



FUNDAMENTUM

PROPERTY

Homelessness; what's the current situation in the UK?

19 October 2018

World Homeless Day takes place each year on the 10 October; a campaign which aims to raise awareness of the problems faced by homeless people, but also to provide opportunities for communities to understand, and help those experiencing homelessness. Political attention on the topic has increased over the last year, in part a response to the ongoing rise in official estimated rough sleeper numbers, with the national total now up by 169% since 2010.

Statistics on those without a home has recently made headlines, due to the harsh reality of the situation for those in the UK. Homeless charity Centrepont, recently stated that the number of calls from adults aged 16 to 24, has risen by 20%. Furthermore, this year nearly 58,000 families were accepted as homeless by their local councils. That's the highest it has been in 10 years. Tragically, last week the Bureau of Investigative Journalism also found that at least 449 homeless people have died in the UK during the last 12 months.

Government Strategy

The Government launched a new strategy in August, releasing £100m of funding to eradicate homelessness, as well as investing £1.2bn to tackle all forms of homelessness. The Government also announced an aim to stop homelessness by 2027. It set out a three-pronged approach of prevention, intervention and recovery, aimed at offering 'comprehensive support' to ensure the specific needs of vulnerable rough sleepers are addressed.

The final element, prevention, will involve £50m of funding to increase housing supply outside of London, for people who have slept rough or are moving on from hostels and refuges. It said £19m will go to providing 'flexible support' in homes provided exclusively for people sleeping rough. David Orr, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation, said: 'People sleeping on the streets because they don't have a home of their own is a desperate situation and one that needs to be tackled as a matter of urgency. But if we're to bring about a lasting end to rough sleeping we need targeted investment in new homes for rough sleepers, a significant increase in homes for social rent overall, and a full assessment of the impact of welfare reform on rough sleeping.'



What is the link between Supported Housing and homelessness?

Often those who need Supported Housing have experienced time on the streets. New research from homelessness charity St Mungo's also revealed, eight out of ten rough sleepers who died last year had a mental health problem. Supported Housing includes those suffering from mental health, as well as other issues which can stem from homelessness, such as drug and alcohol abuse. Echoing David Orr's comment, housing charity Shelter believes the solution to homelessness in England is to build more affordable housing. As we have seen over the last few weeks, the Government has made numerous pledges to increase homes for the social housing sector but will need the private sector to act as a supportive mechanism to meet both the targets and demand.

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