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Housing, Communities and
Local Government Committee

Protecting the homeless and the private rented sector: MHCLG's response to Covid-19

Sixth Report of Session 2019–21

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

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Contents

Summary	3
Protecting the homeless	3
Protecting the private rented sector	3
Introduction	5
Protecting the homeless	8
The first stage of Everyone In	8
The next stage of Everyone In	9
How many people in emergency accommodation are subject to no recourse to public funds?	10
What assistance are local authorities allowed to offer people suffering from homelessness and subject to no recourse to public funds?	12
The impact of individual discretion on the local government response	15
Falling through the gaps	16
Ending rough sleeping by 2024: the manifesto commitment	18
Lessons from Everyone In	18
No recourse to public funds	19
Increasing affordable housing	21
Temporary accommodation	22
Protecting the private rented sector	24
The 'eviction ban' has changed over time	24
The rent arrears crisis	26
How many tenants are in arrears and how significant are the arrears?	27
The impact of increased rent arrears	29
How many extra evictions might there be due to covid-19?	29
Impact on renting in the future	30
Impact on landlords	30
How to solve the growing problem of rent arrears	31
Local housing allowance	32
The Renters' Reform Bill	34

Conclusions and recommendations	36
Formal minutes	41
Witnesses	42
Published written evidence	43
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	52

Summary

This is our second report scrutinising the Government's actions to help rough sleepers, the wider homeless population, private renters, and landlords during the covid-19 pandemic. The publication of this report does not end our work in this area: we will continue to review how the Department acts and will intervene when we believe it is necessary to do so in the public interest.

Protecting the homeless

At the start of the pandemic, the Government, local authorities, and charities helped to provide tens of thousands of rough sleepers with emergency accommodation through what is now known as the 'Everyone In' initiative. Researchers at University College London estimate that as of December 2020, 242 deaths were prevented because of Everyone In.

- **We recognise the enormous success of the early stages of the Everyone In programme, made possible through cross-sector collaboration, substantial funding, and joint working towards a clear goal.**

However, in late May 2020, the Government changed its emphasis on whom councils should be helping. Initially, the Government had encouraged local authorities to assist those who had No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). In late May, the Government reminded local authorities of its position on eligibility relating to people with NRPF, and asked local authorities to use their judgement when assessing people's needs. Our inquiry heard that this created confusion for local authorities and led to people with NRPF being denied support during the covid-19 public health crisis.

Furthermore, the recent case of *Ncube v Brighton and Hove City Council* ruled that councils can and should be using specific powers to provide accommodation to people with NRPF during a public health emergency.

- ***We recommend the Government immediately issues clear guidance to local authorities stating that they can and should use their legal powers under the Local Government Act 1972 and NHS Act 2006 to find accommodation for those otherwise ineligible for support during a public health emergency.***

Beyond the pandemic, our inquiry heard that the Government's pledge to end rough sleeping by 2024 will require a review of its immigration policy, which in some cases denies housing support to those with NRPF.

- ***We recommend that the Government creates a cross-Government task force to resolve the conflict between the commitment to end rough sleeping and the current policy on the no recourse to public funds condition. This will require collecting data on the number of people affected and their specific circumstances.***

Protecting the private rented sector

As well as supporting thousands of homeless people, the Government has also supported renters during the pandemic by banning evictions except in specific cases (such as anti-

social behaviour). However, when this ban is eventually lifted in May, many renters who have been unable to pay their rent during the pandemic will be at risk of becoming homeless. Furthermore, the most recent regulations changed the definition of “substantial rent arrears”—the threshold for permitting repossession—from equivalent to at least nine months’ rent to six months’, and removed the requirement to disregard arrears accrued since 23 March 2020.

- *We call on the Government to publish an exit plan for the private rented sector from national and local restrictions. Now the Government has published its roadmap for how to exit national restrictions, hopefully for the final time, it should set out how it intends for the sector to transition out of the pandemic.*

The problem of growing rent arrears not only puts some renters at risk of eviction and homelessness; it also affects landlords’ incomes. **The Government will eventually have to come up with a policy response, because it cannot keep extending the evictions ban forever more.**

- *We call on the Government to deliver a specific financial package—we prefer discretionary housing payments—to support tenants to repay rent arrears caused by covid-19, in consultation with the Local Government Association and appropriate bodies representing renters and landlords. We received an estimate that this package will likely cost between £200 and £300 million. Given the number of potential evictions this would prevent, it would likely save the Exchequer a substantial amount in homelessness assistance.*

Introduction

1. Since the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic, we have focused our attention on assessing the impact on rough sleepers, the wider homeless population, private renters, and landlords, and scrutinising the Government's actions to try to help these groups. On 17 April 2020, we launched our inquiry. Within 2 weeks we received over 300 responses.¹ By May, we believed our inquiry had revealed concerns which required immediate action by the Government, so we published an interim report a month after launching our work, entitled *Protecting rough sleepers and renters*.²

2. Since the publication of our interim report, we have continued our important scrutiny of the Department's actions as the pandemic unfolded. We issued further terms of reference to reflect the rapidly changing circumstances and received an additional 47 written submissions.³ We held four more evidence sessions, hearing from many experts, including Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, who led the "Everyone In" intervention in March 2020, before questioning the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, Eddie Hughes MP on 28 January 2021. Following his appearance, the Committee wrote to the Minister requesting further information that he had agreed to supply to the Committee during the oral evidence session.⁴ We are extremely disappointed that the response was not sent until five weeks after our deadline. Although the Minister apologised for the delay in replying, this delayed the publication of our report and inhibited our ability to fully scrutinise the Government on these very important issues.

3. It is important, too, to highlight the testimony we heard on 17 December 2020. We invited four experts by experience, Abeo, Sam, T, and Tracey, to share their stories of homelessness and rough sleeping, which were powerful and poignant.⁵ We are grateful for their honesty.

4. 'Homelessness' or 'the homeless' are terms which encompass a wide range of experiences. Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness, but there are many more people homeless than those on the streets. The wider homeless population includes those in temporary accommodation, and the 'hidden homeless', which includes people in night shelters and informal, unstable arrangements with friends and family, like sofa-surfing. Our inquiry has primarily focused on those at greatest threat from covid-19 in the short-term—rough sleepers—but our other focus on the private rented sector stems from the interconnectedness of that sector with homelessness. The most recent annual statutory homelessness statistics show that local authorities are most likely to owe a prevention duty (households threatened with homelessness within 56 days) to households living in the private rented sector.⁶

5. Our interim report began by explaining the vulnerability of rough sleepers, which cannot be over-emphasised. Prolonged rough sleeping is devastating to an individual's

1 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, [Impact of Covid-19 \(Coronavirus\) on homelessness and the private rented sector: written evidence](#), 14 May 2020

2 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2019–21, [Protecting rough sleepers and renters: Interim Report](#), HC 309

3 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, [Impact of Covid-19 \(Coronavirus\) on homelessness and the private rented sector: written evidence](#), 8 December 2020

4 [Correspondence to the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing](#), 5 February 2021

5 These names are pseudonyms selected by the witnesses to help protect their identities.

6 MHCLG, [Statutory Homelessness Annual Report, 2019–20](#), England, 1 October 2020

mental and physical wellbeing. It exposes them to an increased risk of being the victim of serious crimes like violence and sexual assault. As we stated last year, the streets are dangerous at the best of times, and we are far from those. Covid-19 preys on pre-existing vulnerabilities, especially chronic respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Individuals suffering from homelessness have higher rates of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart problems and strokes; on average they have seven long-term health conditions, which is more than people in their 90s.

6. Private renters were vulnerable and insecure before the pandemic struck. The Government's consultation *A New Deal for Renting* accepted that private renters felt insecure due to short fixed-term tenancies.⁷ Since 2000, the sector has more than doubled in size, in part driven by a large increase in the number of families renting privately.⁸⁹ According to the House of Commons Library, over the same period, relative poverty rates of households in the private rented sector have more than doubled.¹⁰ Private renters spend the most on household costs¹¹ (averaging around 45%), with one in six households relying on housing benefit pre-pandemic.¹² The Government spent an estimated £23.4 billion in 2018–19 to support renters, representing 2.9 per cent of total public spending.¹³ That was before the pandemic struck, hitting household incomes and earnings for many households in the country. Since March 2020, it is estimated that a third of all private renters had a fall in their household's overall net income, causing a significant impact on the ability of renters to meet their outgoings.¹⁴

7. In this report we set out what the Government needs to do short-term and long-term to protect both people with a home, and those without, from the ongoing health risks and economic fallout of covid-19. In Chapter 2, we consider how the Department can improve on the early success of Everyone In and embed the principle long-term. In Chapter 3, we recommend how the Department can meet its pledge that no-one will lose their home due to the pandemic. The publication of this report does not end our work in this area; we will continue to review how the Department acts and intervene when we believe it is necessary to do so in the public interest.

7 MHCLG, [A new deal for renting: resetting the balance of rights and responsibilities between landlords and tenants](#), 21 July 2019

8 Department of Communities and Local Government, [English housing survey: private rented sector, 2015–16](#)

9 See, for example: [Core Cities, Understanding the growth in private rented housing](#).

10 [Poverty in the UK: statistics](#), CBP 7096, House of Commons Library, 18 June 2020

11 Household costs are mortgages for mortgagors, or the average proportion of income spent on rent for renters.

12 MHCLG, [English Housing Survey: Headline Report 2018–19](#), 23 January 2020, para 1.49; Office for National Statistics, [Families and households in the UK: 2019](#)

13 Office for Budget Responsibility, [Welfare spending: housing benefit](#), accessed 15 February 2021

14 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, [Briefing: struggling renters need a lifeline this winter](#), November 2020

Protecting the homeless

The first stage of Everyone In

8. On 26 March 2020, Dame Louise Casey (now Baroness Casey of Blackstock), who had just been appointed to spearhead the Government's response to rough sleeping, emailed local authorities and homeless charities calling on them to ensure all rough sleepers were "inside and safe" by the weekend:

These are unusual times so I'm asking for an unusual effort [...] Many areas of the country have already been able to 'safe harbour' their people, which is incredible. What we need to do now is work out how we can get 'everyone in'.¹⁵

9. This kickstarted what is now known as the 'Everyone In' initiative. Local authorities and voluntary organisations had already begun providing emergency accommodation before this instruction—indeed, on 17 March, the Government provided £3.2 million of emergency funding to all councils to help rough sleepers to self-isolate—but by 23 March England was in national lockdown and the urgency was greater. The crucial change was that the Department instructed local authorities to accommodate *everyone*, regardless of whether individuals were legally entitled to homelessness assistance or public benefits. In his letter to local leaders, the then Minister for Local Government and Homelessness, Luke Hall MP, asked them to "utilise alternative powers and funding to assist those with no recourse to public funds who require shelter and other forms of support due to the covid-19 pandemic".¹⁶

10. By April, following incredible efforts by local authorities in partnership with the voluntary sector and homelessness services to triage, helped and supported by the Department, 90% of identified rough sleepers were removed from the streets and received offers of temporary accommodation.¹⁷ The Government also ensured, under its emergency coronavirus measures, that hotels, B&Bs and more could remain open when providing rooms to support vulnerable people.¹⁸ Researchers from University College London estimated that without the prevention methods of Everyone In, 266 people experiencing homelessness would have died, compared to an estimated 24 deaths under Everyone In.¹⁹ By November, the Government reported that 33,000 people overall had been helped into emergency accommodation.²⁰

11. Those involved in helping rough sleepers off the streets were unanimously effusive in their praise for the first stage of Everyone In. Liz Davies, representing the Housing Law Practitioners' Association, said it was "amazing" that the Government had ensured no-one would be sleeping rough on our streets at the time of a global health pandemic.²¹ Jon Sparkes, Chief Executive of Crisis, told us:

15 [BBC News, 'Coronavirus: all rough sleepers in England to be housed', 27 March 2020](#)

16 [Correspondence from Minister Luke Hall to local authorities on plans to protect rough sleepers, 27 March 2020](#)

17 [MHCLG, Correspondence: Dame Louise Casey writes to Local Authority homelessness managers and rough sleeping co-ordinators, 23 April 2020](#)

18 [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(England\) Regulations 2020, regulation 5\(4\)\(b\)](#)

19 [Lewer et al, Covid-19 among people experiencing homelessness in England: a modelling study, Respiratory Medicine, Volume 8 Issue 12, p1181–1191, 1 December 2020](#)

20 [HC Deb, 11 January 2021, col 7WS \[Commons written ministerial statement\]](#)

21 [Q146](#)

I have to say that the efforts of the Department, local authorities and charities throughout the country have been nothing short of phenomenal [...] it has been an amazing and unprecedented effort. To have that many people now safely in self-contained accommodation, so quickly, has been quite remarkable.²²

T, one of the experts by experience who spoke to us on 17 December, said that Everyone In had helped her into accommodation, when before she had only experienced obstacles.²³ **We recognise the enormous success of the early stages of the Everyone In programme, made possible through cross-sector collaboration, substantial funding and joint working towards a clear goal.**

The next stage of Everyone In

12. On 28 May, the then Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, Luke Hall MP, wrote to all local authority chief executives in England to set out the “next phase of accommodating rough sleepers”.²⁴ One of the main purposes of the letter was to ask local authorities to put in place a plan of support for all rough sleepers accommodated in hotels and other accommodation as part of Everyone In. However, the letter also shifted the emphasis on whom councils should be helping:

You should carry out individual assessments and take decisions on who you can provide support to, which would include providing accommodation to vulnerable people sleeping rough.

[...] I do recognise that these are challenging times and that you may have accommodated people who would normally and otherwise be ineligible for support, making judgements based on risk to life. I wanted to take this opportunity to restate the government’s position on eligibility relating to immigration status, including for those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). The law regarding that status remains in place. Local authorities must use their judgment in assessing what support they may lawfully give to each person on an individual basis, considering that person’s specific circumstances and support needs. You will already be used to making such judgements on accommodating individuals who might otherwise be ineligible, during extreme weather for example, where there is a risk to life.²⁵

Prior to this, the Government had not asked local authorities to carry out individual assessments before offering emergency accommodation, and it had previously asked local authorities to house everybody, regardless of eligibility for public funds.

13. Our witnesses told us this was a clear shift from the Government. Steve Douglas, Chief Executive of St. Mungo’s, said:

We have this conversation: “Everyone In was great. Everyone In has now finished. Nobody is quite clear on the guidance”. We managed 30 hotels during the pandemic. We are still managing hotels now as well. We get

22 [Q1](#)

23 [Q191](#)

24 [Correspondence from Minister Luke Hall to all local authority chief executives in England](#), 28 May 2020

25 [Correspondence from Minister Luke Hall to all local authority chief executives in England](#), 28 May 2020

a little bit confused around the principles. If we go back to what the principles of Everyone In were, how they apply now and how they are being applied, the principles we saw in Everyone In were that it was what it said on the tin. There was no prior assessment before you were brought into accommodation. There was no expectation of whether you could pay or whether you had settled status.²⁶

Henry St Clair Miller, representing the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Network, which provides advice to local authorities on NRPF issues, said that the Government had introduced confusion by first undertaking a “universal approach” on a humanitarian basis, before pushing back on NRPF.²⁷

14. In its investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the covid-19 pandemic, the National Audit Office (NAO) reported that some local authorities considered the Department’s messaging to have changed, and responded by taking a tougher line on or ceasing to take in new rough sleepers who were ineligible for benefits, and moving on those already present in emergency accommodation.²⁸ Our evidence supports this conclusion. Following the letter of 28 May, many councils believed Everyone In to have finished, because the Government was no longer asking ‘everyone’ to be brought in. The Local Government Association (LGA) told us the letter caused councils to be unclear about central Government expectations and whether Everyone In had finished.²⁹

How many people in emergency accommodation are subject to no recourse to public funds?

15. The most recent data on the Everyone In scheme is from January 2021, which found that around 37,430 people had been helped into some form of accommodation, with 26,167 moved on into more settled accommodation and 11,263 remaining in emergency accommodation, an increase from 9,809 in November 2020.³⁰ Data on how many of these 11,263 are ineligible for benefits is more difficult to pin down. The NAO estimates that in September 2020 those ineligible for benefits numbered around 2,000 (approximately 50% of the total) of those staying in hotels and other emergency accommodation in London under Everyone In.³¹ In our interim report in April 2020, only a month into the pandemic, we recommended that the Government needed to improve its support to councils for people with no recourse to public funds during the crisis, or hundreds would return to the streets with potentially disastrous consequences.³² At that point, there was an estimated 900 people in London housed with NRPF, and likely double that across England. That cohort has now grown significantly.

16. Baroness Casey explained to us how important it was to have certainty on the numbers of people who are “legally here but have no recourse to public funds”:

26 [Q216](#)

27 [Q216](#)

28 NAO, [Investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the Covid-19 pandemic](#), January 2021, HC 1075, 2019–21, para 2.11

29 Local Government Association ([IOC 323](#)), para 3.8

30 MHCLG, [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021](#), 25 February 2021, [PQ 146785](#), 8 February 2021

31 NAO, [Investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the Covid-19 pandemic](#), January 2021, HC 1075, 2019–21, 15

32 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, First Report of Session 2019–21, [Protecting rough sleepers and renters: Interim Report](#), HC 309, para 13

How big is that figure? I reckon—the Department should be able to tell you this properly—that there are 10,000 people who are still in emergency hotels and other forms of accommodation. If the figures are 2,000 to 3,000, is it honestly worth it? The administration involved with all of that—part of me thinks that if the numbers are that low, we should just declare an amnesty and move on.

But if the numbers are huge, that is a different thing. That is a million people here with no recourse to public funds that somebody like me is asking for an amnesty for [...] The size of that group is really important for us to understand.³³

17. The Director for Rough Sleeping and Homelessness, Penny Hobman, told us that the Government did not collect data on how many of the thousands of individuals in emergency accommodation were subject to NRPF.³⁴ The Minister added that “sometimes, the data is not absolutely necessary”.³⁵ We pressed the Minister on the importance on the issue and asked him to write to us with a further explanation. The Minister wrote to us that the focus of the government “is on the response to the pandemic and supporting councils to protect vulnerable people”, and that an unspecified data source mentioned by the NAO was very new and required further work before it could be published.³⁶ The Minister stated that the department does not currently collect data on the number of individuals with NRPF in emergency accommodation or in move on accommodation, but that data collected at the end of May 2020 suggested that around 2,500 of the 14,610 people in emergency accommodation were people who would not normally be eligible for statutory homelessness assistance. This 2,500 includes, but is not limited to, those with NRPF.³⁷

18. We are not the first committee to come up against this Government point of view on NRPF data. The Work and Pensions Committee concluded in its report on the DWP's response to the pandemic that it could not “understand why the Government does not appear to hold any reliable data on the number of people with NRPF”.³⁸ The Minister for Future Borders and Immigration explained in a Parliamentary Question on 2 June 2020 that the data was “not assured to the standard required by ONS for publication” and the Home Office had determined it would be “too costly” to provide it.³⁹ When this issue was further pursued by the UK Statistics Authority, the Head of Profession for Statistics at the Home Office, Daniel Shaw, wrote to Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation at the Office for Statistics Regulation, explaining that at the moment “no complete figures of visas subject to NRPF conditions can be produced” because of the limitations of Home Office administrative data.⁴⁰ He went on to note that it was not of “practical application” for the Home Office to produce an estimate, because it would not help determine whether

33 [Q249](#)

34 [Q303](#)

35 [Q304](#)

36 [Letter from the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing to the Chair dated 17 March 2021 following up his appearance before the Committee on 28 January](#)

37 [Letter from the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing to the Chair dated 17 March 2021 following up his appearance before the Committee on 28 January](#)

38 Work and Pensions Committee, First Report of Session 2019–21, [DWP's response to the coronavirus outbreak](#), HC 178, para 82

39 [PQ 49575](#)

40 Office for Statistics Regulation, [Response from Daniel Shaw to Ed Humpherson: Parliamentary question response](#), 3 July 2020

such a condition was detrimental to those individuals.⁴¹

19. We do not accept the Government's reasoning for why it cannot produce figures on the number of people subject to the no recourse to public funds condition. The cost and administrative burden of doing so are not sufficient arguments, given how useful the data would be. Without transparent data, it is impossible to know how many people are subject to the condition, what support they need and how much it would cost to fund policy proposals. We recommend that the Government collect and publish data on how many people have no recourse to public funds, including how many of these people are estimated to be homeless, and the reasons for NRPF being imposed.

What assistance are local authorities allowed to offer people suffering from homelessness and subject to no recourse to public funds?

20. Non-UK nationals may have conditions imposed on their leave to enter or remain, including relating to employment and access to public funds. A range of different conditions can apply depending on the type of leave granted. No recourse to public funds (NRPF) is imposed on individuals with limited leave to enter to visit, study, work, or join family in the UK; it is also imposed on a person who does not have any leave to enter or remain but are present in the UK. The definition of public funds includes homelessness assistance under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as well as benefits such as welfare and social housing. Liz Davies, Joint Head of Chamber at Garden Court Chambers, explained the legal confusion caused by Everyone In:

The guidance issued by the Government in March, which is what we call Everyone In, was about accommodating rough sleepers who would not be accommodated under part 7, usually either because they do not have a priority need or, as you say, because they have no recourse to public funds.

[...] The extent to which councils are currently under any sort of guidance to be accommodating rough sleepers who do not fall within part 7 of the Housing Act is very, very unclear. The most recent pronouncement from MHCLG was on 5 November, where it said, "We want to move forward with our goal of eliminating rough sleeping." It is not at all clear that there is current guidance that all rough sleepers should be accommodated.

The NRPF cohort is even more complicated. While the March guidance said it included people who were not eligible because of NRPF, their immigration status, in May and June the Government said, confusingly, "That is not the case unless there is a risk to life." Analysing that from a legal point of view, it suggests that, if you are a rough sleeper with NRPF and your human right to your life being protected is at risk, you should be accommodated, but otherwise you should not.

[...] Half the councils in the country are prepared to offer accommodation to [NRPF individuals] and roughly half are not. Both of them believe they are acting lawfully.⁴²

41 Office for Statistics Regulation, [Response from Daniel Shaw to Ed Humpherson: Parliamentary question response](#), 3 July 2020

42 [Q145](#)

21. People with the NRPF condition can be supported by a local authority when duties are engaged under the Children Act 1989 or the Care Act 2014, but many adults accommodated through Everyone In would not qualify for such assistance.⁴³ Non-UK nationals face additional restrictions for eligibility under the Care Act 2014 based on immigration status. While section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (known as the 'general power of competence') confers a general power on local authorities to benefit the persons resident or present in its area, they are precluded from giving assistance under this power where other legislation prohibits it.⁴⁴

22. We also received evidence that this general power of competence to help individuals with NRPF was limited under case law: Henry St Clair Miller said "under current case law", it was "excluded through the exclusions that already exist in relation to the Housing Act".⁴⁵ On the other hand, Garden Court Chambers argued that, in their view, the powers under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 must be exercised by local authorities to accommodate rough sleepers where it is necessary to avoid a breach of their human or EU rights, noting that in such circumstances it was not a barrier to support if they were ineligible under the Housing Act.⁴⁶ Shelter have noted that the High Court held in 2018 that a local authority could not provide an EEA national with no right to reside accommodation because of section 185 of the Housing Act 1996, which casts doubt on a prior judgment that a local authority must provide accommodation to avoid a breach of article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.⁴⁷

23. In our interim report, following early evidence in our inquiry that councils were unsure of their legal position regarding individuals with no recourse to public funds, we recommended the following:

While the Government believes the legal position is clear, local authorities do not. In addition, we ask the Government to urgently publish guidance on councils' use of discretion in these circumstances and clarify what people can or cannot claim when they have no recourse to public funds.

In response, the Government said that local authorities had powers "to use their judgment in assessing what support they may lawfully give to each person on an individual basis," and that they would be used to making such decisions on accommodating individuals who might otherwise be ineligible, during extreme weather for example, where there is a risk to life.⁴⁸

24. In our first evidence session, the then Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing told us that the task force, led by Dame Louise Casey (now Baroness Casey), would be working on how to help the individuals in this cohort.⁴⁹ When we took evidence from Baroness Casey, we asked her what progress she had made before she stepped down. Baroness Casey told us that she expected it to be more straightforward and did not realise "how

43 NRPF Network ([IOC 346](#)), para 21

44 s2, Localism Act 2011

45 [Q216](#)

46 Garden Court Chamber ([IOC 355](#)), para 9

47 The cases are respectively: R (on the application of AR) v Hammersmith and Fulham LBC [2018] EWHC 3453 (Admin); R (on the application of GS) v Camden LBC [2016] EWHC 1762 (Admin). Source: Shelter, [Help for adults from abroad who are ineligible for homelessness assistance](#), accessed 10 February 2021.

48 MHCLG, Government Response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on protecting rough sleepers and renters, [CP 248](#)

49 [Q44](#)

complicated and how just angst-ridden this whole issue is ... Everyone just climbs into their bunker and stays there. There is not a lot of problem solving”.⁵⁰ She concluded that there was an inherent clash between immigration policy and homelessness, which only people in homelessness were trying to problem-solve, and that no recourse to public funds was a “mismanaged policy”.⁵¹

25. The Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing told us “it feels like a surprising position” for councils and lawyers to say they were unclear what the current law was.⁵² The consistent Government position since the start of our inquiry has been that local authorities can use their general powers of competence where necessary, similar to how they use it during cold weather via the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). On 4 May, the Secretary of State told us that local authorities could use this discretion to support those with NRPF, calling it a well-established practice of “limited intervention” where there is risk to life.⁵³ Similarly, Jeremy Pocklington, the Permanent Secretary, told the Public Accounts Committee in January that “local authorities can offer support where there is risk to life during the pandemic, as they do in periods of extreme weather”.⁵⁴

26. Our inquiry found that this comparison was flawed. Westminster City Council pointed out that the expectations of Everyone In led to it establishing “health protocols for rough sleepers, addressing their wider medical needs such as clinical nursing support, temperature checks, medication management and drug and alcohol support”.⁵⁵ Henry St Clair Miller, representing the NRPF Network, explained:

I would start with this by disagreeing, from the perspective of the NRPF network, with the Minister for Rough Sleeping’s statement to the Committee that the response that local authorities were doing during Everyone In was somehow the same as what we might do in relation to cold weather shelters, and that therefore there was really no difference in this area of work. That was not chiming with the amount of effort and support that was taking place on the frontline. We were doing long-term interventions with wraparound support. We were dealing with self-contained units with subsistence payments. I know there might be some authorities that did not do that, but I cannot answer for that. We were going beyond the statutory safety net that we were familiar with in relation to families and adults with care needs. We were doing all that above and beyond.⁵⁶

27. Of course, this wraparound work was beneficial, and rightly praised. For example, the LGA noted in their lessons learnt from Everyone In that councils “were able to carry out comprehensive needs assessments, with multiple agencies encouraging engagement and providing holistic services”.⁵⁷ Baroness Casey praised the work by the NHS in partnership with homelessness charities who helped councils take a health-led approach in how Everyone In “cohered and triaged people” which lifted pressure off the NHS; she

50 [Q253](#)

51 [Q253](#)

52 [Q309](#)

53 Oral evidence taken before the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, 4 May 2020, Session 2019–21, HC 302, [Q113](#)

54 Oral evidence taken before the Public Accounts Committee, 25 January 2021, Session 2019–21, HC 934, [Q33](#)

55 Westminster City Council ([IOC 330](#))

56 [Q227](#)

57 Local Government Association ([IOC 323](#))

pointed out that Médecins Sans Frontières was present in one of the hotels to ensure the best medical care.⁵⁸ The British Medical Association praised the “improved collaboration at a local level between Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), public health, local authorities and housing departments in England”.⁵⁹

28. When we questioned him, the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing agreed to write to us to clarify which Government funding streams to help homeless people and rough sleepers during the pandemic could be spent on individuals with NRPF. The Minister wrote to us setting out the funding streams that the Government put in place to help rough sleepers in England from March 2020, but simply reiterated the position that it was up to local authorities to judge for themselves whom they should spend it on.⁶⁰ In comparison, the Cold Weather Fund, which the Government has provided over the last few years to support local authorities’ SWEP plans, is explicitly allowed to be spent on “people who are not usually eligible for services, such as those with no recourse to public funds and non-UK nationals”.⁶¹

29. There are substantial differences between a well-established severe weather emergency protocol, which provides short-term accommodation, often in night shelters or other communal spaces, and providing long-term accommodation in self-contained en-suite units with significant wraparound support. While there can be some similarities—especially the principle of ‘In for Good’—this is undermined by the different way the Government stipulates how funding can be used for Severe Weather Emergency Protocol versus Everyone In. The Everyone In funding since May 2020 cannot be spent on individuals with no recourse to public funds, in comparison to the Cold Weather Fund, which can be spent on everyone. Limiting spending in such a manner undermines a broad discretionary power and prevents local authorities from helping whomever they like, unless they spend out of their own pocket.

The impact of individual discretion on the local government response

30. Our witnesses told us that the advice by the Government that local authorities can use their discretion in individual cases has led to a variety of responses across the country. While it was clear whom councils should help in March 2020, we heard it is now less clear whether the Government expects councils to be taking in new rough sleepers subject to NRPF, and whether it considers it acceptable for councils to evict currently accommodated rough sleepers with NRPF if it determines it has no legal duty to house them. We heard evidence that some people in this cohort are already being asked to leave accommodation, due to councils believing Everyone In to have finished. Fiona Colley of Homeless Link told us that that was the case in most of London and likely other places.⁶² Crisis wrote in its written evidence that:

While we recognise the Government has highlighted the continuation of the Everyone In scheme alongside the recently announced Protect Programme, our research shows that some local authorities have already started putting in place restrictions on who they help.⁶³

58 [Q274](#)

59 [British Medical Association \(IOC 353\)](#)

60 [Letter from the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing to the Chair dated 17 March 2021 following up his appearance before the Committee on 28 January](#)

61 Homeless Link, [MHCLG - 2019 Cold Weather Fund application guidance](#)

62 [Q230](#)

63 [Crisis \(IOC 345\)](#)

31. Herefordshire Council said that the Government's change from asking local authorities to bring Everyone In to only helping new rough sleepers who met the normal threshold test led to a 'two tier' system locally.⁶⁴ Fiona Colley of Homeless Link and Steve Douglas of St. Mungo's agreed that practice was variable across different parts of the country.⁶⁵ Councillor Rachel Blake, representing the LGA, said:

Yes, sadly, it is fair to say that there is [confusion among local authorities about whether Everyone In has finished]. The level of pressure on local authorities, in terms of identifying property to move people on to and the support that is needed, means that local authorities are having to make really difficult decisions. I would not call them choices, to be honest; they are not real choices about who to help, but it is fair to say that there is real confusion about what approach should be taken.⁶⁶

32. It is difficult to ascertain precisely how this changed councils' response on the ground, but we heard from many different witnesses that overall, it caused wide variation in local authority responses from May onwards. For example, Crisis said their research revealed that "some local authorities have already started putting in place restrictions on who they help".⁶⁷ Shelter told us that, as a result of the shift in direction from the Department, "people were increasingly turned away from councils, and many of those who had initially been accommodated were asked to leave because there was no legal duty to accommodate".⁶⁸

Falling through the gaps

33. On 17 December we heard from Abeo, who moved to the UK when he was 18. He subsequently went to prison and upon his release, his indefinite leave to remain was revoked:

A deportation order has been signed against me. Because of political reasons, I could not be deported back to my country. I got released from the detention centre and immigration put a restriction on me, saying that I am not allowed to work, claim benefits, study or travel. That made me become destitute and homeless. I have been homeless for two years.⁶⁹

Abeo slept rough and stayed in friends' houses occasionally, but stated that since the start of the pandemic "no one wants to let me stay in their house".⁷⁰ Via a charity organisation, he was put in touch with his local council once Everyone In started, but his council refused because he had no recourse to public funds and he continued sleeping on the streets.⁷¹

34. Subsequently, a nearby council offered Abeo a place in a B&B for three days without food and money, but that council then put him back on the streets because his last address was in a different borough. When he refused to leave due to his underlying health condition putting him at risk of covid-19 on the streets, the police physically removed him. Abeo

64 Herefordshire Council ([IOC 335](#))

65 [Qq223-224](#)

66 [Q173](#)

67 Crisis ([IOC 345](#))

68 Shelter ([IOC 348](#))

69 [Q187](#)

70 [Q188](#)

71 [Q188](#)

was only eventually accommodated once the Public Interest Law Centre took legal action against the council: a month and a half later, the council accommodated him again—with zero financial support—but in December the council got in touch again to tell him that unless he started receiving housing benefit, he would be evicted soon. Abeo is unable to access housing benefit due to NRPF. He is being chased by debt collectors for two months' rent the council is charging him for.

35. We do not believe Abeo's story to be an isolated one. Steve Douglas of St. Mungo's said "those are the stories we hear every day".⁷² When we put Abeo's experience to the Minister, he said it was "dreadfully sad" and that in such circumstances, charities are able to step in.⁷³ Indeed, Abeo was only helped into emergency accommodation when a charity helped him mount a legal challenge to the council's decision. The Minister added that preventing people falling through the gaps was "not just the responsibility of the Government".⁷⁴

36. The Permanent Secretary admitted to the Public Accounts Committee that while "it really was a very broad intervention in the first wave of the crisis", the Government is preferring now to emphasise the importance of individual assessments, suggesting the Department understands that it has changed the framework of Everyone In.⁷⁵ However, a recent High Court ruling found that local councils do have legal powers to provide accommodation, during a public health emergency, to those who are otherwise ineligible for support. In *Ncube v Brighton and Hove City Council*, the High Court ruled that the council could have used its powers under section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 2B of the NHS Act 2006 to find accommodation for Timon Ncube, whose claim for asylum had been refused and whom the council refused to help while he was sleeping rough during the pandemic.⁷⁶

37. Everyone In by definition has finished. The Government believes Everyone In continues to exist, but by its own admission it is no longer helping everyone. The principle of Everyone In was that everyone, no matter what their normal eligibility for homelessness assistance, would be provided with accommodation to self-isolate by their local authority. The Government made a clear decision to change this from May 2020 onwards. The Permanent Secretary admitted that what at the beginning was a very broad intervention is now focused on individual assessments. This backtracking by the Government led to councils deeming individuals ineligible for support when they in fact have legal powers to support such individuals under the Local Government Act 1972 and NHS Act 2006, as shown by the *Ncube v Brighton and Hove City Council* case. The Government is trapped between its exemplary humanitarian efforts to accommodate these individuals, and its insistence that its immigration policies have no flexibility, even during a pandemic. We do not think it is sufficient, as the Minister told us, to pass this responsibility on to charities and turn a blind eye to their predicament.

38. We call on the Government to return to the spirit of the early pandemic and re-commit to Everyone In. This requires providing legal clarity for local authorities. We recommend the Government immediately issues clear guidance to local authorities

72 [Q227](#)

73 [Q291](#)

74 [Q291](#)

75 Oral evidence taken before the Public Accounts Committee, 25 January 2021, Session 2019–21, HC 934, [Q36](#)

76 Shelter blog, [High Court rules councils can legally accommodate street homeless people with 'No Recourse to Public Funds' - will the government now provide proper guidance?](#) 10 March 2021

stating that they can and should use their legal powers under the Local Government Act 1972 and NHS Act 2006 to find accommodation for those otherwise ineligible for support during a public health emergency. The guidance should clearly state that this applies whenever there is a lockdown or other strict national restrictions due to a public health emergency, whether for any current or further covid-19 measures, or any other future pandemic. The Government should ensure that this guidance includes clear instructions on which funding streams can be used to support people with NRPF who are homeless or at risk of homelessness during the crisis.

Ending rough sleeping by 2024: the manifesto commitment

39. The Government was elected in December 2019 with a manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by May 2024, three years earlier than the previous government's target of the end of 2027.⁷⁷ During our inquiry, we sought to understand whether the Government had a clear plan for how to meet this commitment yet and how the experience of Everyone In and the difficulties with NRPF might provide important lessons to take forward.

Lessons from Everyone In

40. Our witnesses told us there were important lessons to learn from the successes of Everyone In, as well as some of the difficulties. The National Housing Federation wrote that "Everyone In' showed what can be achieved with resources, coordination and commitment."⁷⁸ One of the NAO's key conclusions from its investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the pandemic was that, for the first time, Everyone In had provided data on the "potential scale of the population which either sleeps rough or is at risk of doing so".⁷⁹

41. In November, the LGA published its report on lessons learnt from the Everyone In response to covid-19 and how this can inform future policy and practice.⁸⁰ The LGA highlighted the following successes:

- rapid and expansive response in picking up and accommodating people sleeping rough and people living in unsafe conditions at risk of sleeping rough, including those not normally eligible for public services due to immigration status;
- comprehensive needs assessment, including health, substance abuse and specific needs of women;
- characteristics of hotel accommodation giving important feelings of safety and self-worth (for example, adequate washing and laundry facilities);
- multi-agency services coming to the emergency accommodation and encouraging engagement; and

77 The Conservative and Unionist Party, [Get Brexit done, unleash Britain's potential: Manifesto 2019](#), December 2019, p30

78 National Housing Federation ([IOC 325](#))

79 NAO, [Investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the Covid-19 pandemic](#), January 2021, HC 1075, 2019–21, 20(a)

80 LGA, [Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), 19 November 2020

- rapid turnaround in moving on low needs cohort.

The LGA also highlighted two main outstanding issues:

- People with no recourse to public funds remain a dilemma.
- Shortage of affordable housing is an inevitable blocker in finding move on accommodation.

42. When we asked the Minister what lessons the Government had learned so far, he told us that “under extreme pressure, councils, charities, the Government and other organisations working together can achieve incredible things”.⁸¹ He added that the new dataset from councils on whom they had been housing during the pandemic would be “invaluable” to identifying their needs in the future.⁸²

No recourse to public funds

43. We heard evidence that no recourse to public funds and ending rough sleeping were irreconcilable long-term. Joe Lane, Principal Policy Manager, Citizens Advice, said a “very simple thing” the Government could take away from Everyone In is that it is not logically possible to end rough sleeping while housing was considered a public fund and the no recourse to public funds condition remained in place.⁸³ Baroness Casey was appointed pre-pandemic in late February 2020 to undertake a review into rough sleeping to provide the Government with advice on what additional action would be required to end rough sleeping.⁸⁴ She told us that she was appointed because the Government knew it was “a very tall order”.⁸⁵ The Baroness explained that the review had not happened due to the pandemic, but she explained her thoughts on how immigration policies influenced rough sleeping:

When I was the homelessness tsar under the Labour Administration, economic migrants were not a feature that I ever worried about. We worried about long-term homeless people and women who had been out on the street for years. We had a vulnerable cohort in 1999, which I will come to, as I think that is an issue now, but we didn't have one of the causes of homelessness being migration.

Being utterly direct and cutting straight to it, I think that one of the causes of rough sleeping is an inability to manage immigration properly. Sorry; that is really brutal. As you are probably aware, over the years I have worked in different Departments. Under Labour and then under David Cameron, I had to run interdepartmental programmes and policy. The Home Office is a pretty tough Department to get through the door, open up and say, “Hey, we need help here.” That is something they are going have to turn to, because there is no way out of this. If you want to end rough sleeping, or get the numbers back down to the hundreds, then somewhere along the line somebody has to bite off this issue with people.⁸⁶

81 [Q313](#)

82 [Q314](#)

83 [Q181](#)

84 Press release, [Prime Minister sets out new measures to end rough sleeping](#), 27 February 2020

85 [Q266](#)

86 [Q248](#)

44. The difficulties with rough sleepers with NRPF were not created by the pandemic. Jon Sparkes of Crisis told us in our first evidence session back in May 2020 that covid-19 had shone a light on the importance of challenges caused by no recourse to public funds, but that long-term it was “huge and difficult issue that needs to be resolved”.⁸⁷ Non-UK nationals are known to be a significant proportion of both the rough sleeping population, as well as recorded deaths. Analysis of CHAIN data by St. Mungo's in 2018 found that, of the 158 homeless people who died in London since 2010, 46% were non-UK nationals.⁸⁸

45. **No recourse to public funds has been an obstacle to reducing rough sleeping for a long time: the pandemic has just shone a spotlight on its impact. If the Government is serious about meeting its manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024, it must reform the no recourse to public funds policy. It is not sufficient for Ministers to say it is a long-standing immigration policy when it is in their power to change it, especially when it will prevent the Government from meeting its goal to end rough sleeping. Where two Government policies internally conflict, Ministers must work together to find a way forward.**

46. *We recommend that the Government creates a cross-Government task force to resolve the conflict between the commitment to end rough sleeping and the current policy on the no recourse to public funds condition. This will require collecting data on the number of people affected and their specific circumstances. It must involve both Ministers and officials from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office with the goal of presenting a policy proposal which will help individuals with no recourse to public funds to be supported off the streets and prevented from returning. We suggest that policy options to be explored could include: abeyance while individuals in hardship are helped into the private rented sector and employment; placing a duty on local authorities to actively intervene and find solutions; or helping people return to their country of origin where that is their preferred option. The task force must be more than a talking shop; we would expect given the urgency of the Government's 2024 deadline that the task force should report by the end of 2021, with its policy proposal in force by 2022.*

47. *No formal review of the Government's manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping has yet happened, due to the pandemic. We recommend the Government appoints a successor to Baroness Casey within the coming months to lead the review. This important work should not be delayed any further. The review must focus on learning lessons from the successes of Everyone In, most important of which is that, given a clear mandate and funding, we have the means to end most rough sleeping in this country. The Government must also reflect on its new data which shows for the first time that the scale of the problem of those rough sleeping or at risk of doing so is much higher than previously estimated.*

Increasing affordable housing

48. Even before the coronavirus crisis, demand for housing for the homeless outstripped supply. Government statistics show that 92,000 homeless families were living in temporary accommodation prior to the coronavirus crisis,⁸⁹ and the Children's Commissioner for

87 [Q17](#)

88 St. Mungo's, [Dying on the streets: the case for moving quickly to end rough sleeping](#), June 2018

89 MHCLG, [Statutory homelessness live tables, Table TA1 - Number of Households in temporary accommodation at the end of quarter, Q1 2020](#)

England estimated that around 90,000 further families were considered to be ‘hidden homeless’ as they were sofa-surfing between family and friends.⁹⁰ In our report *Building more social housing*, published in July 2020, we called on the Government to invest £10 billion a year to deliver 90,000 social rented homes a year, based on clear evidence of housing need.⁹¹ We heard throughout that inquiry that a social housebuilding programme of that scale would significantly reduce the number of people suffering from homelessness. In response, the Government said it recognised the desire for social rented homes, but said that it preferred to maximise taxpayers’ money by focusing on affordable rent, shared ownership, rent to buy and first homes.⁹²

49. Knowing that social housing was a long-term problem for this country, we concluded in our interim report that:

The Government must ensure that rough sleepers do not end up back on the streets due to a lack of suitable housing. We recommend the Government act to boost the immediate availability of appropriate supported housing, by providing targeted grant funding for councils and housing associations to acquire properties.

We were happy to see the Government agreeing with our approach through its Next Steps Accommodation Programme when it brought forward £161 million to support the accelerated delivery of 3,300 units by March 2021.⁹³ Of that £161 million, £130 million was capital funding for the acquisition or renovation of homes.⁹⁴ According to the NAO, as of September 2020, the Government remained “reasonably confident” that the 3,300 units would be delivered in time.⁹⁵ *We ask the Government to update us on whether it has achieved its target of delivering 3,300 housing units by March 2021 through its Next Steps Accommodation Programme.*

50. Most homeless people in England spend time in short-term supported accommodation, such as hostels, before moving into long-term independent accommodation (which can include supported housing). In this short-term supported accommodation—called move-on accommodation—individuals are expected to engage in treatment to address their needs. Once ready to “move on”, people then look to secure an affordable option to live independently. The system overall needs a pipeline of suitable accommodation throughout each stage to enable it to work.

51. Throughout our inquiry, we heard concerns that the ongoing shortage of social housing and affordable rents in the private rented sector were causing difficulties finding settled accommodation for rough sleepers housed during Everyone In. The Salvation Army told us there was a shortage of accommodation options available, especially in areas where the rough sleeping count is high, giving an example in Manchester where rough sleepers continue to be housed in a night club.⁹⁶ The National Federation of ALMOs explained

90 Children’s Commissioner for England ([IOC 270](#))

91 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Third Report of Session 2019–21, [Building more social housing](#), HC 173, para 91

92 [Letter from the Minister for Housing to the Chair dated 11 November 2020 concerning the long-term delivery of social and affordable rented housing](#)

93 MHCLG, [6,000 new supported homes as part of landmark commitment to end rough sleeping](#), 24 May 2020

94 MHCLG, [Next Steps Accommodation Programme](#), 18 July 2020

95 NAO, [Investigation into the housing of rough sleepers during the Covid-19 pandemic](#), January 2021, HC 1075, 2019–21

96 Salvation Army ([IOC 329](#))

that:

Without the necessary affordable accommodation for people to move into, it is extremely challenging to keep a flow of people moving through the system and prevent them getting stuck in emergency or temporary accommodation. While there are general affordability problems across the country, there is also an acute shortage of one-bed properties in many places. Since 'Everyone In' is targeted at rough sleepers, it is one-bed properties which are urgently needed. While local authorities can try to mobilise private rented landlords and housing associations to provide move-on accommodation for this wave of people, all the evidence shows that we need a massive investment in new genuinely affordable homes—at least 90,000 to 100,000 a year—in order to clear waiting lists and prevent people falling into homelessness. The Government's current ambition through the Affordable Homes Programme is just not sufficient to deliver this.⁹⁷

Temporary accommodation

52. One of the most obvious symptoms of a lack of affordable housing is the growing numbers of families in temporary accommodation. A recent Shelter analysis concluded that around 253,000 people were homeless and living in temporary accommodation, the highest for 14 years.⁹⁸ Temporary accommodation is a broad term which covers various types of living arrangements, including units with shared bathrooms and kitchens, as well as fully self-contained units. Councils use the private sector, short-term lets in social housing, hostel/refuge accommodation, B&Bs, modular housing, and even mobile homes.⁹⁹ Government guidance is clear that B&Bs are considered a last resort because of the detrimental impact on the health and development on children from living in one room with the whole family.¹⁰⁰ The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 provides that homeless families with children should not be placed in B&Bs except in an emergency and only for a maximum of six weeks.

53. There is emerging evidence that poor quality and overcrowded housing might contribute to worse covid-19 outcomes. A study by Inside Housing in May 2020 found a link between local areas which used the most temporary accommodation and higher covid-19 mortality rates.¹⁰¹ Similarly, a link was found between areas with the highest social housing shortages and higher covid-19 deaths. University College London recently announced a new, nationwide study on the impact that covid-19 has had on children under-five living in temporary accommodation, highlighting the fact that families in temporary accommodation are “at greater risk from covid-19 as they often cannot follow the basic guidelines that have been promoted throughout the pandemic—namely social distancing, self-isolating and handwashing—due to overcrowded housing, shared facilities or other issues”.¹⁰²

97 National Federation of ALMOs (IOC 318)

98 Shelter, [Homeless and forgotten: surviving lockdown in temporary accommodation](#), December 2020

99 [Households in temporary accommodation \(England\)](#), SN 02110, House of Commons Library, 26 November 2020, section 2.2

100 MHCLG, [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#), paras 17.31–33

101 Inside Housing, ['The housing pandemic: four graphs showing the link between COVID-19 deaths and the housing crisis'](#), 29 May 2020

102 UCL, ['The invisible dilemma? Children in temporary accommodation during Covid-19'](#), 2 February 2021

54. The London School of Economics held a roundtable in July 2020 to discuss temporary housing in London. It concluded that “almost nothing has been said about [households already in temporary accommodation] and no additional funding has been made available to try to help them into settled accommodation”.¹⁰³ Baroness Casey told us that “we have extraordinary levels of people in temporary accommodation”.¹⁰⁴ She added that while it was understandable the Government had focused on street homelessness during the pandemic so far, “such a high-profile concentration on [visible homelessness] is that it takes the attention from other aspects of homelessness”,¹⁰⁵ and called on the Government to set out a clear housing strategy around low-income and very low-income people.¹⁰⁶

55. There has been a lack of recent focus from the Government on wider homelessness, including those suffering in cramped, poor quality temporary accommodation for long periods of time during the pandemic. The Government must ensure its increased homelessness funding does not only benefit those suffering from visible homelessness.

56. The Government will fail in its homelessness objectives if it continues to oversee the delivery of just a few thousand social rent homes a year. The ongoing shortage of social housing is a clear, long-term obstacle to finding suitable accommodation for people suffering homelessness, as well as forcing local authorities to spend hundreds of million pounds to house families in temporary accommodation with no end in sight. Similarly, there are insufficient affordable options in the private rented sector. The Government continues to believe—without evidence—that its tenure-blind target of 300,000 is sufficient to meet its homelessness goals. *We reiterate our recommendation from our report into social housing that the Government must invest in a social housebuilding programme that will deliver 90,000 social rented homes a year for at least the next ten years.*

103 LSE, [Rough sleeping and homelessness: moving on from the Covid-19 emergency](#), 19 August 2020

104 [Q257](#)

105 [Q264](#)

106 [Q265](#)

Protecting the private rented sector

The 'eviction ban' has changed over time

57. On 26 March 2020, the Secretary of State tweeted that “no one should lose their home as a result of the coronavirus epidemic”.¹⁰⁷ This formed the basis of the Government's early interventions into the private rented sector: the Coronavirus Act 2020 amended the notice period for landlords seeking possession from two months to three months,¹⁰⁸ and the courts issued Practice Direction 51Z which suspended all ongoing and any new housing possession claims for 90 days until 25 June, subject to review and extension.¹⁰⁹ In our interim report, we focused on the risks of a cliff-edge when eviction proceedings could begin again in June. On 5 June, the Government extended the ban on eviction proceedings until 23 August.¹¹⁰ The Government subsequently extended the ban to 20 September 2020.¹¹¹

58. The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Residential Tenancies: Protection from Eviction) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force on 29 August and amended the notice period from three months to six months in most cases.¹¹² Pre-Coronavirus Act notice periods were re-implemented for anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse. Where at least six months of rent was unpaid (defined as “substantial rent arrears”), the notice period was four weeks long, whereas it remained six months' notice for rent arrears under six months.

59. From 20 September, courts could resume eviction hearings. The Secretary of State said that when the courts would prioritise the “most egregious cases”—the ones putting the most strain on litigants—including claims issued before the ban started in March 2020, so-called “extreme rent arrears”, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, and illegal occupiers.¹¹³ On 17 September 2020, the Master of Rolls' working group on possession proceedings published its overall arrangements. It defines “extreme rent arrears” as “arrears equal to at least (i) 12 months' rent or (ii) 9 months' rent where that amounts to more than 25% of a private landlord's total annual income from any source”.¹¹⁴

60. Once a court issues a warrant for possession, tenants are sent an eviction notice which specifies the date they must vacate the property; if tenants do not leave, court-appointed bailiffs can be sent to evict them. Ten days before the expiration of the ban on eviction proceedings, the Secretary of State informed the House that “guidance will be issued to bailiffs to ensure that no enforcement of possession orders will proceed where local measures are in place to protect public health”, as well as extending this protection to all tenants “in the weeks of Christmas”.¹¹⁵ As a result, on 21 October the Lord Chancellor wrote to the representative bodies of bailiffs requesting that evictions not be enforced by

107 Twitter, <https://twitter.com/robertjenrick/status/1243299372894486535?lang=en>

108 Coronavirus Act 2020, s81 & Schedule 29

109 Courts and Tribunal Judiciary, [117th Practice Direction Update to the Civil Procedure Rules - Coronavirus Pandemic related](#), 27 March 2020

110 MHCLG, [Ban on evictions extended by 2 months to further protect renters](#), 5 June 2020

111 MHCLG, [Jenrick extends ban on evictions and notice periods](#), 21 August 2020

112 The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Residential Tenancies: Protection from Eviction) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020, SI No. 914

113 [HCWS446](#)

114 The Master of the Rolls (as Head of Civil Justice) Working Group on Possession Proceedings, [Overall arrangements for possession proceedings in England and Wales](#), 17 September 2020

115 [HCWS446](#)

bailiffs where the Local Alert Level was High or Very High (Tiers 2 and 3 respectively), as well as the period between 11 December 2020 and 11 January 2021.¹¹⁶

61. Following a legal challenge on whether this letter was binding,¹¹⁷ the Government laid The Public Health (Coronavirus) (Protection from Eviction and Taking Control of Goods) (England) Regulations 2020 which came into force on 17 November 2020. These Regulations put the 'bailiff ban' on a legislative footing, preventing the enforcement of repossession orders by bailiffs against tenants except in specific circumstances, such as trespassing, anti-social behaviour, death of a tenant, and domestic violence. Importantly, the Regulations also permitted repossession where there were "substantial rent arrears", which were defined under Regulation 4 as unpaid rent arrears at least equivalent to 9 months' rent, disregarding any arrears accrued after 23 March 2020.

62. In response to the third national lockdown, the Government extended the 'bailiff ban' for a further 6 weeks to the 21 February,¹¹⁸ and subsequently extended the ban further until 31 March and then again until 31 May.¹¹⁹¹²⁰ The new Regulations for the 2021 'bailiff ban' changed the definition of "substantial rent arrears" to:

a case involves substantial rent arrears if the amount of unpaid rent arrears outstanding is at least an amount equivalent to 6 months' rent.¹²¹

The requirement to disregard arrears accrued since the beginning of the pandemic was removed. The Government explained its reasoning for the change in the explanatory memorandum to the statutory instrument:

The Government believes that it is proportionate to widen that exemption to cases where a possession order was granted on the grounds of rent arrears and where more than six months of rent is outstanding. The Government has made this change in order to balance the impact of the extension of the restriction on the enforcement of evictions on landlords, while continuing to protect tenants from eviction.¹²²

63. The change to the definition of substantial rent arrears was made after we had collected evidence for our inquiry. Nonetheless, when we spoke to housing lawyers in December, they criticised the way the Government had continued to change eviction law at the last minute. Giles Peaker, Partner at Anthony Gold Solicitors, said the current position had arisen "through a hotchpotch of interventions and last-minute secondary legislation that it is very hard for anyone to grasp".¹²³ Simon Mullings, representing the Housing Law Practitioners' Association (HLPAs), said while he was startled by the level of complexity that had been added, the HLPAs welcomed the assertive measures to protect renters, but was less positive about the lack of "long-term strategy about how to protect the sector".¹²⁴

¹¹⁶ [Correspondence from the Lord Chancellor to the High Court Enforcement Officers Association](#), 21 October 2020

¹¹⁷ Local Government Lawyer, [Ministry of Justice faces judicial review over requirement on bailiffs not to enforce evictions](#), 16 November 2020

¹¹⁸ The Public Health (Coronavirus) (Protection from Eviction) (England) Regulations 2021

¹¹⁹ MHCLG, [Housing Secretary extends support for renters during pandemic](#), 14 February 2021

¹²⁰ MHCLG, [Further support for commercial and residential tenants](#), 10 March 2021

¹²¹ The Public Health (Coronavirus) (Protection from Eviction) (England) Regulations 2021

¹²² Explanatory Memorandum to The Public Health (Coronavirus) (Protection from Eviction) (England) Regulations 2021, [para 7.8](#)

¹²³ [Q139](#)

¹²⁴ [Q139](#)

64. When we put our concerns about the change in the definition of substantial rent arrears to the Minister, he told us his data showed that “the median of people who are in rent arrears will have one to two months’ rent arrears”.¹²⁵ When we pressed the Minister on why the Government had changed its mind on the definition between September and January, he said “it almost feels like the punitive end of the scale in terms of landlords having to accept nine months of rent arrears, whereas a more reasonable position for both parties feels like six, given that most people have less than two months”.¹²⁶ We asked the Minister to provide us with the data which underpinned the decision to change the definition. The Minister replied that “[t]he EHS [English Housing Survey] resilience survey does not provide information on the quantum of rent arrears by value or how it equates to months of arrears”.¹²⁷ Instead, the Government’s change of definition of substantial rent arrears from nine to six months relied on comparing stakeholders’ estimates of the value of rent arrears to average rents across England:

“In December, the National Residential Landlord Association estimated that 83% of those tenants who were in rent arrears had arrears of £1,000 or less. Based on comparing this to average rents (about £870 per month across England according to the EHS), the estimate is that where renters are in arrears, the majority are likely to be 1–2 month(s) in arrears.”¹²⁸

Given the wide variation in rental values across the country, we do not accept the Minister’s assumption that most tenants who are in rent arrears have one to two months’ arrears as a valid basis for changing the definition of substantial rent arrears from nine to six months.

65. The Government is in danger of breaking its pledge that no one should lose their home as a result of the pandemic. We have seen no satisfactory evidence for why the Government changed the definition of substantial rent arrears to permit tenants who have built up arrears only during the pandemic to be evicted. It is also worrying that this significant change was not debated in the House until two weeks after the Regulations came into force.

66. We call on the Government to publish a proper exit plan for the private rented sector from national and local restrictions. The Government has tinkered regularly with the eviction framework, usually at the very last minute. Now the Government has published its roadmap for how to exit national restrictions, hopefully for the final time, it should set out how it intends for the sector to transition out of the pandemic.

The rent arrears crisis

67. In our interim report, we considered the issue of rent arrears. Our evidence at that time had suggested a wide range of policy solutions. We concluded that we would continue our inquiry and take further evidence on policy options for rent arrears, aware that the potential for substantial rent arrears to build was significant during the pandemic.

125 [Q317](#)

126 [Q318](#)

127 [Letter from the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing to the Chair dated 17 March 2021 following up his appearance before the Committee on 28 January](#)

128 [Letter from the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing to the Chair dated 17 March 2021 following up his appearance before the Committee on 28 January](#)

68. The Government has consistently made it clear that tenants should continue to pay their rent where possible:

Tenants should continue to pay rent and abide by all other terms of their tenancy agreement to the best of their ability. The government has made a strong package of financial support available to tenants, and where they can pay the rent as normal, they should do. Tenants who are unable to do so should speak to their landlord at the earliest opportunity.

In many if not most cases, the covid-19 outbreak will not affect tenants' ability to pay rent. If your ability to pay will be affected, it's important to have an early conversation with your landlord. Rent levels agreed in your tenancy agreement remain legally due and you should discuss with your landlord if you are in difficulty.¹²⁹

In its written evidence, the Government set out how it has helped tenants through its wider temporary welfare reforms and covid-19 support packages:

- Increasing Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by up to £1,040 over the year (the £20 weekly increase, currently ending at the end of September 2021, subject to review)
- Lifting Local Housing Allowance to the 30th percentile from April 2020 (this represents an investment of nearly £1 billion). In 2021/22, LHA rates will be maintained in cash terms.
- Supporting businesses to pay staff salaries through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, extended until September 2021.
- An extra £40m to local authorities to support Discretionary Housing Payments from local authorities to tenants entitled to housing benefits.¹³⁰

How many tenants are in arrears and how significant are the arrears?

69. There is no data on the specific number of tenants in rent arrears. The scale of the problem can only be measured via representative surveys of the sector to produce estimates, of which there have been many over the course of the pandemic. For example, the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) estimated in December 2020 that 7% of renters, over 800,000 people, in England and Wales had built up rent arrears since March 2020.¹³¹ The NRLA further estimated that the average arrears were between £251 and £500, though 18% of renters in arrears had debts over £1,000, which would equate to around 150,000 renters. NRLA research in August—four months earlier—found that 5% of renters were in debt, showing a clear increase in the latter part of 2020.

70. Citizens Advice estimated in January 2021 that half a million renters were in arrears, with an average debt of £730, with 58% of those behind on rent having no previous rent arrears pre-pandemic.¹³² The Resolution Foundation estimated that the current rates of rent arrears are at least double the pre-covid-19 'norm'.¹³³ In 'normal times', there is

129 MHCLG, [Guidance for landlords and tenants](#), last updated 8 January 2021

130 MHCLG ([IOC 351](#))

131 NRLA, [More than 800,000 renters in arrears due to Covid](#), 22 December 2020

132 Citizens Advice, [Half a million renters in arrears as evictions set to resume](#), 5 January 2021

133 Resolution Foundation, [Getting ahead on falling behind: Tackling the UK's building arrears crisis](#), February 2021

usually around 3% of private sector tenants who are in arrears.¹³⁴

71. The Minister told us the evidence he had seen suggested that “the median of people who are in rent arrears will have one to two months’ rent arrears”.¹³⁵ The Minister added that the results from the Household Resilience Study from December showed that around 6% to 7% of tenants were in arrears, but did not see that as particularly significant compared to the usual amount of arrears, which he said was around 4%.¹³⁶ We asked the Minister to share the estimates he had seen of how many households have any rent arrears, rent arrears of 6 months or more, and rent arrears of 9 months or more. As the Minister’s reply to our letter indicates, the Government neither has official government statistics on the value of rent arrears on which to base its decisions, nor does it have access to estimates measured in months of arrears. **We are concerned by the lack of robust data available to the Government on the value of rent arrears and how it equates to months of arrears, and by the impact this lack of data may have on policy-making.**

72. Rent arrears are not stationary: they tend to be exacerbated as time goes on. In November, the Chancellor of the Exchequer warned the House as part of his Spending Review that the number of unemployed people in the UK would increase by a further million people to 2.6 million overall by mid-2021.¹³⁷ The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) found that renters tend to make cuts almost everywhere else to avoid slipping behind on rent, with 41% renters in arrears using savings to offset a drop in income, 70% cutting back on food and 49% cutting back on heating and electricity.¹³⁸ Worryingly, JRF also found that 42% of private renters in arrears had borrowed money to manage their arrears.¹³⁹ The Resolution Foundation concluded that as the crisis continues, tenants who have survived by drawing down on savings or relying on forbearance with housings costs will likely be in danger of slipping into arrears.¹⁴⁰ As Joe Lane of Citizens Advice put it:

We were talking about kicking the can down the road. [The rent arrears crisis] is more equivalent to rolling a snowball in a snowy field. That problem is not just getting delayed; it is potentially becoming bigger as we go along. All those problems that we are not dealing with now are financial difficulties that need to work their way through the system at some point. One of the risks we have at the moment is that the financial difficulties people have experienced because of the pandemic become very longlasting financial difficulties, which weigh down on their own financial capability, on the sector, on their ability to consume and on their ability to reenter the rental market. It is really important that the Government do not see this shortterm protection as something that has been completely effective. There is still a big problem there.¹⁴¹

134 MHCLG, [English housing survey: headline report, 2019–20](#), published December 2020 (results collected between March and April 2020)

135 [Q317](#)

136 [Qs 323, 333](#)

137 HC Deb, 25 November 2020, [col 828](#) [Commons Chamber]

138 JRF, [Struggling renters need a lifeline this winter](#), November 2020

139 JRF, [Struggling renters need a lifeline this winter](#), November 2020

140 Resolution Foundation, [Getting ahead on falling behind: Tackling the UK’s building arrears crisis](#), February 2021

141 [Q152](#)

The impact of increased rent arrears

73. When normal eviction proceedings return, tenants in rent arrears can be evicted under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 at the end of a fixed-term tenancy or during a periodic tenancy at any time, which requires no specific reason for possession, and under mandatory ground 8 of section 8 of the 1988 Act if rent arrears are at least 8 weeks' or more. As we made clear in our interim report, the Government made no changes to housing law, and any pre-action protocol makes no difference to section 21 or section 8 claims which are not discretionary:

Unless the Government amends existing housing legislation, its plans to introduce a pre-action protocol to the private rented sector will be toothless and will fail to prevent a cliff edge of evictions once the moratorium on possession cases ends. We recommend the Government bring forward legislation to amend the 1985 and 1988 Housing Acts to allow judges to use discretion where a tenant is in rent arrears due to the coronavirus crisis for the next 12 months at a minimum. Discretion could include consideration of whether a pre-action protocol has been complied with. These amendments should be delivered through a short Bill—such as we have proposed—which must be introduced to Parliament as soon as possible.

74. In its response to our interim report, the Government said it was “exploring a number of options” to prevent an increase in evictions. It did not take forward our suggestion to amend existing housing legislation.

How many extra evictions might there be due to covid-19?

75. The English Housing Survey has found in previous years that landlords serve notice on around 10–15% of tenants in arrears, with around half of those notices leading to actual eviction.¹⁴² Generally, tenants prefer to move on rather than build up debt, or in normal times would find the money to clear debts. Based on these figures, Generation Rent estimated that around 30,000 extra households could be made homeless as a result of the pandemic this year, on top of the typical 15,000 families who are evicted each year.¹⁴³ When we put those possible evictions to our witnesses, Dr Cecil Sagoe of Shelter said that evictions relating to arrears were difficult to predict, due to the gaps in official statistics.¹⁴⁴ Joe Lane of Citizens Advice said that “the scale feels right” and that 20,000–30,000 additional possession claims were a reasonable prediction.¹⁴⁵

76. Official statistics on the number of eviction notices are not published. The Minister for Housing, Christopher Pincher, has stated that MHCLG “does not routinely collect data on the number of section 21 or section 8 notices served by landlords.”¹⁴⁶ We are concerned about the impact the use of section 21 will have on the number of court cases which will arise and the subsequent impact on court workload. While the Ministry of Justice does publish statistics on possession actions, these are not as useful as a pre-pandemic year, due to the fact that for six months of 2020, no evictions were possible. Since they restarted,

142 Whitehead et al, [Where now for the private rented sector?](#), November 2020

143 Generation Rent ([IOC 359](#))

144 [Q156](#)

145 [Q158](#)

146 [PQ 128173](#)

evictions have been limited by restrictions on exactly who can be evicted, as well as court backlogs. Therefore, current possession actions are not reliable as a tool for predicting future evictions once the normal eviction framework is back in place.

77. When we asked the Minister whether he thought an additional 30,000 evictions was a reasonable estimate, he said there were “absolutely extreme” and it would anyway “be impossible for the courts to handle them at that level”. He added that the Government’s data at the moment did not make it seem likely that such a level of evictions were likely, but if they were concerned the figures might be realised, he “would be considering alternative courses of action”.¹⁴⁷ We asked the Minister for the Government’s current estimates of the backlog of eviction cases in the private rented sector and how that had changed since the introduction of Nightingale courts and other measures designed to relieve pressure on courts. The Minister wrote that he was unable to provide absolute figures on the evictions backlog, as there is “no obligation on a party to inform the court when a case has either settled or withdrawn”.¹⁴⁸ However, the Minister provided statistics from the Ministry of Justice “showing that between October and December 2020, applications to the courts for repossession by private and social landlords were down 67%, and repossessions decreased by 93% compared to the same quarter in 2019”.¹⁴⁹ On Nightingale courts, the Minister wrote that “Nightingale courts are in use for a range of case types across HMCTS [Her Majesty’s Courts & Tribunals Service] but have not been set up exclusively for possession hearings”.¹⁵⁰

Impact on renting in the future

78. For those not evicted, either because their landlord does not pursue repossession, or because they are able to find alternative accommodation such as with family and friends, there can be further impacts. As well as being grounds for eviction, arrears can lead to a County Court Judgment (CCJ). CCJs impact credit scores, and importantly are also spotted by landlords during a credit check as part of a standard tenant referencing process, meaning they can affect a person’s ability to rent in the future. Simon Mullings of the HLPAs said it would be a slow-burn effect over many years, where we could have a large cohort of private renters “whose credit records and whose ability to reenter the private rented sector, by meeting those criteria of being able to raise a deposit, to have a reference from a landlord or to rely on a guarantor, will be shot”.¹⁵¹

Impact on landlords

79. Almost half (45%) of private landlords own just one property, with a further 38% of landlords owning between two and four properties.¹⁵² The proportion of landlords with just one property has declined from 78% in 2010, but is still nonetheless a significant number of landlords. To help landlords with their mortgage payments, the Government has arranged for mortgage payment deferrals (sometimes called “mortgage holidays”) for up to six months, since March 2020.

147 [Q327](#)

148 [Letter from the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing to the Chair dated 17 March 2021 following up his appearance before the Committee on 28 January](#)

149 [Letter from the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing to the Chair dated 17 March 2021 following up his appearance before the Committee on 28 January](#)

150 [Letter from the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing to the Chair dated 17 March 2021 following up his appearance before the Committee on 28 January](#)

151 [Q135](#)

152 MHCLG, [English private landlord survey 2018](#), January 2019

80. We heard evidence that some landlords were struggling. The NRLA, which represents over 85,000 landlords, found that around 23% of landlords had lost rental income due to covid-19, with 9% of those landlords losing more than 20% of their rental income.¹⁵³ A further survey from the NRLA discovered that almost a third of landlords planned to sell one or more properties over the next year, likely due to financial pressures. Ben Beadle, Chief Executive of the NRLA, pointed out that landlords could theoretically have tenants who owed significant rent arrears even before the pandemic who were still unable to be evicted.¹⁵⁴

81. The issue of landlord income and tenants' rent arrears are two sides of the same coin. As Simon Mullings of the HLPAs said, a financial package to help renters pay their arrears off would help landlords who "are basically people running small businesses, and this is a form of support for them".¹⁵⁵

How to solve the growing problem of rent arrears

82. Our evidence showed that most organisations in the sector were concerned about the scale of rent arrears and wanted the Government to actively intervene. In August 2020, a coalition of six leading organisations representing tenants, landlords and letting agents urged the Government to provide financial help for private renters facing rent arrears due to covid-19.¹⁵⁶ They called for a package of grants and loans worth £270 million to help renters pay their arrears due to loss of income. The coalition argued this would help both tenants keep their homes and landlords who rely on rental income for their livelihoods, as well as preventing a rise in homelessness. Ben Beadle of the NRLA said it was "not very often" that organisations representing both tenants and landlords agreed over how to solve the rent arrears crisis.¹⁵⁷

83. We spoke to five of these organisations throughout our inquiry. All were disappointed that the Government had not followed their advice. Joe Lane of Citizens Advice said it was because "the Government have a perception that they have done enough" by stopping evictions.¹⁵⁸ Dr Cecil Sagoe from Shelter said that it was "a massive issue that the Government need to address".¹⁵⁹ Liz Davies, representing HLPAs, said that she assumed the reason the Government had acted could only be "economic".¹⁶⁰ Researchers from the London School of Economics estimated that, at an average cost of £15,000 per annum per household and an average six-month stay in temporary accommodation, it would cost the Exchequer around £225 million if an extra 30,000 households were evicted.¹⁶¹

84. We explored various options for what type of financial package was needed for rent arrears, including grants, loans, and discretionary housing payments. We heard that all had strengths and weaknesses. Grants would be the most expensive option, but would avoid putting renters further in debt. There would need to be a way to target them to

153 National Residential Landlords Association ([IOC 336](#))

154 [Q161](#)

155 [Q136](#)

156 Shelter, NRLA, ARLA Propertymark, Crisis, Citizens Advice and Generation Rent. See Shelter, [Landlords, letting agents and charities urge the government to help renters clear Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rent debts and stay in their homes](#), 28 August 2020

157 [Q152](#)

158 [Q152](#)

159 [Q153](#)

160 [Q136](#)

161 Whitehead et al, [Where now for the private rented sector?](#) November 2020

those most in need.¹⁶² Low-interest loans were chosen in Scotland¹⁶³ and Wales¹⁶⁴ as the best vehicle for helping tenants, as well as in Spain.¹⁶⁵ However, we heard concerns that adding debt onto renters to pay off existing debt might cause longer-term problems.¹⁶⁶ Discretionary housing payments, as an already existing scheme, would likely be the easiest and fastest way to provide financial support, but are limited by their annual structure, and are not accessible by those with no recourse to public funds.¹⁶⁷

85. The Government appears to lack a clear strategy to deal with rising rent arrears. We are very concerned that the Government is waiting until there is a clear crisis emerging before intervening, rather than heading off a growing rent arrears crisis by taking proactive action to protect people in this country. The Minister relied on arrears statistics from a survey in August to defend the Government's response, even though he accepted that the economic circumstances would get worse over time for many households. Once arrears begin, they are likely to grow and will be exacerbated by rising unemployment throughout 2021 and as Government support schemes taper off. The Government will eventually have to come up with a policy response, because it cannot keep extending the evictions ban forever more.

86. We call on the Government to deliver a specific financial package to support tenants to repay rent arrears caused by covid-19, having considered the examples in Scotland and Wales as well as many other international examples. This should be one of the Department's top priorities. Several options have been proposed—we prefer modified discretionary housing payments—but what is important is that the Department delivers a package soon. Helping tenants pay their rent arrears, including consideration of paying direct to landlords, is the simplest and most straightforward way to avoid evictions and help landlords receive income. We received an estimate that such a rent arrears relief package will likely cost between £200 and £300 million. Given the number of potential evictions this would prevent, it would likely save the Exchequer a substantial amount in homelessness assistance.

Local housing allowance

87. Solving the short-term rent arrears problems does not solve the longer-term problem of people being unable to afford their rent over the coming years. The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate determines the maximum financial support renters can claim in the private rented sector. In response to the crisis, the Government readjusted the LHA rate to the 30th percentile of local market rents from April for universal credit and housing benefit claimants, reversing the freeze on the benefit introduced in 2016.¹⁶⁸ MHCLG estimated this was an additional £1bn of financial support and would benefit over 1m households, with claimants on average receiving £600 more a year.¹⁶⁹

88. The rise in the LHA rate was warmly welcomed in our written evidence, although several organisations called for the Government to go further. The National Residential

162 [Qq 137–138](#)

163 Scottish Government, [the Tenant Hardship Loan](#), accessed 17 February 2021

164 Welsh Government, [the Tenancy Saver Loan](#), accessed 17 February 2021

165 [Q80](#)

166 [Q80](#)

167 [Qq 170–172](#)

168 [The Social Security \(Coronavirus\) \(Further Measures\) Regulations 2020](#)

169 [MHCLG \(IOC 308\)](#)

Landlords Association, who represent around 80,000 private landlords, said many tenants were still concerned they would be unable to pay their rent despite the benefit safety net, and called for the LHA rate to be raised further to the 50th percentile.¹⁷⁰ Generation Rent made the same recommendation, as well as calling for the household benefit cap to be lifted, citing Shelter research that found tenants in London may face shortfalls of over £1000 due to the cap.¹⁷¹

89. In our interim report, we concluded that if it was the Government's intention to ensure tenants can pay rents by subsidising their income through the benefit system, it must be aware if shortfalls exist and take further action. We recommended that:

The Government must ensure that the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate is set at a level that reflects real market rents and ensures those in need are able to afford properties in their areas. We call on the Government to guarantee that the LHA rate will be maintained at the 30th percentile long-term. We also ask the Government to conduct work on what the impact on renters and the wider rental market would be of raising LHA rates further.

90. The Government responded by saying that “the increase in the Local Housing Allowance rate to the 30th percentile is not a temporary measure” and that they had no plans to reverse the increase.¹⁷² As part of the Spending Review in November 2020, the Chancellor announced the Government's plans to maintain Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in cash terms from 2021–22 onwards.¹⁷³ The Office for Budget Responsibility concluded that this meant LHA rates would fall below the 30th percentile of local rents over time.¹⁷⁴

91. Dr Cecil Sagoe told us that Shelter was “really concerned” about the Government's decision at the Spending Review, and that they wanted the LHA rate to remain “at the 30th percentile in perpetuity”.¹⁷⁵ Our written evidence—submitted before the Government's announcement of the freeze in cash terms—generally asked the Government to maintain LHA rates at the 30th percentile in real terms.¹⁷⁶

92. The Work and Pensions Committee concluded that some households would not benefit from the increasing of LHA rates to the 30th percentile because they would be hit by the benefit cap.¹⁷⁷ The most recent statistics provided by the Department of Work and Pensions from August 2020 found that the number of households capped jumped from 80,000 to 154,000 due to the pandemic.¹⁷⁸ This is because the uplifts in Universal Credit and LHA rates have not been matched by a corresponding lift in the benefit cap, meaning that some households have seen no increase to their benefits. The committee spoke to Dr Thérèse Coffey, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in September 2020, who told the

170 National Residential Landlords Association ([IOC 127](#))

171 Generation Rent ([IOC 242](#))

172 MHCLG, Government response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee Report on Protecting rough sleepers and renters, [CP 248](#)

173 HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2020](#), last updated 15 December 2020

174 Office for Budget Responsibility, [Economic and fiscal outlook](#), November 2020

175 [Q153](#)

176 For example, see the Chartered Institute of Housing ([IOC 320](#)).

177 Work and Pensions Committee, First Report of Session 2019–21, [DWP's response to the coronavirus outbreak](#), HC 178

178 DWP, [Benefit cap: number of households capped to August 2020](#), published 26 November 2020

committee that discretionary housing payments (DHPs) partly exist to help households make up the shortfall where the benefit cap prevents them paying their rent, and that DWP had asked Treasury for an increase for DHPs.¹⁷⁹

93. London Councils told us that “local authorities have the ability to support tenants to pay off arrears through the use of discretionary housing payments, but these budgets are already under pressure from a number of sources and the funding currently available will not be sufficient to support all households at risk of homelessness”, recommending that the Government needed to provide an emergency uplift to DHPs.¹⁸⁰ When we asked Eddie Hughes, the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, whether he would ask the Treasury for an increase in funding, given the doubling of households hitting the benefit cap, he said he believed other areas were more pressing.¹⁸¹

94. *The Government should review its decision to freeze Local Housing Allowance rates by maintaining the 30th percentile in cash terms only, and instead keep rates indexed at the 30th percentile long-term. This will help households across England to afford their rent.*

95. *We also call on the Government to temporarily boost funding to discretionary housing payments to meet the needs of the tens of thousands of households who are receiving no extra income from welfare increases due to the benefit cap. This will further protect households from falling into rent arrears because of the pandemic.*

The Renters' Reform Bill

96. Following a promise in its manifesto, the Government included the Renters' Reform Bill as part of the 2019 Queen's Speech. One of the main elements of the proposed Bill would be the abolition of the use of 'no fault' evictions by removing section 21 of the Housing Act 1988.¹⁸² Much of our early evidence in our inquiry called for the Government to abolish section 21 as soon as possible.¹⁸³ As long as section 21 remains on the statute book, it will remain an option for landlords. The insecurity of tenants has been put into sharp relief by the coronavirus crisis, so we were convinced that it was important that the Government moved the Renters' Reform Bill up its legislative agenda.

97. Therefore, in our interim report, we recommended that:

The Government must accelerate its plans to introduce the Renters' Reform Bill to Parliament and abolish 'no fault evictions' under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 within the next 12 months.

In its response, the Government declined our recommendation, noting that it planned to set out its next steps only “once the urgent concerns of this emergency have passed”.¹⁸⁴ The Minister for Housing, responding to our Chair in the House in September 2020, said that the Government would only introduce the Bill “when there is a sensible and stable

179 Oral evidence taken before the Work and Pensions Committee, 30 September 2020, Session 2019–21, HC 178, [Qq212–213](#)

180 London Councils ([IOC 340](#))

181 [Q340](#)

182 10 Downing Street, [The Queen's Speech 2019: background briefing notes](#), p46

183 For example, see the Chartered Institute of Housing ([IOC 160](#)) and Shelter ([IOC 234](#))

184 MHCLG, Government response to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee Report on Protecting rough sleepers and renters, [CP 248](#)

economic and social terrain on which to do it".¹⁸⁵ When we asked Eddie Hughes, the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, how it would be determined when such terrain would exist, he said he hoped it would be in the "not-too-distant future" due to the success of the vaccination programme.¹⁸⁶

98. *The Government must introduce the Renters' Reform Bill urgently. The Government does not want to introduce the Renters' Reform Bill until the pandemic has finished, but this is at odds with the approach the Government has taken with NHS reforms. The Health Secretary told the House that the pandemic made the reforms "more not less urgent". The same logic applies to the Renters' Reform Bill and the urgent need to remove section 21 'no fault' evictions. If the Government does not abolish section 21 before we come out of the pandemic, there will be serious consequences for renters.*

99. *We reiterate our offer to conduct pre-legislative scrutiny of the Renters' Reform Bill, should the Government choose to publish the Bill in draft.*

185 HC Deb, 23 September 2020, [col 950](#) [Commons Chamber]

186 [Q331](#)

Conclusions and recommendations

Summary

1. We recognise the enormous success of the early stages of the Everyone In programme, made possible through cross-sector collaboration, substantial funding, and joint working towards a clear goal.
2. *We recommend the Government immediately issues clear guidance to local authorities stating that they can and should use their legal powers under the Local Government Act 1972 and NHS Act 2006 to find accommodation for those otherwise ineligible for support during a public health emergency.*
3. *We recommend that the Government creates a cross-Government task force to resolve the conflict between the commitment to end rough sleeping and the current policy on the no recourse to public funds condition. This will require collecting data on the number of people affected and their specific circumstances.*
4. We call on the Government to publish an exit plan for the private rented sector from national and local restrictions. Now the Government has published its roadmap for how to exit national restrictions, hopefully for the final time, it should set out how it intends for the sector to transition out of the pandemic.
5. The Government will eventually have to come up with a policy response, because it cannot keep extending the evictions ban forever more.
6. *We call on the Government to deliver a specific financial package—we prefer discretionary housing payments—to support tenants to repay rent arrears caused by covid-19, in consultation with the Local Government Association and appropriate bodies representing renters and landlords. We received an estimate that this package will likely cost between £200 and £300 million. Given the number of potential evictions this would prevent, it would likely save the Exchequer a substantial amount in homelessness assistance.*

Protecting the homeless

7. We recognise the enormous success of the early stages of the Everyone In programme, made possible through cross-sector collaboration, substantial funding and joint working towards a clear goal.
8. We do not accept the Government's reasoning for why it cannot produce figures on the number of people subject to the no recourse to public funds condition. The cost and administrative burden of doing so are not sufficient arguments, given how useful the data would be. Without transparent data, it is impossible to know how many people are subject to the condition, what support they need and how much it would cost to fund policy proposals. *We recommend that the Government collect and publish data on how many people have no recourse to public funds, including how many of these people are estimated to be homeless, and the reasons for NRPF being imposed.* (Paragraph 19)

9. There are substantial differences between a well-established severe weather emergency protocol, which provides short-term accommodation, often in night shelters or other communal spaces, and providing long-term accommodation in self-contained en-suite units with significant wraparound support. While there can be some similarities—especially the principle of ‘In for Good’—this is undermined by the different way the Government stipulates how funding can be used for Severe Weather Emergency Protocol versus Everyone In. The Everyone In funding since May 2020 cannot be spent on individuals with no recourse to public funds, in comparison to the Cold Weather Fund, which can be spent on everyone. Limiting spending in such a manner undermines a broad discretionary power and prevents local authorities from helping whomever they like, unless they spend out of their own pocket. (Paragraph 29)
10. Everyone In by definition has finished. The Government believes Everyone In continues to exist, but by its own admission it is no longer helping everyone. The principle of Everyone In was that everyone, no matter what their normal eligibility for homelessness assistance, would be provided with accommodation to self-isolate by their local authority. The Government made a clear decision to change this from May 2020 onwards. The Permanent Secretary admitted that what at the beginning was a very broad intervention is now focused on individual assessments. This backtracking by the Government led to councils deeming individuals ineligible for support when they in fact have legal powers to support such individuals under the Local Government Act 1972 and NHS Act 2006, as shown by the *Ncube v Brighton and Hove City Council* case. The Government is trapped between its exemplary humanitarian efforts to accommodate these individuals, and its insistence that its immigration policies have no flexibility, even during a pandemic. We do not think it is sufficient, as the Minister told us, to pass this responsibility on to charities and turn a blind eye to their predicament. (Paragraph 37)
11. We call on the Government to return to the spirit of the early pandemic and re-commit to Everyone In. This requires providing legal clarity for local authorities. *We recommend the Government immediately issues clear guidance to local authorities stating that they can and should use their legal powers under the Local Government Act 1972 and NHS Act 2006 to find accommodation for those otherwise ineligible for support during a public health emergency. The guidance should clearly state that this applies whenever there is a lockdown or other strict national restrictions due to a public health emergency, whether for any current or further covid-19 measures, or any other future pandemic. The Government should ensure that this guidance includes clear instructions on which funding streams can be used to support people with NRPF who are homeless or at risk of homelessness during the crisis.* (Paragraph 38)
12. No recourse to public funds has been an obstacle to reducing rough sleeping for a long time: the pandemic has just shone a spotlight on its impact. If the Government is serious about meeting its manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by 2024, it must reform the no recourse to public funds policy. It is not sufficient for Ministers to say it is a long-standing immigration policy when it is in their power to change it, especially when it will prevent the Government from meeting its goal to end rough sleeping. Where two Government policies internally conflict, Ministers must work together to find a way forward. (Paragraph 45)

13. *We recommend that the Government creates a cross-Government task force to resolve the conflict between the commitment to end rough sleeping and the current policy on the no recourse to public funds condition. This will require collecting data on the number of people affected and their specific circumstances. It must involve both Ministers and officials from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office with the goal of presenting a policy proposal which will help individuals with no recourse to public funds to be supported off the streets and prevented from returning. We suggest that policy options to be explored could include: abeyance while individuals in hardship are helped into the private rented sector and employment; placing a duty on local authorities to actively intervene and find solutions; or helping people return to their country of origin where that is their preferred option. The task force must be more than a talking shop; we would expect given the urgency of the Government's 2024 deadline that the task force should report by the end of 2021, with its policy proposal in force by 2022. (Paragraph 46)*
14. *No formal review of the Government's manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping has yet happened, due to the pandemic. We recommend the Government appoints a successor to Baroness Casey within the coming months to lead the review. This important work should not be delayed any further. The review must focus on learning lessons from the successes of Everyone In, most important of which is that, given a clear mandate and funding, we have the means to end most rough sleeping in this country. The Government must also reflect on its new data which shows for the first time that the scale of the problem of those rough sleeping or at risk of doing so is much higher than previously estimated. (Paragraph 47)*
15. *We ask the Government to update us on whether it has achieved its target of delivering 3,300 housing units by March 2021 through its Next Steps Accommodation Programme.*
16. *There has been a lack of recent focus from the Government on wider homelessness, including those suffering in cramped, poor quality temporary accommodation for long periods of time during the pandemic. The Government must ensure its increased homelessness funding does not only benefit those suffering from visible homelessness. (Paragraph 55)*
17. *The Government will fail in its homelessness objectives if it continues to oversee the delivery of just a few thousand social rent homes a year. The ongoing shortage of social housing is a clear, long-term obstacle to finding suitable accommodation for people suffering homelessness, as well as forcing local authorities to spend hundreds of million pounds to house families in temporary accommodation with no end in sight. Similarly, there are insufficient affordable options in the private rented sector. The Government continues to believe—without evidence—that its tenure-blind target of 300,000 is sufficient to meet its homelessness goals. We reiterate our recommendation from our report into social housing that the Government must invest in a social housebuilding programme that will deliver 90,000 social rented homes a year for at least the next ten years. (Paragraph 56)*

Protecting the private rented sector

18. The Government is in danger of breaking its pledge that no one should lose their home as a result of the pandemic. We have seen no satisfactory evidence for why the Government changed the definition of substantial rent arrears to permit tenants who have built up arrears only during the pandemic to be evicted. It is also worrying that this significant change was not debated in the House until two weeks after the Regulations came into force. (Paragraph 65)
19. *We call on the Government to publish a proper exit plan for the private rented sector from national and local restrictions. The Government has tinkered regularly with the eviction framework, usually at the very last minute. Now the Government has published its roadmap for how to exit national restrictions, hopefully for the final time, it should set out how it intends for the sector to transition out of the pandemic.* (Paragraph 66)
20. We are concerned by the lack of robust data available to the Government on the value of rent arrears and how it equates to months of arrears, and by the impact this lack of data may have on policy-making. (Paragraph 71)
21. The Government appears to lack a clear strategy to deal with rising rent arrears. We are very concerned that the Government is waiting until there is a clear crisis emerging before intervening, rather than heading off a growing rent arrears crisis by taking proactive action to protect people in this country. The Minister relied on arrears statistics from a survey in August to defend the Government's response, even though he accepted that the economic circumstances would get worse over time for many households. Once arrears begin, they are likely to grow and will be exacerbated by rising unemployment throughout 2021 and as Government support schemes taper off. The Government will eventually have to come up with a policy response, because it cannot keep extending the evictions ban forever more. (Paragraph 85)
22. *We call on the Government to deliver a specific financial package to support tenants to repay rent arrears caused by covid-19, having considered the examples in Scotland and Wales as well as many other international examples. This should be one of the Department's top priorities. Several options have been proposed—we prefer modified discretionary housing payments—but what is important is that the Department delivers a package soon. Helping tenants pay their rent arrears, including consideration of paying direct to landlords, is the simplest and most straightforward way to avoid evictions and help landlords receive income. We received an estimate that such a rent arrears relief package will likely cost between £200 and £300 million. Given the number of potential evictions this would prevent, it would likely save the Exchequer a substantial amount in homelessness assistance.* (Paragraph 86)
23. *The Government should review its decision to freeze Local Housing Allowance rates by maintaining the 30th percentile in cash terms only, and instead keep rates indexed at the 30th percentile long-term. This will help households across England to afford their rent.* (Paragraph 94)

24. *We also call on the Government to temporarily boost funding to discretionary housing payments to meet the needs of the tens of thousands of households who are receiving no extra income from welfare increases due to the benefit cap. This will further protect households from falling into rent arrears because of the pandemic. (Paragraph 95)*
25. *The Government must introduce the Renters' Reform Bill urgently. The Government does not want to introduce the Renters' Reform Bill until the pandemic has finished, but this is at odds with the approach the Government has taken with NHS reforms. The Health Secretary told the House that the pandemic made the reforms "more not less urgent". The same logic applies to the Renters' Reform Bill and the urgent need to remove section 21 'no fault' evictions. If the Government does not abolish section 21 before we come out of the pandemic, there will be serious consequences for renters. (Paragraph 98)*
26. *We reiterate our offer to conduct pre-legislative scrutiny of the Renters' Reform Bill, should the Government choose to publish the Bill in draft. (Paragraph 99)*

Formal minutes

Monday 22 March 2021

Members present:

Mr Clive Betts, in the Chair

Bob Blackman	Ian Byrne
Brendan Clarke-Smith	Florence Eshalomi
Ben Everitt	Rachel Hopkins
Mary Robinson	Mohammad Yasin

Draft report (*Protecting the homeless and the private rented sector: MHCLG's response to Covid-19*) proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 99 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Sixth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134

[Adjourned until Thursday 25 March at 3pm

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 11 May 2020

Jon Sparkes, Chief Executive, Crisis; **Jamie Carswell**, Co-Chair, London Housing Directors' Network, London Councils [Q1–17](#)

John Hall, Director of Homelessness, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; **Luke Hall MP**, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government [Q18–65](#)

Monday 29 June 2020

Ruth Ehrlich, Policy Officer, Shelter; **Caitlin Wilkinson**, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Generation Rent; **Chris Norris**, Director of Policy, National Residential Landlords Association [Q66–129](#)

Monday 14 December 2020

Giles Peaker, Partner, Anthony Gold Solicitors; **Liz Davies**, Joint Head of Chamber, Garden Court Chambers, Housing Law Practitioners Association; **Simon Mullings**, Co-Chair, Housing Law Practitioners Association [Q130–150](#)

Joe Lane, Principal Policy Manager, Citizens Advice; **Cllr Rachel Blake**, Member of the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, Local Government Association (LGA); **Ben Beadle**, Chief Executive, National Residential Landlords Association; **Dr Cecil Sagoe**, Policy Officer, Shelter [Q151–186](#)

Thursday 17 December 2020

Sam, Expert by Experience, NACCOM; **Abeo**, Expert by Experience, NACCOM; **T**, Expert by Experience, St Mungo's; **Tracy**, Expert by Experience, St Mungo's [Q187–214](#)

Fiona Colley, Director of Social Change, Homeless Link; **Steve Douglas**, CEO, St Mungo's; **Henry St Clair Miller**, Head of NRPF, Refugee and Migrant Services, NRPF Network [Q215–244](#)

Monday 18 January 2021

Baroness Casey of Blackstock, Former Chair, Rough Sleeping Taskforce [Q245–274](#)

Thursday 28 January 2021

Eddie Hughes MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rough Sleeping & Housing, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; **Penny Hobman**, Director for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government [Q275–350](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

IOC numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 38 Degrees ([IOC0307](#))
- 2 ARLA Propertymark ([IOC0352](#))
- 3 ARLA Propertymark ([IOC0275](#))
- 4 Ackland, Benjamin ([IOC0161](#))
- 5 Adkins ([IOC0037](#))
- 6 akt ([IOC0350](#))
- 7 Alabare Christian Care & Support ([IOC0202](#))
- 8 All Nottinghamshire local authorities ([IOC0233](#))
- 9 All Souls Church ([IOC0150](#))
- 10 Angel, David ([IOC0038](#))
- 11 Anonymous ([IOC0102](#))
- 12 Anonymous ([IOC0097](#))
- 13 Anonymous ([IOC0101](#))
- 14 Anonymous ([IOC0046](#))
- 15 Anonymous ([IOC0014](#))
- 16 Anonymous ([IOC0015](#))
- 17 Antebi ([IOC0263](#))
- 18 Arch, Miss Thea ([IOC0073](#))
- 19 Association of Community Organisations for Reform Now (ACORN UK) ([IOC0142](#))
- 20 Asylum Matters ([IOC0304](#))
- 21 Atherton, Mr. Paul ([IOC0252](#))
- 22 Atkins, Matt (Director, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum) ([IOC0255](#))
- 23 BMA (British Medical Association) ([IOC0353](#))
- 24 Baines, Jenny ([IOC0031](#))
- 25 Barden, Ms Vanessa ([IOC0036](#))
- 26 Barker, Dr Stephanie; and Dr Nick Maguire ([IOC0273](#))
- 27 Basildon Borough Council ([IOC0239](#))
- 28 Bath & North East Somerset Council ([IOC0231](#))
- 29 Beasley, Mr Liam ([IOC0175](#))
- 30 Blake, Cllr Rachel (Member, LGA Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, Local Government Association (LGA)) ([IOC0367](#))
- 31 Blumsohn, Dr Aubrey ([IOC0280](#))
- 32 Boocock, Ms Demaine ([IOC0129](#))
- 33 Bown, Flora Cullerne ([IOC0148](#))

- 34 Breward, Iris ([IOC0057](#))
- 35 Brighton & Hove City Council ([IOC0241](#))
- 36 British Property Federation ([IOC0362](#))
- 37 British Property Federation (BPF) ([IOC0235](#))
- 38 Brown, Professor Philip (Professor of Housing and Communities, University of Huddersfield) ([IOC0319](#))
- 39 Buckler, Luke ([IOC0034](#))
- 40 Butler, Mr Josh ([IOC0051](#))
- 41 Cardiff and Vale University Health Board ([IOC0251](#))
- 42 Central Bedfordshire Council ([IOC0278](#))
- 43 Centre for Homelessness Impact ([IOC0223](#))
- 44 Centrepoint ([IOC0327](#))
- 45 Centrepoint ([IOC0058](#))
- 46 Changing Lives ([IOC0197](#))
- 47 Chartered Institute of Housing ([IOC0320](#))
- 48 Citizen Housing ([IOC0317](#))
- 49 Citizens Advice ([IOC0337](#))
- 50 Citizens Advice ([IOC0170](#))
- 51 City Of Bradford Metropolitan District Council ([IOC0099](#))
- 52 Clenaghan, Mr Calum ([IOC0077](#))
- 53 Clerke, Rachael ([IOC0094](#))
- 54 Collective Voice ([IOC0365](#))
- 55 Commonweal Housing ([IOC0339](#))
- 56 Coombs-Berry, Lily ([IOC0089](#))
- 57 Cornwall Council ([IOC0349](#))
- 58 Cornwall Council ([IOC0215](#))
- 59 Cornwall Residential Landlords Association ([IOC0105](#))
- 60 Cosgrove, Ms Kathy (Supervising Solicitor, Greater Manchester Law Centre) ([IOC0111](#))
- 61 Coventry Citizens Advice ([IOC0347](#))
- 62 Coventry Citizens Advice ([IOC0133](#))
- 63 Coventry City Council ([IOC0218](#))
- 64 Coventry Frontline Network ([IOC0361](#))
- 65 Coventry Frontline Network ([IOC0217](#))
- 66 Crisis ([IOC0345](#))
- 67 Crisis ([IOC0187](#))
- 68 Croydon, Mr Charles ([IOC0116](#))
- 69 Cullum, Ann ([IOC0061](#))
- 70 Deakin, Zeph ([IOC0118](#))

- 71 de Londras, Professor Fiona (Professor of Global Legal Studies, COVID-19 Review Observatory, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham); and Daniella Lock (Research Fellow , COVID-19 Review Observatory, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham) ([IOC0342](#))
- 72 Devon County Council ([IOC0173](#))
- 73 District Councils' Network ([IOC0248](#))
- 74 Dogs Trust ([IOC0324](#))
- 75 Dogs Trust ([IOC0179](#))
- 76 Drappier, Mr Boris (Founder, Rent Happily) ([IOC0006](#))
- 77 Dudhia, Ms Priscilla (Policy & Research Coordinator (Destitution) , Women for Refugee Women) ([IOC0303](#))
- 78 Dunnett, Sam ([IOC0156](#))
- 79 Eagleton, Mr Oliver ([IOC0093](#))
- 80 East London Housing Partnership ([IOC0306](#))
- 81 Essex, Mr Rob ([IOC0090](#))
- 82 Ethical Lettings ([IOC0174](#))
- 83 Expert Link ([IOC0184](#))
- 84 Faculty for Homeless and Inclusion Health ([IOC0122](#))
- 85 Fair Housing Futures ([IOC0224](#))
- 86 Fitzpatrick, Mr Oscar ([IOC0048](#))
- 87 Fitzpatrick, Sean ([IOC0052](#))
- 88 Forey, Paul ([IOC0264](#))
- 89 Fraser, Ms E ([IOC0069](#))
- 90 Friend, Mr Callum ([IOC0078](#))
- 91 Fulfilling Lives South East ([IOC0271](#))
- 92 Fuller, Naomi ([IOC0229](#))
- 93 Gann, Naomi ([IOC0316](#))
- 94 Garden Court Chambers ([IOC0355](#))
- 95 Garden Court Chambers Housing Team ([IOC0221](#))
- 96 Generation Rent ([IOC0359](#))
- 97 Generation Rent ([IOC0242](#))
- 98 Goodlord ([IOC0211](#))
- 99 Graham, K ([IOC0096](#))
- 100 Greater Manchester Combined Authority ([IOC0283](#))
- 101 Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network ([IOC0143](#))
- 102 Griffiths, Billy ([IOC0113](#))
- 103 Groundswell ([IOC0300](#))
- 104 HFIS PLC t/a Hamilton Fraser ([IOC0203](#))
- 105 Hackney Community Law Centre ([IOC0209](#))

- 106 Halpin, Mr Kieran ([IOC0098](#))
- 107 Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre ([IOC0298](#))
- 108 Hanson, Isaac ([IOC0166](#))
- 109 Haringey Migrant Support Centre ([IOC0220](#))
- 110 Harrison, Mr Mark ([IOC0250](#))
- 111 Harrow Council ([IOC0301](#))
- 112 Hawes, Mr Nick ([IOC0259](#))
- 113 Hayward, Mr Simon ([IOC0152](#))
- 114 Henson, Mx Felix ([IOC0075](#))
- 115 Herefordshire Council ([IOC0335](#))
- 116 Higgs, Mr Don ([IOC0012](#))
- 117 Hindosh, Mr Saad ([IOC0281](#))
- 118 Hinson, Mr Tim ([IOC0083](#))
- 119 Homeless Link ([IOC0354](#))
- 120 Homeless Link ([IOC0286](#))
- 121 Homes for Cathy ([IOC0236](#))
- 122 Housing Law Practitioners Association ([IOC0212](#))
- 123 Howarth, Arvind ([IOC0107](#))
- 124 Hughes, Miss Nancy ([IOC0131](#))
- 125 Hughes-Evans, ([IOC0181](#))
- 126 Humankind ([IOC0334](#))
- 127 Hunt, Mr Ed ([IOC0249](#))
- 128 Hunters Group Plc ([IOC0017](#))
- 129 Hunters Property Group Harrogate and Wetherby ([IOC0021](#))
- 130 Islington Council ([IOC0356](#))
- 131 Jack, Mr ([IOC0138](#))
- 132 Jenkins, Mr ([IOC0144](#))
- 133 Johnson, Mr Jake ([IOC0059](#))
- 134 Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants ([IOC0302](#))
- 135 Jones, Mr Thomas ([IOC0124](#))
- 136 Just for Kids Law ([IOC0207](#))
- 137 Justlife Foundation ([IOC0238](#))
- 138 Kent Housing Group ([IOC0230](#))
- 139 Kettlety, Ms Carys ([IOC0044](#))
- 140 Key, Mr Daniel ([IOC0028](#))
- 141 Khan, Mr T ([IOC0265](#))
- 142 Kidd, Claire ([IOC0042](#))
- 143 Kindersley, Dr Nicki ([IOC0104](#))

- 144 Kingston Council ([IOC0285](#))
- 145 Kirk, Mr Ken ([IOC0026](#))
- 146 Kon, Rohan ([IOC0178](#))
- 147 Kutas, Mr David ([IOC0272](#))
- 148 Lenwell Property Services ([IOC0204](#))
- 149 LSE London ([IOC0313](#))
- 150 LSE London, London School of Economics ([IOC0363](#))
- 151 Labour Homelessness Campaign ([IOC0260](#))
- 152 Lang, Mrs Sophie (Director, Lewis Haughton Wills) ([IOC0295](#))
- 153 Large Agent Representation Group ([IOC0159](#))
- 154 Lasenby, Mrs Sarah ([IOC0115](#))
- 155 Lear, Mr Ben ([IOC0141](#))
- 156 Lester, Mr David ([IOC0008](#))
- 157 Lewis, Mr P ([IOC0019](#))
- 158 Liverpool City Council; Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC); Sefton MBC; Wirral MBC; St Helens MBC; and Halton MBC ([IOC0196](#))
- 159 Liverpool Guild of Students ([IOC0128](#))
- 160 Living Rent ([IOC0140](#))
- 161 Llamau ([IOC0158](#))
- 162 Local Government Association ([IOC0323](#))
- 163 Local Government Association ([IOC0165](#))
- 164 Lockwood, Sam ([IOC0208](#))
- 165 Lodger Landlords Association ([IOC0256](#))
- 166 London Borough of Barking & Dagenham ([IOC0297](#))
- 167 London Borough of Camden ([IOC0287](#))
- 168 London Borough of Enfield ([IOC0194](#))
- 169 London Borough of Hackney ([IOC0366](#))
- 170 London Borough of Hackney ([IOC0198](#))
- 171 London Borough of Hillingdon ([IOC0180](#))
- 172 London Borough of Newham ([IOC0246](#))
- 173 London Borough of Redbridge ([IOC0358](#))
- 174 London Borough of Redbridge ([IOC0253](#))
- 175 London Borough of Sutton ([IOC0227](#))
- 176 London Borough of Tower Hamlets ([IOC0245](#))
- 177 London Councils ([IOC0340](#))
- 178 London Councils ([IOC0171](#))
- 179 London Renters Union ([IOC0153](#))
- 180 McCarthy, Laura ([IOC0001](#))

- 181 MEDACT ([IOC0254](#))
- 182 MacTaggart, Ms L ([IOC0055](#))
- 183 Macgregor-Fairlie, Mr Michael ([IOC0022](#))
- 184 Magee, Mr ([IOC0020](#))
- 185 Making Every Adult Matter ([IOC0291](#))
- 186 Matas, Dziugas ([IOC0056](#))
- 187 Matuleviciute, Ms Guste ([IOC0041](#))
- 188 Matusavage, ([IOC0060](#))
- 189 Mayor of London ([IOC0364](#))
- 190 Mayor of London ([IOC0314](#))
- 191 McCourt, Lauren ([IOC0039](#))
- 192 McDonnell, Miss Sabrina ([IOC0074](#))
- 193 McKee, Dr Kim ([IOC0123](#))
- 194 Mcgearty, Michael ([IOC0149](#))
- 195 Mid Sussex District Council ([IOC0119](#))
- 196 Migrants Rights Network; and Just Fair ([IOC0183](#))
- 197 Miller, Miss Kathy ([IOC0005](#))
- 198 Mind ([IOC0114](#))
- 199 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([IOC0351](#))
- 200 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([IOC0308](#))
- 201 Mohammed, Mr Shabaaz ([IOC0112](#))
- 202 Moore, Chris ([IOC0049](#))
- 203 Munro, Dr Nell; Ms Carla Reeson; and Professor Aoife Nolan ([IOC0226](#))
- 204 Museum of Homelessness; Streets Kitchen; The Outside Project; and The Magpie Project ([IOC0145](#))
- 205 Musgrove, Ms Ellen ([IOC0087](#))
- 206 NACCOM - the No Accommodation Network ([IOC0222](#))
- 207 NACRO ([IOC0299](#))
- 208 NRPF Network, Islington Council ([IOC0346](#))
- 209 NRPF Network, Islington Council ([IOC0214](#))
- 210 National Federation of ALMOs (NFA) ([IOC0318](#))
- 211 National Housing Federation ([IOC0325](#))
- 212 National Housing Federation ([IOC0137](#))
- 213 National Residential Landlords Association ([IOC0336](#))
- 214 National Residential Landlords Association ([IOC0315](#))
- 215 National Residential Landlords Association ([IOC0127](#))
- 216 National Union of Students ([IOC0106](#))
- 217 Nationwide Building Society ([IOC0292](#))

- 218 Nesbitt, Andy ([IOC0125](#))
- 219 New Economics Foundation ([IOC0237](#))
- 220 New Hope ([IOC0086](#))
- 221 New Horizon Youth Centre ([IOC0305](#))
- 222 Noble, Mr David ([IOC0010](#))
- 223 North London Housing Partnership; and Association of Housing Advice Services ([IOC0176](#))
- 224 Northern Housing Consortium ([IOC0201](#))
- 225 Nwogbo, Mr Johnbosco ([IOC0053](#))
- 226 Oakes-Monger, Anna ([IOC0084](#))
- 227 O'Donoghue, Lauren ([IOC0130](#))
- 228 Office of the Children's Commissioner for England ([IOC0270](#))
- 229 Oxford City Council ([IOC0279](#))
- 230 P.A.T.H. (Plymouth Access To Housing) Ltd ([IOC0082](#))
- 231 Peaker, Giles (Partner, Anthony Gold Solicitors) ([IOC0310](#))
- 232 Pettefar, Mr James ([IOC0065](#))
- 233 Phizacklea-Cullen, Mr Jordan ([IOC0095](#))
- 234 Phoenix Futures ([IOC0192](#))
- 235 PlaceShapers ([IOC0182](#))
- 236 Plymouth Alliance for Complex Needs; and Plymouth City Council ([IOC0219](#))
- 237 Porchlight ([IOC0177](#))
- 238 Possession Friend ([IOC0146](#))
- 239 Private Rented Sector Professionals ([IOC0240](#))
- 240 Procter and Co Limited ([IOC0018](#))
- 241 Project 17 ([IOC0135](#))
- 242 Public Interest Law Centre (PILC); and Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth (HASL) ([IOC0274](#))
- 243 R-Rouse, Rev ([IOC0076](#))
- 244 Rapley, Mr Edward ([IOC0027](#))
- 245 Rebecca ([IOC0266](#))
- 246 Renters' Rights London ([IOC0360](#))
- 247 Renters' Rights London ([IOC0157](#))
- 248 Rentstart ([IOC0332](#))
- 249 Roberts, Miss Zoe ([IOC0023](#))
- 250 Robertson, Mrs Mary ([IOC0033](#))
- 251 Robertson, Ms Michelle ([IOC0284](#))
- 252 Robinson, Mr Will ([IOC0163](#))
- 253 Roslin-Sprason, Miss E ([IOC0067](#))
- 254 Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ([IOC0244](#))

- 255 Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead ([IOC0268](#))
- 256 Royal College of Physicians ([IOC0120](#))
- 257 Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors ([IOC0190](#))
- 258 Ryedale District Council ([IOC0169](#))
- 259 safeagent ([IOC0225](#))
- 260 Salford City Council & Manchester City Council ([IOC0288](#))
- 261 Sanghera, Ellen ([IOC0064](#))
- 262 Scarborough, Michael ([IOC0185](#))
- 263 Schaick, Mr Roger van (Vice-Chair, trustee, Host Nottingham) ([IOC0109](#))
- 264 Scott, Ben ([IOC0025](#))
- 265 Scott, Mrs Sue ([IOC0172](#))
- 266 Shelter ([IOC0348](#))
- 267 Shelter ([IOC0234](#))
- 268 Sibley, Mr George ([IOC0290](#))
- 269 Simcock, Dr Tom (Research Fellow, Edge Hill University) ([IOC0357](#))
- 270 Sims, Mr Jamie ([IOC0213](#))
- 271 Skelton, Mr Jim ([IOC0267](#))
- 272 Smith, Mr Mark Crampton (Managing Director, College and County Letting Agency) ([IOC0004](#))
- 273 Smith, Ms Maisie ([IOC0132](#))
- 274 Somerset County Council ([IOC0294](#))
- 275 Somerset West and Taunton Council ([IOC0092](#))
- 276 South Tyneside Council ([IOC0276](#))
- 277 Southampton City Council ([IOC0232](#))
- 278 Southwark Council ([IOC0228](#))
- 279 Southwark Law Centre ([IOC0080](#))
- 280 St Martin's Frontline Network ([IOC0199](#))
- 281 St Mungo's ([IOC0328](#))
- 282 St Mungo's ([IOC0258](#))
- 283 St Petrock's Exeter Ltd ([IOC0126](#))
- 284 St Petrocs ([IOC0117](#))
- 285 Steffen, Miss Roseanne ([IOC0147](#))
- 286 StepChange Debt Charity ([IOC0341](#))
- 287 Stepping Stone Projects ([IOC0050](#))
- 288 Stockton Borough Council ([IOC0085](#))
- 289 Sullivan, Ms Susan ([IOC0261](#))
- 290 Surviving Economic Abuse ([IOC0188](#))
- 291 TFP Online Ltd t/a Training for Professionals ([IOC0007](#))

- 292 Tenants Union UK; Garden Court North; and Greater Manchester Law Centre ([IOC0155](#))
- 293 The Chartered Institute of Housing ([IOC0160](#))
- 294 The Law Society of England and Wales ([IOC0277](#))
- 295 The Nationwide Foundation ([IOC0321](#))
- 296 The Nationwide Foundation ([IOC0164](#))
- 297 The Riverside Group ([IOC0326](#))
- 298 The Riverside Group Ltd. ([IOC0200](#))
- 299 The Salvation Army ([IOC0329](#))
- 300 The Salvation Army ([IOC0216](#))
- 301 Thomas, Callum ([IOC0091](#))
- 302 Thorne, Judy ([IOC0079](#))
- 303 Trafford Council ([IOC0100](#))
- 304 Train-Brown, Ms Elizabeth ([IOC0040](#))
- 305 UNISON ([IOC0322](#))
- 306 UNISON ([IOC0195](#))
- 307 Unipol Student Housing ([IOC0070](#))
- 308 University of Birmingham ([IOC0243](#))
- 309 Valdini, Lou ([IOC0003](#))
- 310 Walmsley, Pat ([IOC0066](#))
- 311 Wassell, Billy ([IOC0032](#))
- 312 Welburn, Jade ([IOC0257](#))
- 313 West London Housing Partnership ([IOC0296](#))
- 314 Westminster City Council ([IOC0330](#))
- 315 Williams, Shelley ([IOC0062](#))
- 316 Williams, Mr Paul ([IOC0024](#))
- 317 Williams, Ms Laura ([IOC0262](#))
- 318 Wilson, Ms Sophie ([IOC0136](#))
- 319 Woods, Revd Tim ([IOC0081](#))
- 320 Wordsworth, Mrs Judith ([IOC0289](#))
- 321 Wycombe Homeless Connection ([IOC0009](#))
- 322 Z2K ([IOC0189](#))
- 323 Z2K (Zacchaeus 2000 Trust) ([IOC0333](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Protecting rough sleepers and renters: Interim Report	HC 309
2nd	Cladding: progress of remediation	HC 172
3rd	Building more social housing	HC 173
4th	Appointment of the Chair of Homes England	HC 821
5th	Pre-legislative scrutiny of the Building Safety Bill	HC 466
1st Special	Government Response to the Committee's report on Protecting Rough Sleepers and Renters	CP 248
2nd Special	Cladding progress of remediation: Government response to the Select Committee report	CP 281
3rd Special	Building more social housing: Government response to the Select Committee Report	CP 299