

Breaking the Cycle:

Moving from crisis to a country free from homelessness



Scan to...
Read our policy recommendations in full

We are in a homelessness emergency.

Homelessness has reached record levels, and numbers are still rising. At the same time, expert support services are closing down, feeling the effects of decades of under-funding, cuts and overwhelming demand.

But there is hope. Every day, tens of thousands of people benefit from the invaluable support delivered by the 750+ homelessness services Homeless Link represents in all corners of the country.

Despite the current crisis, our members are united by the sincere belief that, with the right resources, we can create **a country free from homelessness.**

How can we move from crisis to a country free from homelessness?

To turn the tide on rising homelessness, **Ministers need to radically change course.** More of the same will deliver only the same cycle of crisis: rising homelessness, inflated spending, and tens of thousands of people denied a safe and secure home.

The new Homelessness Strategy is an opportunity to break this cycle. It's time *every corner of Government* puts the mission to end homelessness at the core of their work.

What needs to change?

We need both an **emergency response to spiralling rates of homelessness, and an ambitious, resourced plan to transform homelessness support within a decade.**

Fortunately, **these are two sides of the same coin.**

Ending the crisis of dwindling resource and soaring demand will empower homelessness services to focus on delivering support that works in the long term. Many of these solutions have already proven their effectiveness, such as specialist supported housing and Housing First.

Our four-point plan (overleaf) sets out a vision for unlocking the potential of the sector and moving beyond the homelessness crisis for good.

Address the emergency

Equip services to reverse rising homelessness

Transform the system

All arms of government working together to end and prevent homelessness

A country free from homelessness

Breaking us out of
a costly cycle of crisis

Breaking the Cycle:

Our four-point plan for a new approach to homelessness

1. Make ending homelessness the responsibility of *all* Government departments.

Decisions across all government departments – from health to welfare, immigration to justice – can cause or prevent homelessness. Building on the cross-departmental Homelessness Strategy, real cross-departmental accountability is required. This should include a permanent interministerial group chaired centrally, driving forward a cross-government strategy with shared accountability for delivery.

2. Build a funding system that works to end homelessness.

The Treasury needs to lead in funding a homelessness system that is both sustainable and cost-effective. This requires **a full review of all spending associated with homelessness** to establish true costs across Departments. Ministers must then create **a single ringfenced budget to prevent and end homelessness for good**.

3. Address the homelessness emergency and protect support services from closure.

Turning the tide on the homelessness emergency starts with protecting and expanding homelessness support services. Right now, we are going backwards. Housing First and specialist Supported Accommodation places are being lost. To change course, Government needs to:

- » **Ensure services are resourced** to deliver sufficient safe bed spaces, with associated support, all year round.
- » **Ensure new regulations have a low administrative and financial burden** and do not unintentionally punish good providers
- » **Relieve pressure on services** by reversing policies that drive homelessness, such as frozen Local Housing Allowance rates and the Benefit Cap.

4. Within ten years, deliver system-wide transformation to enable a country free from homelessness.

We must move towards a system that favours prevention and holds support at its core. With this new approach, we can build a country where homelessness is *rare, brief and non-recurrent*:

- » **Rare:** where all public bodies take a prevention first approach, meaning homelessness is routinely prevented through universal measures like social housing and welfare, and anyone can access support to sustain their tenancy.
- » **Brief:** where triage accommodation acts as a genuinely temporary step in support, meaning everyone has access to support and accommodation from day one and services collaborate to find the right housing option to prevent homelessness happening again.
- » **Non-recurrent:** Where long-term accommodation and support is available that matches everyone's needs, meaning a network of housing and support scaled from low-needs to long-term care, integrated with wider health and social care support.



Scan to...

Read our policy recommendations in full