



Minutes of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness

Tuesday 8th September, 17:00-18:30

Macmillan Room, Portcullis House

Ending the Housing Unaffordability Trap

Attendees

- Members:** Paula Barker MP (Co-chair – chair of meeting), Bob Blackman MP (Co-chair), Rachel Blake MP, Emily Darlington MP (APPG Officer), Baroness Penn, Baroness Thornhill, Catherine West MP
- Guest:** Florence Eshalomi MP - Minister for Homelessness, Democracy, Communities and Faith
- Speakers:** Halima – Crisis Expert by Experience, Matt Downie – Chief Executive at Crisis, Maya Singer-Hobbs – Senior Research Fellow at IPPR and IPPR North, James Walker – Strategic Lead Homelessness and Migration at Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
- Staff:** Andrew Bocking, Cello Crompton, Matthew Goodwin-Freeman, Esther Konzon
- Steering Group:** Neil Baird – Changing Lives, Henri Baptiste – Pathway Housing Solutions, Laura Barnard – The Passage, Sophia Kamal Bederski – Riverside Housing, Maha Bryan – Shared Health, Jack Chesterman – YMCA, Dr Sascia Colgan – NHS Inclusion, Sam Dalton – Emmaus, Ria Garrett – Only a Pavement Away, Aiden Greenall – Crisis, Sarah Lister – Oasis Community Housing, Ella Nuttall – Centrepont, Christa Maciver – JustLife, Liz McCulloch – JRF, Emily Page – Pathway, Rosie Perkins – Crisis, Alessandra Sciarra – Depaul UK, Duncan Shrubsole – St Martins in the Field

Charity, Polly Stephens – NHYC, Cat Tottie – Homeless Link, Dr Kari Vyas – Psychology in Homelessness Network, Finley Wild.

Secretariat: Crisis - Matt Bold, Zoe Eaves, Aiden Greenall, Rosie Perkins

Minutes

Welcome and opening statement

Paula Barker MP welcomed all attendees to the meeting. She remarked on the fact that homelessness has gone from being the last thing on the political agenda to the first, with the arrival of Andy Burnham to Downing Street over the summer, and expressed a confidence in working together with the government to end homelessness and rough sleeping.

She reflected on the huge opportunity in the £440 million funding for routes off of the streets, and reiterated the importance of a secure and affordable home as set out in the APPG's report – [Homes, Support, Prevention](#).

The Chair congratulated and welcomed Florence Eshalomi MP in her new role as Minister for Homelessness, Democracy, Communities and Faith. She recognised the Minister's previous roles as a former Co-Chair of the APPG and Chair of the Select Committee for Housing Communities and Local Government.

The Chair also welcomed the other panel members who will be speaking in the meeting: Matt Downie – Chief Executive at Crisis, Maya Singer-Hobbs – Senior Research Fellow at IPPR and IPPR North, James Walker – Strategic Lead Homelessness and Migration at Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Halima, and Expert by Experience who was invited to start the panel's opening remarks.

Panel Statements

Halima – Expert by Experience

Halima thanked the APPG for wanting to hear from people with lived experience stating that, you may sometimes forget the numbers, but you don't forget the people and families that you meet. She talked about how her life changed once she had a permanent tenancy after a period of

homelessness. She talked to the impact on not just one person's journey, but the entire family, and the time it takes to recover from the destruction that homelessness causes. Halima talked about the home being the foundation to everything; financial security, having a career, social connections and getting the right support that you need. She asked an open question of the room – how do you move forward in life without a secure home and a place that you can call home? She reiterated that everything, life, starts with a secure home.

Florence Eshalomi MP – Minister for Homelessness, Democracy, Communities and Faith

The Minister reflected on being offered the role following the Prime Minister's commitments to ending rough sleeping and making homelessness a central issue of this government. She thanked Halima for sharing her story and added that it is known that there are many people experiencing homelessness that are not captured in official statistics, so we have to remember the stories and lived experiences of the people that we meet. The Minister reflected on her time as committee Chair, and taking the conscious decision to focus on children's homelessness as children's voices were missing. With thousands of children living in Temporary Accommodation (TA) there is a generation of children who's chances to thrive are limited without having a safe home.

The Minister went on to state that homelessness is not an issue that anyone can solve on their own – not the Ministry, charities or community groups. She shared that she attended the first Interministerial Group (IMG) today chaired by the Secretary of State (SoS), and the group was attended by SoS representation from 5 other government departments. This is the kind of collaboration and whole government effort needed, and she is proud of the cash injection already made to end rough sleeping by Christmas.

The Minister took a moment to thank the APPG, including thanking Bob Blackman MP and parliamentarians from all parties for continually pushing for homelessness to be at the top of the agenda, holding the government of the day to account.

The Chair took a moment to reflect the feeling of hope that the Minister has given, and the importance and APPGs and cross-party collaboration.

Matt Downie – Chief Executive of Crisis

Matt thanked all the members of the APPG for their historic efforts in building the calibre of homelessness as an issue for government to tackle, so that in moments like these where the political capital shows up, there is something to do with it. Matt also thanked the Minister for engaging with the APPG at the earliest opportunity, and asked her to lean on the sector through open communication, and to be honest with disagreements in approach so that we can work through it together.

Matt stated that now the political capital is here, we all need to rise to the occasion with solutions, citing 3 core challenges we are facing:

- Getting everyone off the streets by Christmas
- Transitioning of the current system to applying a Housing First philosophy
- Ensuring a national drive on ending homelessness stretches beyond policy and politics – through to employers, housing providers, funders, faith groups and charities.

Matt touched on the solutions Crisis is pursuing, such as running a lettings agency and buying houses, on top of traditional support services to individuals. There is a need to do things differently, and trial new solutions.

Matt highlighted the challenges of getting everyone in before Christmas while the current priority need framework remains in place, encouraged Housing Associations to maximise housing opportunities for people experiencing homelessness, and called for a coordinated cross-government approach to prevention, including restoring Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and ensuring that no one leaves prison or care into homelessness. He emphasised that ending homelessness is a shared responsibility and that government should strive to ensure its own systems do not contribute to people becoming homeless.

The Chair reiterated Matt's call to uplift LHA and to not discharge anyone into homelessness. She also reflected on the success of previous government successes in reducing homelessness due to centralised, unified efforts.

James Walker – Strategic Lead for Homelessness and Migration at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

James brought reflections from the GMCA's Housing First programme, and how we can take the learnings more broadly and apply them to a national Housing First philosophy.

James explained that in 2017, the 'A Bed Every Night' and Housing First pilots sprung out of a crisis response to severe weather. The delivery of Housing First continues to see very successful results – an 80% tenancy sustainment rate over 18 months. The learning from this programme has been used to inform the approach on Greater Manchester becoming a 'Housing First City Region'. Taking the principles of the Housing First programme and apply this more broadly across housing.

He also talked to the youth homelessness prevention service that was established called Pathfinder. James noted the positive outcomes that come when young people are allowed to have self-determined outcomes through flexible choices. He also highlighted the impact on employment outcomes.

James mentioned some of the current work being done to try and address affordability in the region, complementing the Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP) but reiterated the calls from other panellists in the need for LHA to be uplifted.

Maya Singer-Hobbs – Senior Research Fellow at IPPR and IPPR North

Maya explained that IPPR have conducted a 9-month project with Crisis into what the barriers to having a housing-led system are, and in particular the role of Mayors in that. Maya defined housing-led as an approach that moves people into their own homes as quickly as possible, with support being in place at a level that is needed. They took GMCA, the North East Combined Authority and Oxfordshire as their three case studies, and identified 6 barriers. These were:

- A lack of social housing supply. Maya stated that allocations need to be increased and empty homes need to be brought back onto the market.

- Legislation, duties and bureaucracy. Particular focus on removing priority need, and barriers towards collaboration between institutions like data sharing.
- Siloed thinking, Maya drew attention to the GMCA example of integrating migration and homelessness.
- Political will, the report recommends establishing a delivery unit to protect from differences in political will over time.
- Risk aversion, Maya highlighted the ability for Mayoralities to be innovative due to less statutory requirement as local authorities.
- Funding, the report signals to a feasibility study Crisis conducted in Liverpool, and the need for transition funding whilst shifting to a housing-led system. Maya also raised the point around uprating LHA and the unaffordability of the private rented sector (PRS).

The Chair stated that the APPG will be writing to senior Government figures asking to meet and putting forward key asks ahead of the budget.

Actions:

- **Circulate APPG letter to the Prime Minister for parliamentarians to sign**
- **Circulate APPG letter to the Chancellor for parliamentarians to sign**

Question and answer with the panel

Emily Darlington MP asked the minister a series of questions on taking learnings from Everyone In, rewarding locally co-created plans in non-mayorality areas and stopping local blame games, the approach to individuals with multiple support needs and how to ensure MHCLG empower local areas based on outcomes. The Minister responded that it's crucial to ensure individuals are getting the right support, and that's why seeing 5 departments convene at the IMG is heartening – we need a multiagency approach. The Minister also stressed that it is important not to prescribe to local governments and remove unnecessary ringfences.

Bob Blackman MP and Co-Chairman of the APPG asked the Minister whether the minutes of the IMG will be accessible, stressed the importance of continuity in leadership, and urged the minister to enact the Supported Housing Oversight Act (2023) to tackle rogue landlords. He also commented on the need for greater prevention, as laid out in his Private Members Bill – Homelessness Prevention Bill – and that the rough

sleeping initiative only goes so far as there are over 300,000 people experiencing other forms of homelessness.

Baroness Penn highlighted the possible tension for not wanted to find people not captured in official counts, such as women, and asked the Minister whether there are any plans for tackling undercounting to avoid any perverse action taking place. The Minister shared that additional protections will be included in the Social Housing Bill to address women's homelessness. The Minister also stated that she will be really interrogating the data in her role.

Emily Darlington MP highlighted a local issue regarding people with no recourse to public funds and stressed the importance for needing constructive engagement with the Home Office. The Minister noted her point and stated that it all comes back to a greater need for affordable housing.

MPs had to leave the meeting due to a vote in the Commons. The secretariat took the remaining questions and will seek a response from the Minister via email.

Actions:

- **James Walker to explore the possibility to share GMCA research on black and minoritised community experience**
- **Co-Chairs will write to Government on key points on housing affordability ahead of the Budget**
- **Submit the additional questions to the Minister for response**
 - **How do we ensure 'everyone in' really means everyone?**
 - **How will the Minister respond to multiple reports that have highlighted intersectional impacts of homelessness?**
 - **How do we get greater collaboration between health and homelessness services on the frontline?**

Any other business

There was no other business to discuss.

End of meeting