



# **CITIES IN ACTION 2**

## **ROUGH SLEEPING**



The Key Cities Group was formed in 2013, comprising 23 of the UK's cities which play a key role in their regional economy.

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# FOREWORD

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I am delighted to introduce this report, the second in Key Cities' *Cities in Action* series but the first produced by the Cities in Action Commission, which I have the pleasure of chairing.

The Cities in Action Commission was launched by the Key Cities Group in summer 2019. We have two missions: first, to study the policy responses developed by places across the world to tackle major challenges for social justice and community well-being; and second, to make recommendations for how successful international responses can be adapted to the domestic policy context and trialled by mid-sized cities and places in the UK.

Our first report focuses on one of the greatest current challenges: how to eradicate the practice of rough sleeping. It should not be the case in the 21st century that any person believes they have no choice but to sleep outside in the open, without the protection of shelter or a locked door, but the number of rough sleepers in England alone has risen by 165 per cent overall since 2010.<sup>1</sup> This trend is not unique to England and the other UK nations:

countries all over the world are also seeing significant increases in the number of people sleeping rough. By looking beyond our own shores and learning from successful initiatives delivered by places across the globe, we as public leaders in the UK will be better equipped to develop policies and programmes that bring an end to rough sleeping in our country once and for all.

I am therefore pleased that this report contributes ideas that will complement and build on the extensive work currently being delivered by the UK and devolved governments, local authorities and cross-sector partners. Cities in the UK are already developing pioneering solutions to reduce rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness. For instance, a council housing estate built by the local authority I lead in Norwich recently won the prestigious Riba Stirling Prize. Other Key Cities members such as Doncaster, Plymouth and Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole have also received recognition for their socially responsible and highly innovative housing projects.<sup>2 3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Crisis. 31 January 2019. 'Number of rough sleepers in England soars by 165% since 2010'. Available at: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/number-of-rough-sleepers-in-england-soars-by-165-since-2010/>

<sup>2</sup> BBC. 08 October 2019. 'Riba Stirling Prize: Norwich council estate wins architecture award'. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-49970607>

<sup>3</sup> Wainwright, O. 28 October 2019. 'Meet the councils quietly building a housing revolution'. *Guardian Cities*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/oct/28/meet-the-councils-quietly-building-a-housing-revolution>

Close collaboration with national government and partners to design and pilot new projects based on international best practice will enable places in the UK to play an even greater role in the effort to end rough sleeping by 2027. I look forward to meeting with colleagues in government and partner organisations to discuss this report so that, together, we can

keep progressing our vitally important work to provide shelter and support to all who need it.

## **Cllr. Alan Waters**

*Chair of the Cities in Action  
Commission and Leader of  
Norwich City Council*



## ABOUT THE KEY CITIES

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Key Cities is the UK's fast-growing city leadership network. With a current membership of 23 cities and places spanning the length and breadth of England and Wales, and a collective population of nearly 6 million, Key Cities is the recognised democratic and authentic voice of urban Britain.

*The Key Cities: Ready to Meet the UK's Biggest Challenges* vision underlined that it is essential for UK and devolved governments to work more closely with Key Cities to achieve a united country, enhanced productivity, and a more inclusive and rebalanced economy across the UK.<sup>4</sup> *Key Cities: Cities in Action* builds on this vision by setting out how Key Cities intend to work in partnership with the UK and devolved governments to fulfil three shared ambitions: that Key Cities are the best places in the UK for people

to get on, live and grow up.<sup>5</sup>

In June 2019, Key Cities announced the launch of two commissions: the Economic Growth Commission and the Cities in Action Commission. The commissions will identify the most innovative best practice from the UK and overseas that can help deliver better economic growth and social prosperity for all communities living in the UK's mid-sized cities. They will also make proposals on how national governments can work with these places to trial domestic policy initiatives and international best practice in the UK.

The Economic Growth Commission published its first report, *Cities in Action: Workplace Automation*, in July 2019 in partnership with NLGN.<sup>6</sup> This report, *Cities in Action: Rough Sleeping*, is the first report produced by the Cities in Action Commission and NLGN.

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<sup>4</sup> Key Cities. 2018. *The Key Cities: Ready to Meet the UK's Biggest Challenges*.

<sup>5</sup> Key Cities. 2019. *Key Cities: Cities in Action*.

<sup>6</sup> Key Cities and NLGN. 2019. *Cities in Action: Workplace Automation*.



- BLACKPOOL
- BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH & POOLE
- BRADFORD
- CARLISLE
- COVENTRY
- DONCASTER
- GLOUCESTER
- HULL
- KIRKLEES
- LANCASTER
- MEDWAY
- NEWPORT
- NORWICH
- PLYMOUTH
- PORTSMOUTH
- PRESTON
- SALFORD
- SOUTHAMPTON
- SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
- SUNDERLAND
- SWANSEA
- WAKEFIELD
- WOLVERHAMPTON

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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No-one should ever be put in a position where sleeping rough feels like their only option. Yet, the number of rough sleepers in England almost doubled between 2013 and 2018 and has risen by 12 per cent in Wales in the last two years.<sup>7</sup>

Governments at all levels, alongside their cross-sector partners, have stepped up efforts to eradicate rough sleeping in recent years, but it will take time, sustained commitment and long-term investment for initiatives to have their desired impact. Complex policy challenges have no easy solutions, and there are few challenges more complex and wide-ranging than those comprised in the issue of rough sleeping.

For this reason, the Cities in Action Commission, which was launched

in summer 2019 by the Key Cities Group, decided to focus its study of international responses to prevent and eradicate rough sleeping on three themes. The themes are: support for people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough; enabling rough sleepers to shape their own support; and supply of affordable homes.

Based on the research presented in this report, the Cities in Action Commission proposes that the UK and devolved governments work with mid-sized cities and places to trial a series of policies, initiatives and collaborations with a greater place-based focus, all designed to prevent rough sleeping and support people currently sleeping rough to leave the streets for good. These should involve:

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<sup>7</sup> ONS. 17 September 2019. 'UK homelessness: 2005 to 2018'. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/ukhomelessness/2005to2018>





**A new Housing Deal for mid-sized cities and places**, working with Key Cities as pilot areas to ensure that housing policy and funding mechanisms are sufficiently robust and flexible to allow local authorities and partners to address the specific housing challenges of their area. This should include flexibility over Local Housing Allowance rates, measures to improve rough sleepers' access to housing registers, and powers to re-invest money from the sale of homes through Right to Buy into new social housing (in England).



**Housing First pilots in the UK's mid-sized cities and places**, and trials of other forms of one-stop-shop centres and escalator

accommodation that provide holistic support to help keep rough sleepers and people at risk of rough sleeping away from the streets permanently.



**Technology-centred pilots to match the needs of rough sleepers with the generosity of members of the public**, which would include working with mid-sized cities' councils, universities, partners and people with lived experience of or at risk of rough sleeping to develop ideas for new technology and funding to develop and test prototypes.

# INTRODUCTION

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Warmth, shelter and nourishment are the basic necessities of human life, all of which are denied to people who live and sleep on our streets.

Homelessness takes many forms – from people staying overnight in shelters to people surfing on friends’ sofas – but its most extreme form is rough sleeping. Across UK legislation, rough sleeping is generally defined as “a person bedding down or about to bed down in the open air, an outside shelter or other places not intended for habitation.”<sup>8</sup> In England, the estimated number of people sleeping rough on any given night has almost doubled overall in the last five years, from 2,414 in 2013 to 4,677 in 2018.<sup>9</sup> While rough sleeping has risen in every region of England between 2013 and 2018, there are regional variations in the 2017/18 figures: during this year, the number of people sleeping rough decreased by over 20 per cent in some regions (South West England and East England) and increased by over 20 per cent in others (West Midlands and North East England).<sup>10</sup> Wales has also seen an increase in the number of rough

sleepers of 12 per cent between 2016 and 2018.<sup>11</sup>

Ending rough sleeping is one of the most pressing challenges the UK faces. It is a black mark against the name of a civilised society that any person should be pushed to such desperation that sleeping on a hard, cold pavement appears to be their only option.

Launching the UK Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2018, the then Prime Minister Theresa May underlined that “nobody should have to sleep rough.”<sup>12</sup> This is the starting point for policy development to eradicate rough sleeping: recognising that no-one chooses voluntarily to bed down on the street. A person who sleeps rough for the first time often does so because they are experiencing a severe crisis – usually related to health (especially drug and alcohol misuse), financial circumstances or problems with family – and believes that they have nowhere else to go.

For governments and policy-makers, prevention involves getting people off the street – preventing them from

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. The difficulties involved in accurately counting or estimating the number of people sleeping rough are also highlighted in this ONS release.

<sup>10</sup> Homeless Link. 2019. *2018 Rough sleeping statistics: An analysis of 2018 rough sleeping counts and estimates*. p.2.

<sup>11</sup> Note that the current methodology of reporting rough sleeping in Wales was established in 2016. See: ONS. 17 September 2019. ‘UK homelessness: 2005 to 2018’. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/ukhomelessness/2005to2018>

<sup>12</sup> MHCLG. 13 August 2018. ‘Government announces £100 million plan to end rough sleeping by 2027’. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-100-million-plan-to-end-rough-sleeping-by-2027>

further physical and psychological harm. Humans are at their most vulnerable when they are asleep, and those who sleep outside in open, public spaces are exceptionally so. Rough sleepers are almost 17 times more likely to have been victims of violence in the last year compared to other members of the public, with one in four women having been sexually assaulted whilst rough sleeping, and many people who sleep rough also develop drug and/or alcohol addictions.<sup>13</sup> The longer people sleep rough, the more numerous and complex their challenges grow and the more difficult it becomes for homelessness and health services to help them rebuild their lives.

Prevention is also about ensuring that people are never in a position where they contemplate sleeping rough. Putting a roof over someone's head is not enough to prevent rough sleeping. Prevention should involve establishing a robust multi-agency support system that allows rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness to overcome the root cause(s) of their crisis and get their life back on track.

Eradicating rough sleeping is a challenge that needs to be owned by all levels of government and cross-sector partners. Housing, homelessness and health are devolved policy areas, but matters such as

welfare reform (for example, Universal Credit), which can be a major factor in the cause and prevention of rough sleeping, remain largely within the control of the UK Government for all parts of the UK. This underlines the central importance of effective cross-government collaboration in the mission to end rough sleeping.

## The UK's policy response to rough sleeping

### *UK Government*

The UK Government published its Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018, pledging to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027.<sup>14</sup>

The strategy is built on three pillars: prevention, intervention and recovery. Key commitments in the strategy include: a review of homelessness and rough sleeping legislation (such as the Vagrancy Act); supporting at risk groups, such as people leaving prison, to find suitable accommodation; funding to continue the work of the Rough Sleeping Initiative and the Somewhere Safe to Stay Pilots; and funding to set up

<sup>13</sup> Crisis. [no date]. 'Rough sleepers and complex needs'. Available at: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/rough-sleeping/rough-sleepers-and-complex-needs/>

<sup>14</sup> MHCLG. August 2018. *Rough Sleeping Strategy*. CM9685.

the UK Government's first Housing First pilots in Greater Manchester, Liverpool and the West Midlands.

A recent evaluation on the Rough Sleeping Initiative, in which the UK Government funds and works with 246 councils in England to help rough sleepers into secure accommodation and support programmes, indicated that the Initiative had reduced the number of rough sleepers by 32 per cent between March and autumn 2018.<sup>15</sup>

## Devolved Governments

The UK's devolved governments have their own plans and strategies to tackle rough sleeping, especially as key policy areas such as health and housing are devolved.

For instance, the Welsh Government is working to deliver its own two-year action plan on rough sleeping, which includes commitments to enhance support for rough sleepers

to access health, housing and social services; promote greater joint-working between partners; and improve systems to monitor the number of rough sleepers in Wales. The Welsh Government's action plan was launched in 2018 and is due for renewal early next year.<sup>16</sup> The Scottish Government is also implementing its action plan on 'Ending homelessness and rough sleeping', which includes funding for five Housing First 'pathfinder cities' in Scotland and a major emphasis on homelessness prevention.<sup>17</sup> Both the Welsh and Scottish Governments have scrapped Right to Buy in their nations in order to retain more social housing units as part of their affordable housing offer.<sup>18 19</sup>

## Local Government

In England, councils have a statutory duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to prevent homelessness and support all people requesting help who might be at risk of homelessness.<sup>20 21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> MHCLG. 12 September 2019. 'New analysis shows one third fall in number of vulnerable people sleeping rough linked to government initiative'. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-analysis-shows-one-third-fall-in-number-of-vulnerable-people-sleeping-rough-linked-to-government-initiative>

<sup>16</sup> Welsh Government. February 2018. *Rough Sleeping Action Plan*. WG34146.

<sup>17</sup> The Scottish Government. November 2018. *Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan*.

<sup>18</sup> The Scottish Government. 30 July 2016. 'Right to buy ends in Scotland'. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/news/right-to-buy-ends-in-scotland/>

<sup>19</sup> Barker, N. 09 January 2019. 'Right to Buy to end in Wales this month'. *Inside Housing*. Available at: <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/right-to-buy-to-end-in-wales-this-month-59673>

<sup>20</sup> Hudspeth, I. [no date]. 'Supporting the health needs of those who are experiencing rough sleeping'. *Local Government Association*. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/supporting-health-needs-those-who-are-experiencing-rough-sleeping>

<sup>21</sup> Note that the Act does not replace the main housing duty, which only covers applicants who are eligible, have priority need and are not homeless intentionally. See: Centrepoin. 2018. *The Homelessness Reduction Act: Will it work for young people?*. p.15.

However, there is concern among councils over their capacity to fulfil the duty: 67 per cent of respondents to NLGN's April 2019 Leadership Index survey disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have sufficient funding to fulfil the new statutory duty included in the Act.<sup>22</sup>




Duties also apply to councils in the devolved nations – for example, Welsh local authorities have duties under the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 to review homelessness in their area, develop a strategy to prevent homelessness and provide help to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.<sup>23</sup>

Councils that are local housing authorities are required by statute to have a homelessness strategy and renew it every five years. In addition to designing and implementing these strategies, they work closely with the UK or devolved governments to deliver national programmes and pilots. Councils also hold responsibility for public health and commissioning health services and programmes, such as those offering treatment to people experiencing alcohol dependence, which makes local government a crucial actor in both the delivery and coordination of local services to prevent rough sleeping.<sup>24</sup>

## The international response to rough sleeping

Rough sleeping is a challenge that all countries are addressing, not just those within the UK. The case studies featured in this report are projects led by cities and places across the world that are designed, whether directly or indirectly, to help end rough sleeping in their area. The report is not intended to present international case studies covering every policy response to rough sleeping (for example, there are no case studies in this report specifically on how other countries support rough sleepers who are migrants), but aims to highlight some examples of best practice that could usefully be adapted to the UK policy context.

The case studies are grouped into the following sections:

-  Support for people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough.
-  Enabling rough sleepers to shape their support.
-  Supply of affordable homes.

<sup>22</sup> NLGN. April 2019. *NLGN Leadership Index April 2019*. p.1.

<sup>23</sup> Welsh Local Government Association. [no date]. 'Homelessness'. Available at: <https://www.wlga.wales/homelessness>

<sup>24</sup> Case studies of how councils are supporting people with alcohol-related problems are presented in: Local Government Association. October 2019. *Helping to support and transform the lives of people affected by alcohol*.

SECTION 1

**SUPPORT FOR  
PEOPLE WHO ARE  
SLEEPING ROUGH  
OR AT RISK OF  
SLEEPING ROUGH**

## SECTION 1

### *Support for people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough*

No single organisation can end rough sleeping. The chain of events that leads to someone bedding down on a street is complex, varied and deeply personal to the individual. As national and local rough sleeping strategies all emphasise, partners and agencies working together to provide holistic support tailored to an individual's specific needs is the only way to prevent rough sleeping happening in the first place and the only way to help people into secure housing.

This is by no means a straightforward task. One in three rough sleepers are classed as having complex needs – that is, they have at least two problems.<sup>25</sup> Around 41 per cent of rough sleepers have long-term physical health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes and addictions, and 45 per cent have been diagnosed with a mental health condition.<sup>26</sup> The longer someone sleeps rough, the more likely they are to develop additional physical and mental health needs and have contact with the criminal justice system.<sup>27</sup> This places the onus on UK, devolved and

local governments and their partners to act swiftly and collaboratively to provide sustained and appropriate support to people who have experienced rough sleeping.

## Multi-agency collaboration

Previously, permanent housing would only be offered to people sleeping rough once their problems had been addressed. Given the complex nature of these problems, this policy has only served to create additional instability for rough sleepers and put pressure on health and social services. Responding to this situation, the most prominent and celebrated international innovation in holistic support for rough sleepers in recent years is Housing First. This scheme makes housing the first step to resolving problems rather than the reward. It first places rough sleepers in appropriate permanent housing and then works with them to start tackling the challenges that

<sup>25</sup> Hudspeth, I. [no date]. 'Supporting the health needs of those who are experiencing rough sleeping'. *Local Government Association*. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/supporting-health-needs-those-who-are-experiencing-rough-sleeping>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Crisis. [no date]. 'Rough sleepers and complex needs'. Available at: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/rough-sleeping/rough-sleepers-and-complex-needs/>

are the underlying causes of their homelessness. Support can include access to treatment, help to obtain benefits or assistance to sign up to locally-run skills courses.

Housing First has had outstanding success internationally. It is a key part of housing policy in Finland, the only country in the EU that is seeing homelessness rates fall. Since Housing First was launched in Finland in 2008, the number of people who are long-term homeless has fallen by over 35 per cent.<sup>28</sup> This has saved €15,000 a year in emergency healthcare, social services and the justice system for every homeless person placed in properly supported housing.<sup>29</sup> The first UK Government-backed Housing First pilots were announced in 2018, based in three of England's mayoral combined authorities, but small-scale Housing First projects have been trialled in a small number of locations in the UK since 2010.<sup>30</sup>

The success of Housing First lies in providing secure, private and suitable housing to rough sleepers to help

them prepare for independent living while addressing the root causes of their situation, such as health problems. Two-thirds of homeless people cite drug and alcohol abuse as a cause of their homelessness.<sup>31</sup>

Housing First is not the only international programme designed to help people tackle the root causes of their rough sleeping at the same time as assisting them to live more independently. For people with complex problems, being housed in a 'village' environment is an important first step to living independently, as it allows multiple agencies to work together on site to address their medical needs. The Housing is Health project in Portland (case study 1) has built specific housing developments to support recovery and life skills of people who have complex medical needs and are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Social Bite Village in Edinburgh and the Ozanam House in Melbourne are further examples of one-stop-shop approaches to placing housing and wide-ranging recovery support in one development.<sup>32 33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Henley, J. 03 June 2019. 'It's a miracle': Helsinki's radical solution to homelessness'. *Guardian Cities*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/jun/03/its-a-miracle-helsinki-radical-solution-to-homelessness>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> For more information on the small-scale pilots, see: House of Commons Library. 17 July 2018. *Housing First: Tackling homelessness for those with complex needs*. Briefing Paper Number 08368. pp.12-17.

<sup>31</sup> Crisis. [no date]. 'Drugs and alcohol'. Available at: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/health-and-wellbeing/drugs-and-alcohol/>

<sup>32</sup> BBC. 17 May 2018. 'Social Bite homeless village launches in capital'. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-44146641>

<sup>33</sup> Michael, L. 01 July 2019. 'Australia's largest homelessness centre offers new approach'. *Pro Bono Australia*. Available at: <https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2019/07/australias-largest-homelessness-centre-offers-new-approach/>



# CASE STUDY 1

## Housing is Health

### *Portland, Oregon, USA*

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In 2016, the not-for-profit organisation Central City Concern (CCC) launched the 'Housing for Health' initiative in Portland. Supported by \$9 million from the city's housing bureau, and a combined \$21.5 million donation from six major health providers, CCC's mission was to build affordable housing units for residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have complex medical needs.<sup>34</sup>

In Portland, nearly 1,900 people sleep outside each night.<sup>35</sup> Recognising the strong links between stable accommodation and good health, and acknowledging the shortage of

affordable housing supply in Portland, CCC built three housing developments in areas of the city where people on low incomes are at risk of displacement from rapid gentrification.

The housing developments collectively host 379 affordable units.<sup>36</sup> The third development, which opened its doors in July 2019, contains 51 units of respite care for people discharged from hospital with nowhere to go, 80 units of alcohol- and drug-free transitional housing and 34 permanent homes, as well as a healthcare clinic and pharmacy.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Flaccus, G. 23 September 2016. '6 Portland health providers give \$21.5m for homeless housing'. *The Associated Press*. Available at: <https://www.apnews.com/f4c66b4b23f347e6b1e118b1b3fd8d1c>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Central City Concern. [no date]. 'Housing is Health'. Available at: <https://www.centralcityconcern.org/housingishealth>

<sup>37</sup> Hayes, E. 09.07.2019. 'Health organizations open new clinic-housing project in East Portland'. *Portland Business Journal*. Available at: <https://www.bizjournals.com/portland/news/2019/07/09/health-organizations-open-new-clinic-housing.html>

## Community-led prevention

Governments and cross-sector partners are the formal providers of rough sleeping prevention and support services. But sometimes, no matter their age, people feel uncomfortable asking for help from formal service providers – whether because they feel intimidated or because they lack trust in institutions. It is often easier for people to trust in and seek support from their own community. Formal service providers working collaboratively with communities to prevent rough sleeping, especially among young people, is an under-used approach in the UK.

As the proverb goes, it takes a village to raise a child. It is the community of that ‘village’ who knows the child best and can spot early warning signs that a child or young person is in trouble. Childhood trauma and deprivation, such as physical abuse or neglect, violence between parents and serious problems at school, are strong predictors of experience of extreme forms of homelessness in adults.<sup>38</sup> No prevention or early intervention policy on homelessness can work without directly addressing this.

Youth Reconnect in Niagara (see case study 2) is an example of a community initiative that has had real success preventing young people from sleeping rough and entering a cycle of chronic homelessness. It demonstrates that community ownership of a local asset (in this case, a drop-in centre for homeless young people) encourages the community to be inventive and resourceful, enabling early intervention through trust and the early identification of need.<sup>39</sup>

Youth Reconnect also highlights the importance of the local education system in identifying young people at risk of homelessness and giving them the opportunities to get their life back on track at an early age. Exclusion from school is one of the main causes of homelessness in young people as it makes it difficult for young people to access support for health or problems at home and obtain qualifications to find employment in later life.<sup>40</sup> Poor attendance or exclusion from school should be an immediate trigger for public services and communities to work closely together to identify and resolve the needs of the affected young people before they develop more complex and long-term problems.

<sup>38</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Bramely, G., and Johnsen, S. 2013. ‘Pathways into multiple exclusion homelessness in seven UK cities’. *Urban Studies*. 50(1):148-168. p.162.

<sup>39</sup> See NLGN. September 2019. *From tiny acorns: Communities shaping the future of children’s services*.

<sup>40</sup> Centrepoin. [no date]. ‘Youth homelessness: The causes’. Available at: <https://centrepoin.org.uk/youth-homelessness/>

## CASE STUDY 2

# Youth Reconnect

### *Niagara, Canada*

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Youth Reconnect, a programme that helps homeless young people to stay in their community and in school, was set up by a community organisation named the RAFT in St Catharines, Niagara, in 2008.

The RAFT was originally launched in St Catharines in 1994 as a drop-in centre for homeless young people.<sup>41</sup> In the 2000s, the RAFT moved to larger premises so that it could offer beds to young people who needed somewhere to stay overnight, but soon became overwhelmed by demand. Rather than move premises again or add more beds, the RAFT decided to devote more attention to preventing youth homelessness and analysing data to understand more about the young people who were using their services.

The RAFT discovered that the majority of young people they were helping came from Niagara communities outside St Catharines that did not have overnight shelters. They also found that most of the young people were school-aged, but had dropped out of high school because they were homeless. Through Youth Reconnect, the RAFT partnered with high schools across Niagara and helped to connect the young people with housing and support services in their own community.

Since Youth Reconnect began in 2008, the RAFT has experienced a 70 per cent reduction in need for their shelter beds. Whereas just under 500 young people were using the shelter beds in 2008, only 141 young people used them in 2018.<sup>42</sup> The success of Youth Reconnect has led to its recognition as a model of best practice nationally.

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<sup>41</sup> RAFT. [no date]. 'What is the RAFT?'. Available at: <http://www.theraft.ca/site/about>

<sup>42</sup> Cheevers, M. 27 June 2019. 'RAFT works to curb the trend of youth homelessness in Niagara'. *NiagaraThisWeek.com*. Available at: <https://www.niagarathisweek.com/news-story/9453573-raft-works-to-curb-the-trend-of-youth-homelessness-in-niagara/>

SECTION 2

**ENABLING ROUGH  
SLEEPERS TO  
SHAPE THEIR  
SUPPORT**

## SECTION 2

### *Enabling rough sleepers to shape their support*

An important element of an independent lifestyle is freedom of choice: choosing where to live, what to eat, and how to spend money and free time. For people and organisations seeking to end rough sleeping, one of the major challenges they face is the strong reluctance of some rough sleepers to receive support. For some, sleeping rough makes them feel like they have control over how they lead their lives, and they fear the possibility that accepting support and entering the 'system' will force them to give up some of that control.

Historically, public service providers have tended to adopt a paternalistic 'we know best' stance to people who use their services.<sup>43</sup> For providers of services to support rough sleepers or people at risk of rough sleeping, there is a fine balance between overwhelming vulnerable people with too much choice and 'micro-managing' their care to the extent that they

becoming overly dependent on or resentful of public institutions. Housing First is an example of a scheme that strikes the right balance: providing homeless people with their own, appropriate permanent housing solution so that they can learn to live independently while ensuring that they have access to the support services they need to assist their recovery.

Many councils and service providers are already working with people who are homeless, have been homeless or are at risk of homelessness to co-design and give feedback on the programmes intended to help them. Technological innovation is also offering new platforms to make their voices heard. With the assistance of technology, it is possible to give rough sleepers who are reluctant to move away from the streets the opportunity to shape their support whilst bringing them into closer contact with service providers who stand ready to help them if needed.

<sup>43</sup> See NLGN. February 2019. *The Community Paradigm: Why public services need radical change and how it can be achieved.*

## Community mobilisation

Technology is already in use in the UK to assist work to prevent rough sleeping: for example, StreetLink is helping members of the public to alert relevant authorities when they see a person who might be sleeping rough. Outside the UK, technology is being developed to encourage other forms of community mobilisation in support of rough sleepers.

One example is the WeCount app (see case study 3), developed and trialled in Seattle, where homeless people can make anonymous requests for items they need and the local community can help them by dropping items off at locations in the city that offer support to the

homeless. This shifts the role of homelessness service providers to facilitators of donations rather than requesters, and also allows frontline staff to make contact with rough sleepers who are collecting their items and help them access shelters and other services. In this way, they can start building relationships of trust with long-term rough sleepers.

The risk with using an app like WeCount is that allowing long-term rough sleepers to ask for donations might only assist them to feel more comfortable living on the street. However, the WeCount app invites homeless people and members of the community to select requests/donations from a pre-set list, so the list would need to ensure that clothes or items of food could be requested but not, for example, tents or sleeping bags.



## CASE STUDY 3

### WeCount app

#### *Seattle, USA*

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Seattle-based not-for-profit WeCount has set up a free online digital platform that matches the material needs of homeless people with donations from other members of the public.

The WeCount app requires all users to create an account. As 90 per cent of Seattle's homeless population has a way to access the Internet, this is not a major barrier, and last names are not requested so that people can use the app anonymously with their privacy respected.<sup>44</sup> Once signed up, homeless people can use the app to choose what they need from a list of around 200 items, such as shoes and personal hygiene products. The would-be donors also sign up and select from the same list which products they are willing to provide.

WeCount has partnered with 30 locations in Seattle, including shelters, churches and a city government building, to serve as supervised drop-off points for donations that can be labelled and picked up by the homeless person who requested them. Volunteers at the 30 partner locations are also able to help connect homeless people with local services and members of the public with other donation or volunteering opportunities should they wish.<sup>45</sup>

In the 90 days following its launch in June 2016, 800 people joined the app and more than 150 items were donated.<sup>46</sup> WeCount is now exploring new uses for the app, such as potentially enabling the donor to meet and give their item directly to the individual who asked for it.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Stiffler, L. 1 June 2016. 'New 'WeCount' app enables direct donations of essential items to homeless people'. *GeekWire*. Available at: <https://www.geekwire.com/2016/wecount-app-enables-direct-donations-essential-items-homeless-people/>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Matthews, T. February 2017. 'How Some Visionary Seattleites are Helping the Homeless'. *Seattle Magazine*. Available at: <https://www.seattlemag.com/how-some-visionary-seattleites-are-helping-homeless>

<sup>47</sup> Hemmings, J. 12 September 2018. 'How Creating A Diverse Culture Can Help Your Company Thrive'. *Thrive Global*. Available at: <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/how-creating-a-diverse-culture-can-help-your-company-thrive/>



## Contactless payment mechanisms

Technology is also playing an important role in enabling members of the public to donate money to rough sleepers. Another Seattle-based app, called Samaritans, gives homeless people a 'beacon' to allow smartphone users to read their story and donate money to them that can be used at Samaritan partner shops, although not for alcohol.<sup>48</sup>

A similar, but more privacy-enabling initiative, is the contactless payment jacket developed by Amsterdam start-up N=5 (see case study 4). This provides a warm jacket to people living on the street with facility for passers-by to make a contactless payment to the wearer of €1 that can be used at partner businesses that provide food and shelter. There is real potential to link this with other contactless donation technology, such as Tap for Change, to allow rough sleepers to put together 'savings' that they can spend on discounted local services, such as skills courses.

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<sup>48</sup> Greenstone, S. 05 May 2018. 'Homeless? This Seattle start-up has an app for that'. *The Seattle Times*. Available at: <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/homeless-seattle-startup-has-an-app-for-that/>



# CASE STUDY 4

## Helping Heart Contactless Jacket

### *Amsterdam, Netherlands*

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Created by Dutch media company, N=5, the Helping Heart jacket helps to raise money for people sleeping rough from members of the public who do not carry change with them. The jacket, which is designed to be worn by a homeless person, contains thick padding for warmth and a contactless payment symbol – a ‘Helping Heart’ – on its front. Members of the public can tap their card on the symbol three times a day for a maximum of €1 at a time.<sup>49</sup>

The homeless person can use their donations at partner businesses that offer food and shelter. The technology does not allow them to take out their donations as cash.

N=5 worked with homeless people to trial the jacket, which has received positive feedback from the homeless community.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> BBC Radio 5 live. 10 January 2017. ‘Homeless people trial contactless payments jacket’. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04p2vlc>

<sup>50</sup> Zatat, N. 02 January 2017. ‘This Amsterdam company created a contactless payment jacket that could revolutionise how you give money to the homeless’. *Indy100*. Available at: <https://www.indy100.com/article/amsterdam-company-contactless-payment-social-experiment-homeless-7505446>

SECTION 3  
**SUPPLY OF  
AFFORDABLE  
HOMES**

## SECTION 3

### *Supply of affordable homes*

The success of programmes like Housing First is reliant on there being an adequate supply of affordable housing. That is not the case in Great Britain, where 4.7 million households currently have housing needs that are not being met.<sup>51</sup> Research published by the National Housing Federation and Crisis in 2018 estimates that, in order to solve the ‘housing crisis’ in England alone, 340,000 homes will need to be built every year until 2031, with 145,000 of these homes needing to be affordable.<sup>52</sup>

A low supply of available social housing is cited as an important element of the affordable housing crisis. The UK Government removed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) cap in 2018 to give some councils more freedom to build new social housing, but there is currently

concern in the local government sector that the recent 1 per cent interest rate rise to borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board will hinder its housebuilding plans.<sup>53</sup> The Welsh and Scottish Governments have ended Right to Buy to enable councils in Wales and Scotland to use HRA flexibilities to build and retain more social housing for people on low incomes.

Ending rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness will not be possible without homes. For the UK Government to achieve its goal to end rough sleeping by 2027, it cannot wait for new houses to be built. There needs to be greater innovation in how affordable houses are built and how existing stock can be made more affordable.

<sup>51</sup> Bramley, G. 21 May 2018. ‘How much housing do we need?’. *I-Sphere*. Institute for Social Policy, Housing, Equality Research. Heriot-Watt University. Available at: <https://www.i-sphere.hw.ac.uk/how-much-housing-do-we-need/>

<sup>52</sup> Barker, N. 18 May 2018. ‘England needs 340,000 new homes a year, says NHF’. *Inside Housing*. Available at: <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/england-needs-340000-new-homes-a-year-says-nhf-56355>

<sup>53</sup> Barker, N. 21 October 2019. ‘Treasury mulls Public Works Loan Board discounts for housing schemes’. *Inside Housing*. Available at: <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/treasury-mulls-public-works-loan-board-discounts-for-housing-schemes-63763>



## Building more affordable homes

It is crucial for the successful implementation of Housing First and other programmes that rough sleepers are placed in secure, private and suitable affordable housing. Case study 1 highlighted the importance of ensuring the availability of ‘escalator accommodation’ – housing that is appropriate for a vulnerable person’s needs at all stages of their transition to a more healthy, independent and stable lifestyle.

Escalator accommodation should be increased in supply in the short- as well as long-term. In Melbourne, a community agency has used vacant public land to build ‘tiny homes’ – basic accommodation offered to tenants at generous social rent to give residents a home and help them be part of a ‘tiny homes’ community (see case study 5).

New methods of construction and technology are being used across the world to accelerate housebuilding. 3D printed houses are being developed in San Francisco, costing only \$4,000 per unit to make, and in Bogota an organisation called Conceptos Plasticos has used recycled plastic to build houses and shelters for low-income families.<sup>54 55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Bendix, A. 12 March 2019. ‘These 3D-printed homes can be built for less than \$4,000 in just 24 hours’. *Business Insider*. Available at: <https://www.businessinsider.com/3d-homes-that-take-24-hours-and-less-than-4000-to-print-2018-9?r=US&IR=T>

<sup>55</sup> Davidson, L. 28 November 2016. ‘Meet the entrepreneur solving homelessness and pollution at the same time’. *The Telegraph*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/property/abroad/meet-entrepreneur-solving-pollution-homelessness-time/>

## CASE STUDY 5

### Tiny homes

#### *Melbourne, Australia*

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Community agency, Launch Housing, has started a project to build 'tiny homes' on unused government land. The tiny homes are designed for the long-term homeless, enabling them to live in a permanent place of their own and start to get their lives back on track.

Launch Housing and the Victorian Property Fund are investing \$9 million AUD into the project. Their mission is to build 57 tiny homes, of which six are already in place in

Melbourne's inner west. The homes are 20 square metres inside, with nine square metres of front and back balconies, and based on 60-90 square metres of land. The six tiny homes constructed to date are designed to be pet-friendly and have been built as a 'small community' connected to a large suburban neighbourhood.

Tiny homes tenants pay a social rent of a maximum 30 per cent of their income.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Sinclair, H. 06 August 2019. "Tiny homes' a potential solution to help get homeless people off the streets'. *SBS News*. Available at: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/tiny-homes-a-potential-solution-to-help-get-homeless-people-off-the-streets>

## Freeing up more affordable homes in existing stock

Housebuilding projects require time, suitable land and money. Some cities lack one or more of these factors. In this case, it is important that city governments examine how to make their existing housing stock more affordable for both renters and buyers.

Places across the world are employing a variety of strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing in their existing stock, tailored according to their unique housing market situation. For example, a Tokyo-based charity has

achieved recognition for converting some of Japan's 9 million vacant homes into affordable housing for single mothers (216,186 dwellings were classified as long-term vacant in England and nearly 30,000 homes were empty in Wales in 2018, so vacant housing is a much larger problem in Japan than in the UK).<sup>57 58</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Another example is the Amsterdam government's proposal to ban the buy-to-let of new-build homes on city land to stop investors pricing people on low to middle incomes out of affordable home ownership.<sup>60</sup>

But the main concern for cities is the amount of income renters are paying for their accommodation. On average, private renters in England spend 40 per cent of their income on housing costs, with this figure rising to over 75 per cent for people on the lowest incomes.<sup>61</sup> The Local Housing Allowance freeze until 2020 adds

<sup>57</sup> Haines, G. 22 July 2019. 'Japanese charity turns empty homes into housing for single mothers'. *Positive News*. Available at: <https://www.positive.news/society/japanese-charity-turns-empty-homes-into-housing-for-single-mothers/>

<sup>58</sup> MHCLG. 11 March 2019 [last updated]. 'Table 615: vacant dwellings by local authority district: England, from 2004.' Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

<sup>59</sup> Davies, D. 10 October 2019. 'Empty homes: cost to councils 'a massive risk''. *BBC Wales*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-49985647>

<sup>60</sup> Boztas, S. 18 March 2019. 'Buyer beware: Amsterdam seeks to ban buy-to-let on newbuild homes'. *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/18/buyer-beware-amsterdam-seeks-to-ban-buy-to-let-on-newbuild-homes>

<sup>61</sup> Weekes, T. 03 August 2018. 'Flatlining wages, surging rents and a national affordability crisis'. *Shelter blog*. Available at: <https://blog.shelter.org.uk/2018/08/flatlining-wages-surging-rents-and-a-national-affordability-crisis/>

to the difficulties of paying housing costs for low-income households.<sup>62</sup> Rent as a percentage of annual earnings is above 30 per cent across the South of England and the East Midlands.<sup>63</sup>

Major cities across the world are developing initiatives to address the problems associated with rising housing costs. For instance, Barcelona's government has established a Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER), which works with other municipal services to help families in emergency housing situations and mediate in eviction cases. The UCER supported 7,000 people, including 2,377 children, at risk of residential exclusion in 2017 and has played an important role in reducing the number of evictions in Barcelona by 22 per cent since 2014.<sup>64</sup>

Another initiative that is being considered or adopted by cities is rent controls. In October 2019, Berlin's state government ratified a new rent control law that places a cap on rents and allows renters to sue their landlord if their rent is above the limit set out in a 'rent table' (see case study 6). The impact of rent controls is contentious – many housing researchers and policy-makers believe they encourage gentrification and favour older rather than newer tenants.<sup>65</sup> Research on the impact of a rent control law introduced in Germany in 2015 found that it has been successful in reducing rents in areas where rents had risen significantly over a number of years.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> BBC. 11 May 2018. 'Reality check: how much do we spend on rent?'. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-44046392>

<sup>64</sup> Barcelona City Council. 24 April 2018. 'Home evictions drop as more support is given to high risks cases'. Available at: [https://www.barcelona.cat/culturapopular/en/noticia/home-evictions-drop-as-more-support-is-given-to-high-risks-cases\\_646445](https://www.barcelona.cat/culturapopular/en/noticia/home-evictions-drop-as-more-support-is-given-to-high-risks-cases_646445)

<sup>65</sup> See BBC. 03 February 2019. 'Rent control: does it work?'. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47028342>

<sup>66</sup> The Local. 14 February 2018. 'Germany's controversial rent law works after all (at least in central Berlin)'. Available at: <https://www.thelocal.de/20180214/controversial-rent-control-law-does-work-after-all>

# CASE STUDY 6

## Rent controls

### *Berlin, Germany*

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The Berlin state government has agreed a new rent control law that will see almost all rents in the city frozen for the next five years and capped at €9.80 per square meter.<sup>67</sup> The law also gives tenants the right to sue their landlord if their rent is above the limit set out in a 'rent table' and prohibits landlords from charging a new tenant more than their previous tenant. The law is expected to come into effect in January 2020.

Around three-quarters of apartments in Berlin are expected to be covered by the new law. Exceptions include buildings constructed after 2014 and government-owned social housing, the latter of which is subject to its own rent controls.

The law is a response to significant rental increases and gentrification in Berlin in recent years. Last year's Global Residential Cities Index found that Berlin's rents were rising faster than any other city in the world, rising by 21 per cent between 2017 and 2018.<sup>68</sup> A study by Mietenwatch found that only 4.4 per cent of the apartments on Berlin's rental market are affordable for an individual earning the city's average net monthly income.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Knight, B. 23 October 2019. 'Berlin's new rent freeze: How it compares globally'. *Deutsche Welle*. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/berlins-new-rent-freeze-how-it-compares-globally/a-50937652>

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.



**ROUGH SLEEPING  
AND THE UK'S  
MID-SIZED CITIES**

## ROUGH SLEEPING AND THE UK'S MID-SIZED CITIES

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Policy-makers generally talk about the UK's housing crisis as a national challenge, but in reality it is made up of smaller housing crises specific to the environment and characteristics of places throughout the country. National housing and homelessness policy can only have limited success based on a one-size-fits-all approach. It must be designed with flexibility, facilitating responsiveness and collaboration between local partners to make decisions based on what they know their local housing market and public services require.

The experience of mid-sized cities and places illustrates the impossibility of developing a national policy on housing or homelessness that will work in all parts of the country. For instance, the Key Cities Group has a membership of 23 mid-sized cities and places throughout England and Wales sharing similar population numbers, economies and socio-economic challenges and opportunities. But their housing markets are all very different. The highest median monthly private

sector rent in England's Key Cities between April 2018 and March 2019 was £853 (Christchurch), more than double the lowest median rent of £410 (Kingston-upon-Hull).<sup>70</sup> Some, but not all, Key Cities are struggling with Local Housing Allowance rates being too high, which incentivises private landlords to buy and rent out affordable housing stock.<sup>71</sup> Some Key Cities have land available for housebuilding, whereas others have no land available and must concentrate on making their existing stock more affordable.

For UK and devolved governments, mid-sized cities are an important partner to develop place-sensitive housing and homelessness solutions to end rough sleeping. The UK Government is already working closely with individual Key Cities to address place-based challenges, but working in partnership with the Key Cities network will allow for the testing of pilots to determine whether policies can be easily adapted by local partners to meet the specific needs of their area before wider

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<sup>70</sup> Figures taken from Valuation Office Agency. 20 June 2019. 'Private rental market summary statistics: April 2018 to March 2019'. All tables: Table 2.7. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-april-2018-to-march-2019>

<sup>71</sup> Key Cities. February 2019. *Cities in Action*. p.41.

national rollout.<sup>72</sup> Working with the Key Cities network will also allow national government to assess the impact of pilots on surrounding areas and other mid-sized cities. This will make sure that policy flexibility on local connection qualifying criteria, for example, does not negatively affect other places.

Based on the research and case studies featured in this report, the Cities in Action Commission proposes that the UK and devolved governments include the following as part of the place-based pilots to eradicate rough sleeping:



### **A new Housing Deal for mid-sized cities and places,**

working with Key Cities as pilot areas to ensure that housing policy and funding mechanisms are sufficiently robust, sustainable and flexible to allow local authorities and partners to address the specific housing challenges of their area. This would see the UK Government, Homes England and the Welsh Government working with Key Cities and partners in the first instance to study the barriers to enabling affordable housing that

are faced by different mid-sized cities and places in different parts of the country. The evidence from this study would inform the drafting of a new kind of Housing Deal that gives mid-sized cities the powers they need to make existing housing stock more affordable and accessible to local people as well as build more housing of all tenures. This should include flexibility over Local Housing Allowance rates, measures to improve rough sleepers' access to housing registers, and powers to re-invest money from the sale of homes through Right to Buy into new social housing (in England).<sup>73</sup> Through the development of the Housing Deal agreement, the UK and Welsh Governments and Key Cities should explore working together to design and test initiatives that allows housing associations to apply for long-term funding to build more affordable and social housing.<sup>74</sup>



**Housing First pilots in the UK's mid-sized cities and places,** which would also involve projects to build

<sup>72</sup> For example, the UK Government highlighted its work with Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole, Medway and Southend-on-Sea on the Rough Sleeping Initiative in MHCLG. August 2018. *Rough Sleeping Strategy*. CM9685. p.42.

<sup>73</sup> These proposals were first made in Key Cities. February 2019. *Cities in Action*. p.43.

<sup>74</sup> As first proposed by the former Prime Minister, Theresa May. See: Evans, J. and Hughes, L. 19 September 2018. 'UK housing associations welcome 10-year funding deals'. *FT*. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/cd0fdd1a-bbe4-11e8-8274-55b72926558f>

one-stop-shop centres and escalator accommodation that provide holistic support to help keep rough sleepers and people at risk of rough sleeping away from the streets permanently. The delivery of one-stop-shop centres and escalator accommodation would be managed by a housing delivery vehicle in each city that is set up as a not-for-profit and can attract investment for projects from non-governmental bodies (such as health providers, as happened in Portland in case study 1). The vehicle would be the main coordinator of collaboration between national government, local government, cross-sector providers of homelessness services and communities in the city to ensure that accommodation earmarked for the Housing First pilots is secure, accessible, appropriate and allocated to people who would benefit most from the scheme. With cities around the world using modern methods of construction (MMC) to build small homes quickly, escalator accommodation built for the Housing First pilots could be supported financially by the Accelerated Construction

Programme in England and by a similar grant for MMC housing projects set up in Wales.



**Technology-centred pilots to match the needs of rough sleepers with the generosity of members of the public**, which would

include working with mid-sized cities' councils, universities, partners, communities and people with lived experience of or at risk of rough sleeping to develop ideas for new technology and funding to develop and test prototypes. Ideas would be collected and prototypes generated by a social innovation R&D centre based in a Key City that would form part of a wider network of R&D centres based in mid-sized cities to reduce large regional disparities in business innovation in the UK.<sup>75</sup> The technology pilots could be aligned with Future Career Pilots and increased powers for mid-sized cities to focus Adult Education Budget spend locally to give all city residents access to training that develops their coding skills, enabling them to be the architects of digital innovation for social outcomes in future.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> BEIS. 2018. *The UK Innovation Survey: Headline findings 2014 to 2016*.

<sup>76</sup> See proposals on skills policy made by Key Cities' Economic Growth Commission in: Key Cities and NLGN. July 2019. *Cities in Action: Workplace Automation*. pp. 34-5.

# **CONCLUSION**

## CONCLUSION

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Preventing and eradicating rough sleeping are not achieved by simply putting a roof over someone's head. They also require that the root causes leading to a person bedding down on the street are properly and sensitively addressed, so that the individual sleeping rough or at risk of rough sleeping receives appropriate and secure long-term housing, health and welfare support tailored to their needs. This principle is at the heart of the large amount of work already being delivered by all levels of government and cross-sector partners in the UK, but there will always be space for more ideas on how to tackle rough sleeping until the practice finally becomes a thing of the past.

Most of the UK's main economic and social challenges are not unique to these isles. Rough sleeping takes place in every country on the planet, and every country is busily coming up with measures to resolve the issue. Taking inspiration from

international best practice is not a new idea in homelessness policy: Housing First, a highly successful scheme that has been adopted in many places, including some parts of the UK, was first developed in New York.<sup>77</sup> This report sheds light on how cities across the world are developing new ideas and schemes that, whether directly or indirectly, will help them fulfil their ambition to end rough sleeping. With the backing of long-term and sustainable funding to help them succeed, many of these schemes could be adapted and trialled here in the UK.

A further lesson to be drawn from this report is that efforts to prevent and eradicate rough sleeping cannot work under a one-size-fits-all national policy approach. The UK Government recognises this in its Rough Sleeping Strategy, noting that "rough sleeping is an issue that impacts different people and different places in different ways".<sup>78</sup> But this recognition is not fully

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<sup>77</sup> Housing First England. [no date]. 'About Housing First'. Available at: <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/about-housing-first>

<sup>78</sup> MHCLG. August 2018. *Rough Sleeping Strategy*. CM9685. p.9.

reflected in policy development. For example, housing markets are highly place-based in their challenges and opportunities (see page 34), yet local authorities must operate under a largely national housing policy framework with limited flexibility to make adjustments for their own places. The case studies highlighted in this report demonstrate the value of giving cities more autonomy to align their housing, health and social services with the needs of their population, working in close collaboration with local partners and communities to enable them to develop their own schemes to

support rough sleepers in their area. UK and devolved governments are currently grappling with some of the most important and complex economic, social and environmental challenges the country has ever faced – not least preparing for and implementing Brexit. When solutions to these challenges are best developed and implemented at place level, as is the case with rough sleeping, it is imperative that city governments play a more prominent role. UK and devolved governments working in close partnership with cities offers the best chance to end rough sleeping in our country by 2027.



**KEY**  
**CITIES**  
UNLOCKING  
POTENTIAL

**N L G N**