, 2012. 9. National Audit Office. 10. New Economics Foundation, 2008

WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM

We've made progress in tackling homelessness. The help you get today is quite different from what was available in the 1990s.

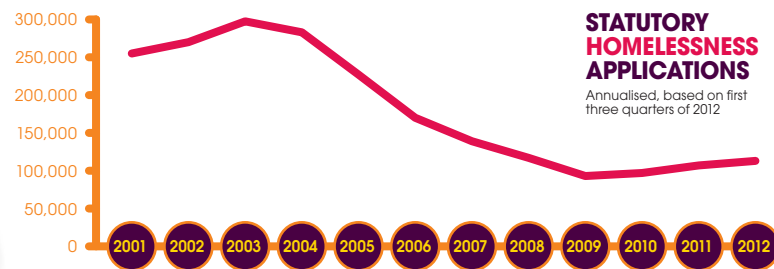
Governments have prioritised the issue, matched by funding to make a difference, while on the ground, charities and councils have put in place a vital safety net.

BUT THE ECONOMIC CRISIS HAS PUT THIS PROGRESS AT RISK

and has given rise to new barriers.

There is a housing shortage and accommodation costs continue to rise. The number of people in your situation is increasing, while funding cuts threaten a postcode lottery of support. Welfare reform and the introduction of Universal Credit could add to the problem.

However, we can prevent this from happening and learn from the positive progress that has been made.



| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2001 Government cuts rough sleeping by two thirds following Rough Sleepers Initiative investment in services. | 2002 Legislation extends statutory help to more groups. Every council required to have a homeless strategy. | 2003 £1.6bn Supporting People launched, funding housing-related support for homeless people. | 2004 Government ends long-term use of B&Bs for homeless families. | 2005 Government sets target to halve use of temporary accommodation by 2010. |
| 2006 Homeless Link launches vision and action plan to end homelessness. | 2007 £80m Places of Change programme improves hostels. | 2009 Research shows £1.6bn Supporting People investment delivers a net saving of £3.4bn. | 2010 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING NUMBERS INCREASE. Supporting People funding ringfence removed. | 2011 No Second Night Out launches in London to help tackle rough sleeping. |
| 2011 £20m Homelessness Transition Fund enables 68 areas to adopt No Second Night Out. | 2011 Day centres see 25% rise in demand; 80% of accommodation services have no empty beds; 6 out of 10 services have budgets cut. ¹¹ | 2011 £43.5m Homelessness Change Programme creates new hostel bed spaces. | 2012 StreetLink launched to help connect people sleeping rough with local services. | 2012 Social impact bond launched to help long-term rough sleepers. |

TODAY | Agencies are providing **40,000** homeless adults with vital support.¹²



¹¹. Survey of Needs and Provision, Homeless Link, 2012. ¹². 2011 Supporting People Data, Centre for Housing Research

FAST FORWARD TO 2023

IT IS TIME TO
**DISMANTLE THE
BARRIERS** THAT
PREVENT YOU
REBUILDING YOUR
LIFE, AND TO
RETHINK THE HELP
YOU RECEIVE.

THIS IS **OUR
VISION** OF THE
FUTURE SHAPE OF
**HOMELESSNESS
SUPPORT.**

STOPPING HOMELESSNESS BEFORE IT BEGINS

In 2023, it is unlikely that you will end up homeless, because you know where to seek help. You are able to get high quality local advice and the support you need to keep your accommodation.

Preventing homelessness is seen as everyone's business - and housing, health and any other agencies will work together to support you.

If you're young and relations with your family break down, mediation and early intervention services are on hand to ensure you don't end up homeless.

WITHOUT A HOME FOR THE SHORTEST TIME

If you do become homeless, it is for the shortest time possible. There is enough affordable accommodation where you live and you are helped to access it.

SUPPORT TO **REGAIN YOUR INDEPENDENCE**

In 2023, you won't be homeless for a long time, or repeatedly end up with nowhere to live. Housing and homelessness services focus on helping you find a long-term place to live, supporting you to overcome any issues.

HELP YOU **REALISE YOUR POTENTIAL**

You get the assistance you need to help realise your potential and avoid becoming homeless again

Local agencies, including the welfare system, work together to help you build the resilience, skills, support and income you need to regain your independence and avoid the crises that trigger homelessness.



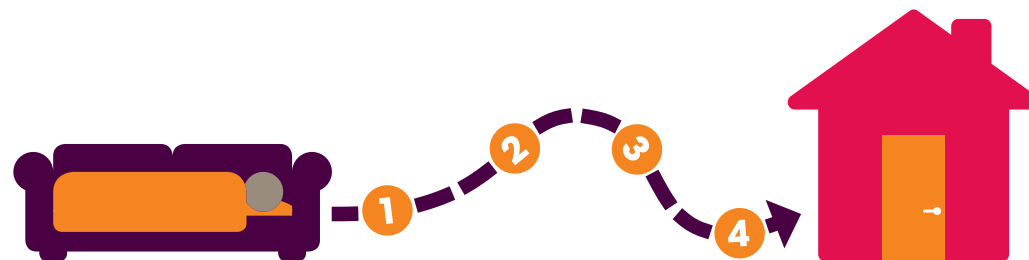
Errol

“I'm on top of things now. The way I think is different. I was out of my head most of the time while I was homeless. Getting away from that, I'm realising what I'm capable of. And I've got my flat, I keep it clean, I've had some help to get things for it. It's homely, and I can look at it and I know it's something I've made. It's a good feeling.”

CHANGED **ATTITUDES**

In 2023, you are a member of a community which understands that everyone needs a place to call home. It recognises that you need safe, secure quality accommodation from which you can build your life.

Homelessness is no longer seen as a personal failing. Its root causes are widely understood, as are the roles that institutions, systems and structures play in helping you overcome it. No matter how vulnerable you are, you are supported to realise your aspirations.



WHAT DOES 2023 LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

In 2023, you are supported to keep your home but, if you do lose it, it happens only once. You are helped to feel a part of your community.

YOU SEE YOURSELF – AND SOCIETY SEES YOU – AS A PERSON FIRST, **NOT DEFINED BY YOUR HOMELESSNESS.**



HELP FOR YOU

You will be given a clear explanation of the support, housing and income you can expect to receive if you lose your home or are at risk of becoming homeless.

As a minimum this will include:

- **An assessment of your needs** and the right support, for as long as you need it, to avoid or quickly end homelessness.
- **A tailored response**, that takes your views into account and matches your needs.

- **The support and housing** you need to move on with your life.
- **Assistance to develop the skills and resources you need** to realise your aspirations and be an active, integrated member of your community.
- **Support from services** that are professional, responsive and co-ordinated with services in other sectors.
- **A safety net** that ensures you don't live on the streets.



THE HOMELESSNESS SECTOR

The driving force behind homelessness services is to enable and empower you to achieve your potential.

You'll get advice, assistance and support from a diverse and highly skilled workforce. Professionals advocate on your behalf – helping you to get the services you need.

Homelessness agencies co-ordinate with other sectors, helping them understand and improve the work they do with you, holding them to account if it falls short.

Ending homelessness is an integral part of the housing and support framework, as it helps you achieve your aspirations. Your voice and needs are at its heart.



Khufu

“The charity were great. They helped with my CV and supported me to get my GCSE English and Maths. They also helped me apply for a small grant to start up a sports coaching business. I didn't even know there was funding like this out there. I grasped the opportunity and used everything I had learned to make a success of my business. I now employ five people.”



WIDER SUPPORT

Society sees homelessness as its challenge not your failing – and you get the space and support to rebuild.

The housing market has safeguards to ensure you are never excluded from it – not in spite of but because of your situation.

If your needs are complex, the services you use work together – across housing, substance misuse, offending, health and social care – providing co-ordinated help that is tailored to you.

You get effective support to get a job. If you cannot work, adequate welfare benefits allow you to live with dignity, and to achieve your potential with an acceptable standard of living.

You are helped to build the resilience, support networks and assets you need to manage life's traumas. If you cannot, others are there to support and empower you to determine the services necessary to meet your aspirations.

Help is available to you for as long as you need it. There is no expiry date on getting back on your feet.



NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Central government is committed to ending and preventing homelessness.

It supports your local council and other public services, such as the NHS and police, to meet local need. However, government retains ultimate responsibility for tackling homelessness and putting sufficient resources in place to do this.

Legislation exists that supports an end to homelessness. National and local government have the right policies in place.

They hold agencies to account if you are not prevented from becoming homeless, and if the support you need is not delivered on time.

GETTING THERE...

TO ENSURE YOU HAVE **A PLACE TO CALL YOUR OWN** REQUIRES CONCERTED RESPONSE AND ACTION ON 4 CORE AREAS

1 HELP TO REALISE YOUR **POTENTIAL**

2 ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, GOOD QUALITY **ACCOMMODATION**

3 CO-ORDINATED AND PERSONALISED **SUPPORT** FOR AS LONG AS YOU NEED IT

4 AN ADEQUATE **INCOME**

This won't happen overnight. We have planned a road-map for the next three, five and ten years, to set us on course towards achieving the goals that will make an end to homelessness possible.

1 POTENTIAL

| OUR GOAL | 2016 | 2018 | 2023 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SOCIAL INCLUSION You have a sense of worth and belonging. You are supported to develop relationships, friendships and to be an intergrated member of your community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your talents and aspirations are recognised and valued by everyone. You are given opportunities to develop. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can get help from a peer or mentor to achieve your aspirations. Your support plan focuses on achieving your goals as well as addressing other needs. Funding streams encourage achievement of your potential. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems and services reward your achievements and help you build your assets. |
| NO RETURN TO HOMELESSNESS Services remain in contact with you at critical points in your life. You know where to go when you experience difficulty. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible commissioning structures are in place and drive the availability of support when you need it. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are able to determine the on-going help you require. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A system is in place that encourages you to seek support when you need it, in order to realise your aspirations rather than just avert a crisis. |

2 ACCOMMODATION

| OUR GOAL | 2016 | 2018 | 2023 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IMPROVING HOUSING SUPPLY AND QUALITY You have access to genuinely affordable, safe, quality housing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All political parties make housing a priority at the next general election and commit to increased investment. If you are on a limited budget, housing costs are affordable. Local authorities monitor the security of tenure and quality of accommodation. They take action when needed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of housing is accessible to people at all stages of the housing market and on all incomes, including the provision of supported accommodation for people who need it. Local authorities have a statutory duty and powers to secure the provision of a range of housing to ensure local housing needs are being met. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new system of private rented sector regulation guarantees minimum quality standards, increases security and length of tenure, and safeguards against excessive rents. New innovative forms of tenure and housing provision, such as co-operative housing tenure, are available. More institutional investors provide long-term funding for social and other forms of affordable housing, such as supported accommodation. |
| PREVENTION AND INFORMATION When you need housing, you know where to go for the support you need to prevent you from becoming homeless. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone who seeks help from local authority housing services receives a tailored offer of advice and assistance covering housing and other support needs. Those seeking advice and assistance consistently report satisfaction with the service they get. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need help with housing, your local authority will assist you regardless of their legal duty. Your local authority housing service will link you to other services you need. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every area has a housing service that is well resourced, well-trained staff, and a culture of delivering services, not rationing them. |

3 SUPPORT

| OUR GOAL | 2016 | 2018 | 2023 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WORKING BETTER TOGETHER Health, criminal justice, substance misuse, mental health, education, social care and children services play an active and co-ordinated role in preventing homelessness. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are leaving the care of an agency, professionals identify if you are at risk of homelessness and support and accommodation exist to help. Incentives are in place to ensure this happens. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are vulnerable, agencies supporting you can be held to account if you become homeless. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies commission integrated services offering housing and homeless prevention support. |
| SUPPORT IN TIMES OF TRANSITION A range of housing and support services are available that respond to your needs and aspirations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitional and supported accommodation are valued, funded and tailored to your needs. New accommodation models are developed, with personalised support at their heart. There is a shared culture that views evictions and abandonments as preventable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government policy and funding encourage the development of groundbreaking housing models for people who require long-term supported and transitional accommodation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In every area there exists a diverse range of housing and support models, including long term supported and care options, housing first models and transitional accommodation. People spend no more than six months in emergency accommodation. Cases of people being serially excluded from accommodation no longer exist. |
| PERSONALISED SUPPORT You are offered personalised support by services and have control over the help you get. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services offer you a choice and say in the support that is available to you. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are actively involved in planning your care with the relevant agencies that are supporting you. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are empowered to navigate and manage the support you need and this is provided by a seamless range of relevant services. |
| BETTER HEALTH You are able to access high quality, personalised health care that supports you to live a healthier life. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services recognise the health inequalities you might experience and offer access to appropriate services. You get a full health assessment and receive appropriate care for any mental, physical or substance misuse problems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The commissioning of NHS services takes into account, and responds to, the inequalities and needs of people experiencing homelessness. Services are commissioned that are able to help you improve your mental and physical well-being. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every health professional recognises the role they can play in preventing homelessness and reducing health inequalities. The NHS uniformly provides services to help you live a healthier life. |
| TACKLING MIGRANT HOMELESSNESS The right support is in place to ensure that migrants do not become destitute. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services are in place that prevent migrants from becoming destitute. If you are a migrant, a quick and fair decision will be made on your immigration status. If you have become destitute and want to return home, a high quality, supported reconnection service is available in every region. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU and national integration policies include responses to people who become homeless in their host country. If you have no recourse to public funds and no option to return home, support exists to enable you to thrive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are a migrant, your contribution will be recognised and resources focussed to help you realise your potential. If you are not allowed to work, you'll get sufficient resources to live, without experiencing destitution. |

4 INCOME

| OUR GOAL | 2016 | 2018 | 2023 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING You are supported to be ready to work and have the right employment options accessible to you. Once you get a job it pays a living wage with prospects for development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you're not ready to work, incentives exist to encourage agencies to prioritise your needs. If you're placed on a welfare to work programme, you'll be offered effective pre-employment support - including life, competencies and skills training. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and support is targeted at you if you need the most help to get a job. Support will help you to keep a job and, if possible, develop your career. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support exists to help you get a job, stay in employment and develop your career. It will be provided regularly and work at a pace that is right for you. You won't be penalised for taking time to be ready for work. Your employer will pay a living wage. |
| FAIR WELFARE If you are unable to work, or getting ready for employment, there is an effective welfare safety net that covers the cost of basic necessities including housing, food and clothing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The welfare system aims to prevent homelessness. If you are vulnerable, the system will help you access housing, and provide a sufficient income to survive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are unable to work, the welfare system will support you. If you can work, the welfare system supports you to get a job and helps to reduce the risk of you becoming homeless. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The welfare system offers you tailored support and has built in safeguards to protect you if you are vulnerable. |

WHAT PEOPLE SAID...

THE VIEWS OF 300 AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS HELPED SHAPE THIS DOCUMENT.

“You’re already in a bad position and it has to get worse so you can fit into a box to get help.”

“You can end the current conveyor belt of homelessness.”

“When I look at the resources that we have between us – leadership from local authorities, technical skills and ability from providers, time, space and good will from the volunteer organisations and the experience of service users – I believe that we can become better than we have ever been at tackling homelessness.”



“What gives anyone the right to say one person deserves to be looked after over and above another?”

“Few people decide to be homeless.”

“44,000 beds are made available for people who have been failed by other services.”

“Homelessness ends, when it ends in your mind.”

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