

## 200,000 face homelessness in England every night, warns Crisis

The Everyone In scheme prevented a rise in homelessness, according to the homelessness charity's annual report, but a lack of suitable homes could see a 27 per cent increase in the next decade



Homelessness could rise by more than 25 per cent in the next decade and undo the good work of the Everyone In scheme, homelessness charity Crisis has warned, if tenant protections are removed and there is a failure to build enough new suitable homes.

An estimated 200,000 people in England are experiencing the worst forms of homelessness every night, including sleeping rough, sofa surfing and being stuck in unsuitable accommodation like B&Bs, according to the charity's annual Homelessness Monitor report.

Without government intervention, that number could grow by 27 per cent over the next ten years, with a post-pandemic recession likely to hit those already in poverty and drive them into homelessness.

Jon Sparkes, chief executive of Crisis, said "The Westminster Government's bold action, along with the tireless work of councils across the country, has stopped thousands of people being forced onto the streets at the most dangerous of times.

"But ending policies like the evictions ban and the raising of the Local Housing Allowance rate prematurely could force devastating numbers of people to the brink."

The [Everyone In scheme](#) has seen councils, charities and homelessness organisations protect 37,000 rough sleepers and vulnerable people from Covid-19 in hotels and emergency accommodation since last March.

Heriot-Watt University researchers – commissioned by Crisis – found Everyone In prevented an immediate overall increase in the number of people seeking support for homelessness. In the report, they praised the decision to initially remove barriers to help for migrants with no access to benefits through the scheme.

Other measures introduced in the pandemic also had an impact. More than eight in ten of the 148 English councils surveyed told researchers raising Local Housing Allowance rates gave more people access to the housing benefit and prevented homelessness.

The [ban on evictions](#) between March and September last year also helped: 87 per cent of councils said the action was very important in preventing and minimising homelessness while three-quarters of local authorities said the same about Everyone In.

But the report warns this progress is under threat of being undone.

Almost all councils also told researchers they expect to see a rise in newly unemployed people being made homeless.

A severe shortage of affordable homes has seen rents climb so high in some areas that even if the Local Housing Allowance rate is raised the benefit cap means people are still locked out of the private rented sector. Crisis expects Local Housing Allowance Rates to be frozen again in April.

The end of the current protections against evictions could also lead to more homelessness. The current ban on bailiff-enforced evictions currently lasts until the end of March.

Almost all of the councils told Crisis they expect to see an increase in people made homeless after being evicted from the private rented sector.

Sparkes is calling for “a one-off package of financial support for the hundreds of thousands of renters in arrears” to avoid a rise in homelessness.

***‘There is a desperate need to reverse the decline in council housing over the past few decades***

Meanwhile, the report’s lead author, Heriot-Watt professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, said a commitment to building permanent housing must be the goal to “build back better”.

Professor Fitzpatrick said: “As we look ahead, we must take this opportunity to transform the homelessness system for the better, ensuring everyone has access to their own safe and stable place to call home.

“However, the research highlights the failure to build sufficient affordable housing over consecutive years against the backdrop of welfare reforms are making it increasingly difficult for councils to help people access a home.”

The Local Government Association (LGA) echoed Crisis’ call for a renewed effort to build social housing to tackle homelessness in the long-term. Last year, the local authority group warned social housing waiting lists could double and reach two million people across England during the pandemic,

Cllr David Renard, the LGA’s housing spokesperson, said: “There is a desperate need to reverse the decline in council housing over the past few decades.

“Handing councils the powers and resources to build 100,000 social homes for rent each year would help to reduce homelessness, enable more people to save up for a deposit, and deliver a £14.5 billion boost to the economy.”

The Westminster Government has pledged to spend £750 million tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in 2021 and invest £11.5bn in the Affordable Housing Programme.

Homes England will be making £7.39 billion available from April to deliver up to 180,000 affordable homes by March 2026 – outside of London. That includes 32,000 social rent homes – the most affordable band of social housing often cited as vital to ending homelessness by experts.

A Government spokesperson said: “We are pleased councils recognise the unprecedented action we have taken to support the most vulnerable people in our society during the pandemic, backed by over £700 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year alone and a further £750 million next year.”