

All Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness



Emergency meeting on a winter homelessness crisis

Meeting Minutes

22 October 2020, 3.30-4.45pm, Zoom

Attendees:

Neil Coyle MP, APPG Co-Chair
Bob Blackman MP, APPG Co-Chair
Lord Young of Cookham
Mike Wood MP
Baroness Ruth Lister of Burtsett
Kim Johnson MP
Feryal Clark MP
Stephen Timms MP
Lord Fairfax of Cameron
Tracy Brabin MP
Lord Shipley
Nickie Aiken MP
Baroness Walmsley
Baroness Smith of Newham
Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top
Bishop of Manchester

Parliamentary staff:

Graeme Smith, Office of Neil Coyle MP
Josephine Amos, Office of Afzal Khan MP
Ellen Day, Office of Stephen Morgan MP
Sophie Ferdinand, Office of Caroline Ansell MP
Elliot Curryer, Office of Caroline Ansell MP
Madeleine Harding, Office of Lord Best
Josh Price, Office of Tim Farron MP
Katy Craven, Office of James Sunderland MP
Eleanor Goldberg, Office of Anne Marie Morris MP
Amy Provan, Office of Thangam Debbonaire MP
Ella Owens, Office of Robin Millar MP
Stine Holm, Office of Liz Twist MP
Karrie Mould, Office of Luke Pollard MP

Secretariat:

Emily Batchelor, Secretariat to APPG

Other:

Ruth Jacob, Crisis
Matt Downie, Crisis
Saskia Neibig, Crisis

Apologies:

Jason McCartney MP
Clive Lewis MP
Caroline Lucas MP
Kerry McCarthy MP
Stephen Barclay MP
Fleur Anderson MP
Lord Rooker
Lord Foulkes
Baroness Hodgson of Abinger
Lord McNally
Baroness Parminter
Lord Ribeiro
Baroness Grey-Thompson
Baroness Hamwee
Baroness Bull
Lord Carter

Panellists:

Kelly Tolhurst MP, Minister for Housing and Rough Sleeping
Dr Al Story, UCL
Professor Andrew Hayward, UCL
Dom Williamson, St. Mungo's
Andrew Boff, GLA
Tom Copley, Deputy London Mayor for Housing
Jasmine Basran, Crisis

Dora Dixon, Crisis
Emma Yorke, Crisis
Hannah Slater, Crisis
Charlie Atkinson, Crisis
Chris Hicks, Crisis
Suzannah Young, NHF
Anna Yassin, Glass Door
Sam Dorney-Smith, QN1
Michelle Langan, Papercups
Guddy Burnet, Standing Together
Ally Routledge, NHF
Marike Van Harskamp, New Horizon Youth Centre
Eloise Di'Gianni, Just for Kids
Anna Watchman, St. Mungo's
Neil Preddy
Caroline Schulman, KCL
Neil MacDonald, Housing First Ipswich
Mike Wright, Manchester Council
Hannah Green, Centre for Homelessness Impact
Jo Bhandal, AKT
Connie Muttock, Commonweal
Ed Hodson, Citizen's Advice
Anna Perkins, Porchlight
Dr Nigel Hewett, Pathway
Zoe Titchener, Citizen's Advice
Sarah Porter, Porchlight
Jessica Turtle, Museum of Homelessness
Paul Prosser, Noah Enterprise
Octavia Aronne, Safer London
Christa Maciver, Justlife
Yoric Irving-Clarke, CIH
Patrick Duce, World Habitat
Lucy Croxton, NYAS
Vicky Nevin, Centrepoint
Duncan Gall, Emmaus UK
Amarvir Singh-Bal, Young Fabians
Stephen Cutter, Release
Andrea Gilbert, Labour Homelessness Campaign
Becky Ross, Labour Homelessness Campaign
Shaista Aziz, Labour Homelessness Campaign
Karen Purdy, Labour Homelessness Campaign
Claire Dowan, Homeless Oxfordshire
Jennie Corbett, Homeless Link
Holly Tippett-Simpson, Salvation Army
Lucy Smith, NACCOM
Bethan Lant, Praxis
Robin Tyne, Southwark Council
Ian Swift, Southwark Council
Fatima Wurie, PHE
Louise Jones, Surviving Economic Abuse
Mabli Jones, Asylum Matters
Mark Brennan, Housing Justice
Jacob Quagliozi, Housing Justice
Lucien Lawrence, Housing Justice
Robyn Casey, St. Mungo's
Rachel Neale, UK Mortgage Prisoners
Molly Bishop, GMCA
Deidre Webb, NIHE
Laura Aznar, St. Martins

Charli Clodfelter, Two Saints
Stephanie Kleynhans, Shelter
Deb Garvie, Shelter
Andrea Faulkner, TCC
Joe Shalam, CSJ
Diana Heimann
Andrea Coady, Nacro
Beth Knowles, Shared Health
Esme Davies, GMCA
Hitesh Tailer, London Borough of Redbridge
Jean Templeton, St Basils
Chris Brill, Expert Link
Benn Kiley, a2dominion
Laura Griffith, Newington Communications
Abigal Ampofo, Hestia
Ed Addison, St. Mungo's
Stephen Greek, GLA Conservatives
Jade Edwards, mybnk
Cllr Kieron Williams
Samantha Dorney-Smith, QNI Homeless
Health Programme

Welcome and apologies	
Introductions	
Neil Coyle MP	<p>Neil Coyle MP (NC) opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and briefly outlining the event format.</p> <p>NC made some opening remarks on the why the emergency meeting has been called, including comments on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The eviction ban ending - The furlough scheme ending - The manifesto commitment by the Conservative to end rough sleeping by 2024 - The Everyone In initiative <p>NC then passed onto St Mungo's Dominic Williamson (DW).</p>
Dominic Williamson, Executive Director of Strategy and Policy, St. Mungo's	<p>DW outlined the services that St Mungo's provide with 2700 people supported in hotels during the Everyone In initiative across the South East and in London.</p> <p>DW said the Everyone In initiative saved lives and emphasised the importance of access to self-contained accommodation, and that there are some amazing stories from this scheme.</p> <p>DW said that they are very concerned about the winter ahead, which would normally include communal spaces.</p> <p>DW emphasised how there is a new flow of people experiencing homelessness, and that it is not a static population.</p> <p>DW outlined what St Mungo's would like to see happen in the winter ahead, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - St Mungo's will not be offering communal spaces as this will not be able to be covid-safe - Calling for an Everyone In 2.0 this winter – with clear messages to local authorities and sufficient funding - Importantly this must include non-UK citizens - Day-by-day partnership working between MHCLG, local authorities and providers of homelessness services - A need to get to the review which was originally going to be undertaken by Dame Louise Casey <p>DW closed by saying the Home Office announcement that morning was unhelpful and that there was an unanimous message across the sector that this is a not a constructive way to go.</p>
Professor Andrew Hayward, Director of the Institute of Epidemiology and Healthcare, UCL, and Dr Al Story, Clinical Lead of the pan-London Find&Treat service, UCL	<p>NC introduced the next panellists Professor Andrew Hayward (PAH) and Dr Al Story (DAS).</p> <p>DAS said the Government's response to the covid-crisis has been internationally recognised as an exemplar of great practice which has undoubtedly saved many lives. Their talk would be a call for a continuation of this approach.</p> <p>DAS outlined their key arguments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communal air spaces for people experiencing homelessness are not safe

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual rooms and individual washing facilities should be the default accommodation option - The Triage-Test-Cohort-Care process - This is an unprecedented opportunity to end homelessness - The magnitude of clinical vulnerability among the homeless population, around half of which have no access to primary care, who are entirely dependent on alternative provision <p>PAH then outlined how communal airspace sleeping facilities would amplify virus transmission which would be almost impossible to contain. This would result in severe disease, ICU admissions and death.</p> <p>PAH's following comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The risk of infection in communal sleeping facilities can build for both staff and residents. - An example from New York where the communal facilities were relatively good but did not prevent high numbers of outbreaks. - There have been reports of large scale outbreaks across North America and in Europe where communal night shelter accommodation has remained opened. - In New York there has been over 150 deaths of people using these facilities, which is likely to be a huge underestimate. - Outline of research which found even with control measures in place, the best case scenario is that 1/3 of shelters have outbreaks. - In Paris, over half of the residents in emergency shelters became infected in the first wave of the pandemic, comparing to 5% of overall Paris population. - Estimates that preventative measures in the first wave of coronavirus in England avoided over 21,000 infections, 1100 hospitalisations, nearly 340 ICU admissions and 266 deaths. <p>DAS outlined that their final point that safe accommodation should be made available now nationally, to avert large outbreaks, preventable severe disease and deaths among people experiencing homelessness who would likely resort to communal airspace sleeping.</p> <p>DAS described how the MHCLG guidance makes it almost impossible to open a communal night shelter safely, and puts all the risk on the providers of shelter provision, and how this operational guidance does not apply in times of SWEPS.</p> <p>DAS finished by reiterating the call for another Everyone In, which would make people experiencing homelessness safe from the cold and safe from COVID-19.</p> <p>[If you would like a copy of PAH and DAS' slides or briefing paper please email appg@crisis.org.uk]</p>
<p>Kelly Tolhurst MP, Minister for Housing and Rough Sleeping</p>	<p>NC introduced the Minister, Kelly Tolhurst (KT).</p> <p>KT outlined how this was a key moment in ending homelessness and rough sleeping for good, and how she was keen to hear people's views across the sector.</p> <p>KT praised the efforts of various stakeholders, including those on the call, in Everyone In which enabled nearly 29,000 people to be supported earlier in the first wave of the pandemic, 19,000 of which have been provided with settled accommodation or move-on support.</p>

	<p>KT outlined how government has provided £5.8 billion to councils to respond to the covid-19 pressures, and targeted funding, for example, £266 million for the Next Steps Programme.</p> <p>KT said she recognised the challenges that local councils faced, having been a councillor before she was an MP, and that the Government must ensure that rough sleepers do not return to the streets and are protected from life threatening cold weather and from the risks of covid.</p> <p>KT said she had recently announced the £10million Cold Weather Fund which would help local councils to provide self-contained accommodation to homeless people this winter.</p> <p>KT said she had been clear that communal night shelters should be used only as a last resort.</p> <p>KT outlined how she remained dedicated to protecting vulnerable rough sleepers, and would continue to work closely with the sector to understand the challenges and where the support should be given.</p> <p>KT said that the Government is committed to tackling homelessness and that no one should be without a roof over their heads.</p> <p>KT described the impact of the HRA on homelessness, with support coming earlier and for longer, particularly on single people experiencing homelessness, which make up two thirds of those owed a homelessness duty. KT said the Government was fully committed to implementing and embedding the HRA, but there is a lot more to be done.</p> <p>KT outlined the package of support measures the Government has already put in place during the pandemic, including temporary ban on evictions proceedings.</p> <p>KT thanked the sector for their work in these times of adversity in the shared mission to tackle homelessness and protect vulnerable people over winter. KT said she looked forward to working with the sector and said she would always be candid.</p>
NC, Bob Blackman MP	NC thanked the Minister for her contribution and handed over the Chair to Co-Chair Bob Blackman MP (BB) for the Minister’s Q&A session.
Questions to the Minister: 44:40	
	<p>1. Jon Sparkes (JS), Crisis</p> <p>JS thanked KT for attending and for her work so far. JS said that one of the most welcome elements of Everyone In was that everyone was helped into safe accommodation, regardless of their eligibility in normal times. This approach was welcomed by the entire sector. On the announcement that the Home Office will begin deporting non-UK nationals for rough sleeping, JS asked whether KT would be happy to work with the sector to understand the potential impact of such a policy, and to meet EEA nationals who are accessing homelessness support to learn about the impact of that policy.</p> <p>KT said that she would be happy to talk with the sector around the practical issues on the ground, and will remain and accessible to raise those concerns. KT said she does recognise that this is an issue in some parts of the country but would be happy to convene and speak to JS and other stakeholders.</p>

2. Hannah Green (HG), Centre for Homelessness Impact

HG said it was clear to her, as someone who experienced homelessness until just before the pandemic, that many of the accommodation types that are provided to young people experiencing homelessness, are not adequate. HG explained that the hostel she stayed in last year has stayed open during the pandemic with 19 people under one roof. While each room had an en suite bathroom, people had to share one kitchen. HG asked whether we would see an evidence-informed move towards covid-secure accommodation for young people experiencing homelessness?

KT thanked HG for her question and said that she was particularly interested in youth homelessness, for example accommodation for care leavers and young people in temporary accommodation. KT said the Government was working with local authorities, looking at the accommodation they have, and implement procedures that are covid-secure. KT said the Government was still reviewing and learning which enables them to modify and change their advice. KT said was personally interested in this and would like to do more work on it in the future.

3. Samantha Dorney-Smith (SDS), QNI Homeless Health Programme

SDS said she welcomed that night shelters are seen as a last resort and asked what KT thought options before that, asking whether local authorities should be procuring hotels, particularly for those with NRPF.

KT stressed that night shelters should only be a last resort. KT outlined the importance of the Next Steps funding providing move-on accommodation. KT said the £10 million fund is for local authorities to convert existing units, or facilities to self-contained accommodation. KT said she didn't want to see anyone having to use a night shelter, but the reality is that she is the Minister and she understands the challenges faced by rough sleepers on the street. KT said that she feels strongly that night shelters should be had a last resort if needed, for those who did not want to engage with local authorities services, faith or voluntary groups, but would continue to review.

4. BB then read a question from a colleague who had to leave the call early: 'Can you confirm what additional funding will be allocated to local authorities to ensure they are able to continue to house rough sleepers as transmission rates increase in the coming winter months?'

KT outlined the following:

- £261million for the Next Step allocated in November
- £10million Cold Winter Fund
- Over £700million in total being spent on rough sleeping this year.

KT said local authorities face different challenges in the local environment and that each area dictate different solutions. KT said the Government had committed significant amounts of funding and that we can see the direction of travel. KT said that she might not be able to give yes or no answers that we want but she assured that she will upfront on her thoughts in these areas.

BB thanked KT for attending and taking the time to answer questions.

<p>Andrew Boff, GLA</p>	<p>BB introduced the next panellist Andrew Boff (AB), Conservative member of the Greater London Authority.</p> <p>AB thanked the organisations that managed to accommodate in London 16,000 people off of the street and into hotels during the pandemic.</p> <p>AB said we've got to talk about funding, and that we have got to be creative in terms of finding money, particularly in the GLA. AB said that we needed to spend money to repeat the successes during the worst times of the pandemic.</p> <p>AB said if you want a holistic approach to solving this crisis, it doesn't seem sensible for one government department to be preventing people from accessing services from another government department, in order to defeat this pandemic.</p>
<p>Tom Copley, Deputy London Mayor for Housing</p>	<p>BB introduced the next panellist Tom Copley (TC).</p> <p>TC said he wanted to make three points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the announcement from the Home Office, TC said this was for the sake of sounding tough on immigration but it would harm some of the most vulnerable people – it would put people off from engaging with services and risk pushing them towards human trafficking. TC said the way to end rough sleeping was not through deportation but continuing the success of earlier work during the pandemic. 2. TC said we need to recognise this achievement, when there are excellent partnerships between national, local government and organisations. TC said that there had been nearly 5,000 people being helped in hotels and over 2,000 people successfully moved on into permanent accommodation. TC said the rate of infection amongst homelessness people in London was around 3-4%, in San Francisco it was 66%. TC paid tribute to Dame Louise Casey for her national leadership on this. TC said it would be a tragedy if this good work was now undermined, because the support and the funding was not there. On night shelters being a last resort, TC said the problem is that without the support and funding for the first resort (self-contained accommodation), the last resort will become the default option. 3. TC said we need funding so that we can bring everyone in again. TC said we need policy change around NRPF and EEA nationals because otherwise we risk having no solution to those people. TC said we also need speedy announcements, as the infrastructure will be different this winter to help providers prepare.
<p>Jasmine Basran, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Crisis</p>	<p>BB introduced the next panellist Jasmine Basran (JB), Crisis</p> <p>JB outlined how never before has being homeless been so dangerous and never before has the Governments' commitment to end rough sleeping been so critical. JB said the pandemic revealed the risk of being homeless, as so many of us are reliant on our homes, lockdown measures, social distancing and being able to follow basic public health guidance.</p> <p>JB said this is what was recognised by the Government in the initial decisive action in March to support the people most exposed to the virus. This action was unprecedented and we know that it saved lives.</p> <p>JB said we know that we are in a similar position now, but with the additional health risks of the winter months ahead. JB said we now need</p>

	<p>again exceptional leadership and we have examples of this from local authorities.</p> <p>JB outlined one example in Liverpool, where Crisis worked closely with City Council and council housing providers and over 200 people have been provided with somewhere safe to stay. JB said that since then, the council has made an astonishing commitment with housing associations to ensure that people in the hotels will be prioritised when properties become available.</p> <p>JB said that local authorities are still struggling against a multitude of challenges, a lack of genuine affordable housing and the winding down of funding to support people into settled accommodation, and there are still barriers which have not been addressed, for example, the benefit cap.</p> <p>JB said bold leadership was needed again, and that the priority must be moving people into safe accommodation, and this must include people with NRPF. Communal shelters must not be a last resort.</p> <p>JB finished by saying we should use this opportunity to achieve the Government's aim to end rough sleeping. JB pointed to the example of Scotland where much progress has been made.</p>
Bob Blackman MP	<p>BB thanked panellists and attendees, and outlined his support for a longer-term plan, delivering move-on accommodation.</p> <p>BB outlined his concern for the supply of accommodation with the lack of new projects during the pandemic.</p> <p>BB said that this problem is not going away as there is a new flow of people becoming homelessness.</p> <p>BB said we need to develop the housing that people need.</p>
Actions and deadlines	Secretariat to send around minutes to attendees and both Chairs.