

Local elections 2026: Speaking with councillors and candidates

Having conversations with elected councillors before and after the local elections is a great way to get ending homelessness on the agenda in your community.

You can find details of how to get in touch with local candidates and councillors before and after the election [in our contact guide](#). This also includes template letters you can use and adapt.

Below we have included a few suggestions on issues you can explore in your conversations with politicians and suggestions on how to have productive conversations with politicians.

Raising key issues with candidates and councillors

Below is a short selection of topics you can explore with local election candidates or successful councillors.

Beyond these suggestions, please raise any specific issues that affect your local area or service. Even if not the direct responsibilities of councillors, they can push for change on your behalf.

You will almost certainly know much more about homelessness, and certainly more about your service, than any candidate you speak to. So be confident in your approach: the below suggestions are framed as open questions but can be reworked as recommendations to put to candidates or councillors.

Funding

Key issue: Local authorities in England have recently received a three-year funding settlement, including a simplified funding pot to support efforts to end and prevent homelessness. Councillors can work to ensure that this long-term funding is passed on to organisations delivering homelessness-related services for the council.

Questions or points you can raise

- Now the council has received a three-year funding settlement, can you push for the council to pass on that same longer-term stability to those delivering services?
- In recent years costs of delivering homelessness services have risen – due to inflation, staff costs, rising demand and a wide range of factors – but the amount of funding services receive from local authorities has not kept pace and puts services at risk of closure. What will you do about this?

Please email our Campaigns Manager Stefan Donnelly on Stefan.donnelly@homelesslink.org.uk for further information or to arrange a call

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- Preventing homelessness is the best way to reduce homelessness spending. How do you see the local authority investing in prevention spending?
- Here is how our organisation's work is *saving* the local authority money.... [Add your own relevant details. But areas to explore could be reducing or preventing rough sleeping, preventing medical emergencies, reducing anti-social behaviour etc]

Supporting resources:

[Local Authority Funding settlement 2026 – 2029](#)

[Our Breaking the Cycle report on national funding challenges](#)

Implementing the National Plan to End Homelessness

Key issue: The National Plan to End Homelessness makes ending and preventing homelessness the responsibility of all arms of government, including all levels of local government. The election is an opportunity to invite local councillors to be part of delivering this plan.

Questions or points you can raise

- The National Plan to End Homelessness contains a commitment to halve long-term rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament. How do you think we could work together to make that happen in our community? Or go even further?
- Increased investment in prevention is a major focus of the National Plan to End Homelessness. What do you think the council could do, in partnership with services like mine, to prevent more homelessness in future?

Supporting resources:

[Homeless Link's summary blog on National Plan to End Homelessness](#)

[Our Breaking the Cycle briefing on what needs to be included in the Homelessness Strategy \(produced Autumn 2025, prior to strategy release\)](#)

[Full National Plan to End Homelessness \(Government website\)](#)

Record levels of rough sleeping

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Key issue: The latest Rough Sleeping Snapshot figures - released in early 2026 - are the highest on record, as are the numbers for people currently in temporary accommodation. This should focus local authorities' efforts on both supporting those who are currently rough sleeping and preventing more people being forced into rough sleeping.

Levels will vary across different areas, but even in areas where the number of people sleeping rough has reduced, this can serve as a useful starting point to discuss what is working in your area and where you can go further.

Questions or points you can raise

- How do you see the council and services like this working together to rapidly reduce the number of people forced to sleep rough in our area?
- These are the key factors which I think have driven the rising number of people sleeping rough in our area **[Add your own relevant details here. Ideally focusing on areas where the local authority can make a difference]**

Supporting resources

[Full Rough Sleeping Snapshot dataset, including breakdown by all local authorities in England](#)

[Summary briefing of local authority or authorities in your area \(request from Homeless Link\)](#)

Housing First

The National Plan to End Homelessness – the Government's strategy on homelessness, released in late 2025 – does not mandate local authorities to adopt a Housing First approach, but Housing First is highlighted as a "long-term solution which we know works" and encourages councils to explore implementing this.

Questions or points you can raise

- Given the evidenced success of Housing First schemes in pilots across the country over the past decade, would you advocate for adopting a Housing First model in our area to reduce long-term homelessness and rough sleeping?
- In my experience, the benefits of a Housing First model are.... **[Add in your own relevant details, if you have worked with Housing First or housing-led models]**

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Supporting resources

[‘More than a roof’ research report from Homeless Link documenting impact of Housing First](#)

Framing homelessness for politicians

Discussing homelessness with politicians, who may have a range of views you agree and disagree with, can feel daunting. But research conducted by Frameworks Institute and Crisis shows there are ways to speak about homelessness which both respects the humanity of those affected by homelessness and builds support for action to end and prevent homelessness.

You can [read the full guide on the Crisis website](#). But we have summarised a few top tips that may help you when communicating with politicians. These tips may also prove useful in creating content for the general public.

#1: Begin with universal values we all agree on

Politicians will likely be more receptive to your cause if you can start the conversation by reminding them we all share common values. We all agree people have the right to be treated with dignity, and a dignified life needs decent housing.

In the first instance, asking politicians to commit to protecting this essential human right helps the politician see themselves as your ally and someone who shares their values.

#2: Show there is a solution to the problem of homelessness

The extremely high levels of homelessness, and the huge pressure homelessness services are under, often encourage us to speak about a ‘crisis.’ While we cannot understate the challenge we currently face, speaking of a crisis does risk encouraging a fatalism that homelessness as an issue is too big to resolve.

Frontline services are well-placed to speak about concrete examples of when homelessness can be ended – or prevented – on a personal or small-scale level. Explain to politicians how these approaches offer hope that we genuinely can end and prevent homelessness in our communities.

#3: Focus on systemic forces rather than individual choices when explaining how people become homeless

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Research shows people better understand the complex reasons people become homeless when it's explained in terms of pressures those people experience, rather than individual choices or events. Using metaphor can be a simple way to do this without getting bogged down in the details. For example, using the metaphor of pressure we can say

“Poverty puts pressure on people. If the pressure builds up, people can be pushed into homelessness. We can help people withstand this pressure by making sure services in our area can provide the support they need when it's needed.”

In practical terms, this can look like highlighting how current processes and policies in the welfare system can play a part in causing homelessness. Or how the lack of access to mental health support can lead to people losing their tenancies.

#4: Show that people experiencing homelessness are not 'the other'

Homelessness – and in particular rough sleeping – is often assumed by the public to be something that happens to 'other' people. We can subtly challenge that preconception when speaking with politicians by highlighting the diversity of reasons why people lose their home.

We can also emphasise the humanity of those affected by homelessness by speaking not only about their current situation but also their interests, hobbies, family connections or hopes for the future.

Our choice of language can also subtly prevent others from considering homelessness as 'the other.' Crisis and Frameworks Institute produced this table of terms to embrace and terms to avoid in order to encourage people to think of those experiencing homelessness as an equal part of society.

Terms to embrace	Terms to avoid
People facing/ experiencing homelessness	The homeless/homeless people
People rough sleeping	Rough Sleepers
People more exposed to/ at higher risk of...	The vulnerable
People	Them

Let us know about the responses you get

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Please let us know if you contact any councillors, and if you get any responses or have any conversations with candidates or successful councillors.

This will help us map where there are local representatives hearing about homelessness, and so enable us to better focus our influencing and better support your efforts.

Please email stefan.donnelly@homelesslink.org.uk with details of any responses you receive.