

Vision to end rough sleeping:
No Second Night Out nationwide

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Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to us at:

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July 2011

ISBN: 978-1-4098-2996-6

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Prime Minister's foreword



It is an affront to this country that last winter, one of the coldest on record, there were people still sleeping rough on our streets. While the temperature dropped below freezing, many were making do with doorways and cardboard boxes for beds. In a civilised society, this is totally unacceptable. This government is determined to tackle rough sleeping, and this report gives us a strong start.

In these pages is the recognition that tackling rough sleeping is not just about providing homes. It is about dealing with the wider causes of homelessness, from family breakdown and mental illness to drug addiction and alcoholism. This is a complex, multi-faceted problem, which is why it is so important that Ministers from across government have come together in this Working Group. We are bringing together all the relevant Whitehall departments to try and crack this problem collectively.

But ultimately, this report is not about collaboration within government, it's about collaboration between government and those who work and volunteer at the sharp end – in charities, shelters, community groups and local authorities. We are freeing these people from bureaucracy and giving them support to get people off the streets. Together I am confident that we can make a real impact, with the ambition to end the uncertainty, indignity and suffering of rough sleeping.

I look forward to seeing the progress made in the months to come.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Cameron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Cameron MP
Prime Minister

Ministerial foreword



I am shocked and saddened that I still see people who are living on our streets. I am more shocked when some people seem to accept that it must always be so. I can not.

Of course, I am not alone. There are thousands of people up and down the country, working in local government and charities, helping people into a secure and stable home. Millions of people support their work and we should all be thankful for their dedication and compassion. They already make a real difference. As Housing Minister, I want to help them help even more people.

One of the first things I did as a new Minister was to change the way we counted rough sleepers. It was obvious to everyone that too many people were still sleeping in shop doorways, on park benches or on our pavements but they didn't appear in counts. This meant that we didn't know the scale of the problem we had to tackle.

Now we have a better picture, I want to make sure that nobody has to spend a second night out on the streets.

That's the first commitment made in this plan.

The first of the six commitments Government and its partners have made to tackle homelessness.

Homelessness is not just a problem of scale. It's also a problem of complexity – no two people lose their home for the same reason. They all have different life stories. For some it's a dramatic change like losing a job or leaving the armed services. For others a problem with drugs or alcohol. In some cases family breakdown or mental illness. For many it's a combination of all of these. That's why I set up the Ministerial Working Group to bring together Ministers with responsibility for these complex issues.

But in the end it's not people working in Whitehall who keep people off our streets – it's people working at the sharp end that make the difference. The most successful action to tackle homelessness is rooted in local communities – local authorities working together with local community groups, charities and businesses. We must free people from unnecessary bureaucracy so they can work together and become an even better example of Big Society in action.

And there's an extra commitment from me: I will continue to work with you and my colleagues across Government to fulfil the commitments laid out in this plan – to tackle homelessness and make sure nobody has to spend more than one night out on our streets.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Grant Shapps". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Grant Shapps MP

Minister for Housing and Local Government
Department for Communities and Local Government

Ministerial Working Group foreword

This plan is owned by the Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness.

To prevent homelessness and support those without a stable home, a range of Government Departments must work together. Homelessness is more than about housing. For many years there was criticism that policies of different Departments needed to join up. We have come together through the Ministerial Working Group to better prevent and tackle homelessness, and address the underlying causes.

The Government has already shown its commitment to protecting the most vulnerable. It has maintained funding for local authority homelessness services through the Spending Review and recognised the importance of preventing homelessness in the Mental Health and Drugs Strategies, and offender sentencing and rehabilitation green paper.

The Government is committed to addressing the underlying causes of homelessness and social disadvantage by tackling issues of poverty, equality and social justice.

The tough fiscal climate means that it is even more important that we effectively prevent and tackle homelessness. We should be making the most of our investment in services, preventing people from falling into a cycle of repeat homelessness and avoiding increasing costs in the long-run.

This plan sets out six joint commitments that means we will all work together to give local people the tools to tackle rough sleeping and put an end to second nights out on the street. It is the first report from the Ministerial Working Group as we work to tackle homelessness more effectively, across government.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Crispin Blunt".

Crispin Blunt MP
Ministry of Justice



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Browning".

Baroness Angela Browning
Home Office



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Burstow".

Paul Burstow MP
Department of Health



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Freud".

Lord David Freud
Department for Work and Pensions



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Hayes".

John Hayes MP
Department for Business,
Innovation and Skills



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Loughton".

Tim Loughton MP
Department for Education



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Robathan".

Andrew Robathan MP
Ministry of Defence

Summary of commitments

Commitment 1: Helping people off the streets

Government will:

- work with partners to roll out the principles of *No Second Night Out* nationally, drawing on the lessons learned in London and from other effective approaches
- provide an additional £20m to Homeless Link for a new Homelessness Transition Fund to support the roll out of No Second Night Out and the delivery of strategic rough sleeper services
- help local authorities who have prioritised action to tackle significant numbers of migrant rough sleepers to reconnect them with their home countries.

Homeless Link will:

- work with other voluntary sector partners to identify and disseminate good practice in helping people off the streets.

Commitment 2: Helping people to access healthcare

Government will:

- support Health and Wellbeing Boards to ensure that the needs of vulnerable groups are better reflected in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments
- highlight the role of specialist services in treating homeless people, including those with a dual diagnosis of co-existing mental health and drug and alcohol problems
- work with the National Inclusion Health Board and the NHS, local government and others to identify what more must be done to include the needs of homeless people in the commissioning of health services.

Commitment 3: Helping people into work

Government will:

- offer voluntary early access to the Work Programme for homeless people who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, in agreement with their Jobcentre Plus adviser
- undertake a review of employment support for homeless people, including access to Jobcentre Plus services
- prioritise access to further education and skills services for the most disadvantaged, including homeless people, and promote informal adult learning as a pathway towards wider learning opportunities.

Business Action on Homelessness will:

- lever in new corporate investment to develop a pre-Ready to Work programme, helping the most disadvantaged homeless people to access pre-employment training, work experience, and job coaching with business volunteers.

Commitment 4: Reducing bureaucratic burdens

Government:

- has reduced the amount of guidance from central government, such as publishing more coherent and shorter revised regulations and guidance for care leavers
- has simplified the system for funding further education and skills, and given colleges and training organisations greater freedom and flexibilities to respond to local demand
- will no longer require local authorities and providers of services to submit ongoing data returns to Government on Supporting People services which deflects from the main task of delivering practical help
- will end plans for those seeking to work or volunteer with vulnerable groups to register with the Vetting and Barring Scheme
- has established a red-tape taskforce, which has reported on how to reduce the impact of bureaucracy on charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations
- has encouraged local authorities to have regard to their local compact agreements on fair working with voluntary organisations when commissioning local services.

Commitment 5: Increasing local control over investment in services**Government will:**

- during 2011, analyse the costs of homelessness and the public services to which they fall, to help communities identify where investment in homelessness prevention can best be made.

The Local Government Group and Government will:

- work together to develop a proposal for the use of community based budgets for homeless adults with complex needs.

Commitment 6: Devolving responsibility for tackling homelessness

- In London, the Mayor has been given new responsibilities and £34m of government investment to help end rough sleeping in the capital by the end of 2012. This will build on work already being led by the London Delivery Board to establish a pan-London approach.

Introduction

“For most people, it’s not just a single issue. It’s not just drugs and alcohol. They have a mental health problem or experience a family crisis. This leads them into drugs and alcohol, which makes it worse.” (Homeless Link Advisory Panel member)

1. Tackling homelessness is at the centre of the Coalition Government’s commitment to protect the most vulnerable and promote social justice. As the Prime Minister has made clear, protecting the most vulnerable is *“the sign of a civilized society”*.¹ People living on the streets are some of the most disadvantaged people in society – at risk of severe illness, violence and early death. No one should have to sleep out on our streets in the 21st century.
2. The Government is committed to preventing and tackling homelessness. We have maintained the level of Preventing Homelessness Grant, with £400m being made available to local authorities and the voluntary sector over the next four years. We have also set out proposed changes in the Localism Bill to give greater freedoms and flexibilities to local authorities to meet the housing needs of homeless families, reducing the need for long waits in temporary accommodation.
3. The Government recognises that homelessness is about more than just providing housing. Homeless people often have complex underlying problems that can be worsened by living on the streets or in insecure accommodation. The Government has set up a Ministerial Working Group to bring together eight departments with responsibility for the issues that affect homeless people.
4. The focus of this plan is on single homeless people who are not in ‘priority need’,² including those who are living on the streets and those who are at the greatest risk of rough sleeping because they have lived on the streets or are living in insecure accommodation, such as hostels or shelters. Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and where people are the most vulnerable. In London, 52 per cent of rough sleepers have alcohol support needs, 32 per cent drug support needs, and 39 per cent mental health problems. Many have had extensive contact with the state: 37 per cent had previously been in prison, 12 per cent in care and 3 per cent in the UK Armed Forces.³ These factors can often be linked to social disadvantage. For example, family breakdown, debt and a lack of skills or qualifications. Many have experienced some form of trauma in their life.

¹ Speech to the Conservative Party Conference speech, 6 October 2010.

² Priority need categories as set out in the homelessness legislation.

³ Street to Home 2010-11 bulletin which uses data from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) on people seen rough sleeping in London.

5. The plan sets out six priority areas where government departments and partners have committed to work together to end rough sleeping. The Government fully supports the Mayor's commitment to end rough sleeping in London by 2012. Anyone who finds themselves sleeping rough should be quickly helped off the streets so they do not have to spend a second night without a roof. And to keep people off the streets, services must address the problems that led to homelessness in the first place.
6. The Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness is helping to ensure that the government works better together. But the most successful action to tackle homelessness is rooted in local communities. Real progress can be made when local authorities work with voluntary and community groups, and with private sector support – a real example of Big Society in action. Local communities will be able to act even more effectively if they are freed from unnecessary bureaucracy.
7. The economic case for action is as strong as the moral one. Single homeless people are five times more likely to use Accident and Emergency departments than the general public.⁴ There are also negative impacts on communities and industries such as tourism from visible rough sleeping and associated activities, such as begging and street drinking. Despite the tough fiscal climate and the need to tackle the nation's deficit, we need to 'invest to save' in services which prevent and tackle homelessness. This will reduce the need for more expensive help to address entrenched problems in the future, and avoid passing the costs to other areas or public services.
8. The new rough sleeping statistics published on 17 February 2011 show that an estimated 1,768 people are sleeping rough in England on any one night.
9. Previously only local authorities where there was a known, or suspected, rough sleeping problem were required to provide a count. This meant that only 440 rough sleepers were counted under the previous system. Now all areas across England provide counts or robust estimates giving a clear national picture. By having more accurate data in each area, we can better identify rough sleepers and target service provision and action to address the problem.
10. In addition to people sleeping rough on any one night, a greater number of people will be living in insecure accommodation, such as hostels for short periods of time or staying with friends and family. The lack of a stable home increases the risk that they could be forced to sleep rough at some point. It is important that we continue to tackle the broader issues of access to stable housing in order to prevent homelessness and avoid long-term impacts. This is the first report from the Ministerial Working Group to meet its aim of ensuring a cross-government approach to preventing and tackling homelessness, and supporting those without a stable home.

⁴ *Healthcare for Single Homeless People*, Office of the Chief Analyst, Department of Health, March 2010. www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/_library/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Other_reports_and_guidance/Healthcare_for_single_homeless_people.pdf

11. This plan is not just for housing providers, but for everyone involved in delivering services that help tackle homelessness, and for everyone who wants to get involved in their local community to help end rough sleeping.

12. The work of the Ministerial Working Group is specific to England and many of the areas covered in this plan are matters for the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive have their own approaches to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. Some areas of the plan, such as defence, and social security in Scotland and Wales are non-devolved, though they can interface with a range of devolved matters. A commitment to preventing homelessness is common to all four nations in the United Kingdom. We are therefore committed to working with the devolved administrations on our vision for tackling homelessness.

No Second Night Out nationwide

“If people have no issues, they have no priority status. If someone has drugs or alcohol problems they get priority. But if you leave someone with no issues on the streets, they become more vulnerable to what’s out there.” (Homeless People’s Commissioner)

13. It cannot be right in the 21st century that anyone should need to sleep on the streets. The Ministerial Working Group has identified that its priority is to ensure that when people hit crisis point and come onto the streets, there is a swift and effective response from services.
14. Despite the best efforts of local authorities and service providers to prevent homelessness, some people will continue to experience personal crises, which results in them coming onto the streets. People are often drawn to specific locations, such as city centres or seaside resorts, which puts particular pressure on services in these areas. Our aim is to ensure that anyone who does spend a night sleeping rough anywhere in the country is immediately helped off the streets.
15. London faces particular challenges with 23 per cent of rough sleepers being counted in the capital. The Mayor of London has already devised and launched *No Second Night Out*. This is overseen by the Mayor’s multi-agency Delivery Board and funded by the Government’s Preventing Homelessness Grant.
16. There is a 24-hour helpline and a website so that members of the public, the emergency services and homeless people themselves can report and refer rough sleepers, with an outreach worker dispatched to contact the person as quickly as possible. An assessment hub, staffed by a professional team, has been set up to provide existing outreach teams with somewhere to take new rough sleepers where they can be assessed and while alternative housing or reconnection back to their home area or country is arranged. Outcomes are tracked using London’s rough sleeper database. This approach is being piloted until the end of September 2011 and adjustments to practice will be made as necessary.

17. The Government recognises that many cities already have excellent homelessness services in place, and have been highly successful at reducing levels of rough sleeping. Local areas have different outreach and other service models, reflecting local circumstances. Local authorities will need to build on these to adopt a gold standard approach to rough sleeping services that meet the *No Second Night Out* principles:
 - New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately so that they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle
 - Members of the public should be able to play an active role by reporting and referring people sleeping rough
 - Rough sleepers should be helped to access a place of safety where their needs can be quickly assessed and they can receive advice on their options
 - They should be able to access emergency accommodation and other services, such as healthcare, if needed
 - If people have come from another area or country and find themselves sleeping rough, the aim should be to reconnect them back to their local community unless there is a good reason why they cannot return. There, they will be able to access housing and recovery services, and have support from family and friends.
18. *No Second Night Out* helps to identify where rough sleepers are coming from and improve prevention and recovery services in these areas. It needs to sit alongside efforts to tackle the multiple needs of the most entrenched rough sleepers through personalised approaches. In London, over three-quarters of the '205' most entrenched rough sleepers targeted by the Mayor's London Delivery Board for extra focus and assistance in May 2009 are no longer sleeping rough.
19. Robust multi-agency approaches can help people off the streets if they are used alongside offers of appropriate accommodation and support, such as by Newcastle City Council and the Cyrenians as part of the Adults with Chronic Exclusion pilot to help entrenched rough sleepers in Newcastle.⁵
20. A key success in parts of London, the South-East and Peterborough has been the UK Border Agency's involvement in supporting local authorities' work with migrant rough sleepers. A pilot has carried out 66 administrative removals up until the end of December 2010 where a voluntary return has been refused, with 290 individuals taking up voluntary reconnection offers.

⁵ <http://www.thecyrenians.org/>

21. Enforcement provides a solution of last resort, and also often encourages recent migrants to accept an offer of voluntary reconnection which they may have otherwise refused. We will work with voluntary homelessness organisations to help migrants access short-term accommodation where possible while they are seeking work or awaiting reconnection, to prevent rough sleeping on the streets.

Commitment 1: Helping people off the streets

Government will:

- work with partners to roll out the principles of *No Second Night Out* nationally, drawing on the lessons learned in London and from other effective approaches
- provide an additional £20m to Homeless Link for a new Homelessness Transition Fund to support the roll out of No Second Night Out and the delivery of strategic rough sleeper accommodation services
- help local authorities who have prioritised action to tackle significant numbers of migrant rough sleepers to reconnect them with their home countries.

Homeless Link will:

- work with other voluntary sector partners to identify and disseminate good practice in helping people off the streets.

22. The Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive have varying strategies for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping based on historically different approaches. These are based on the understanding that local services developed in response to local circumstances and contexts are more effective in tackling homelessness. One of the key objectives of No Second Night Out, preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity, is shared by approaches pursued in all countries. The Devolved Administrations remain committed to implementing policies which will prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping through learning and sharing practice with partners across the United Kingdom.

Preventing homelessness

"If you're accessing drug and alcohol treatment, or in the criminal justice system, they should be geared up to be aware of other things that can help to prevent your homelessness. Then you could get help before you lost your flat." (Homeless Link Advisory Panel member)

23. The Government recognises that rough sleeping can be avoided in many cases if people have access to stable accommodation and get help at an earlier stage. It is common sense that we should be preventing homelessness and keeping people off the streets in the first place.
24. Local authorities already have a duty to ensure that homeless applicants who are not in 'priority need' (and who are eligible for assistance and unintentionally homeless) are provided with advice and assistance to help them secure their own accommodation. Local authorities are also encouraged to prevent homelessness wherever possible. To help them, the Government is maintaining investment in Preventing Homelessness Grant, with £400m over the next four years. Homeless Link will support local authorities to identify opportunities and commission services that better prevent rough sleeping by rolling out the PrOMPT toolkit.⁶
25. The Government has prioritised help for single homeless people, recognising that they often do not benefit from homelessness prevention schemes. We are providing £10m to Crisis between 2010-11 and 2012-13 to fund voluntary sector schemes to improve access to the private rented sector for single homeless people.
26. More broadly, the Government has made prevention a central element of a number of cross-government strategies, which recognise the importance of stable accommodation. We have included action on the issues that lead to homelessness in:
 - the new Mental Health Strategy⁷ which focuses on promoting good mental health and early intervention
 - the Drugs Strategy⁸ which sets out an ambition for anyone dependent on drugs or alcohol to achieve recovery
 - the offender sentencing and rehabilitation green paper⁹ which focuses on more effective sentencing and rehabilitation to break the cycle of crime and re-offending

⁶ Prevention Opportunities Mapping and Planning Toolkit (PrOMPT) www.homeless.org.uk/prompt

⁷ *No Health Without Mental Health*, 2 February 2011. www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/Mentalhealth/MentalHealthStrategy/index.htm

⁸ *Drug Strategy 2010, Reducing demand, restricting supply, building recovery: supporting people to live a drug-free life*, 8 December 2010. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/alcohol-drugs/drugs/drug-strategy/drug-strategy-2010

⁹ *Breaking the Cycle Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*, 7 December 2010. www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/breaking-cycle-071210.htm

- reforms to the NHS¹⁰ and public health delivery¹¹ which introduce a prominent role for the NHS and local authorities in tackling health inequalities.

27. The Ministerial Working Group has focused on providing appropriate support where ‘transitions’ between different forms of accommodation create the risk of homelessness:

- All offenders at risk of homelessness are identified on arrival into prison. We will publish in 2011 more comprehensive expectations and guidance for Prisons and for Probation Trusts on how to assist offenders to access stable housing
- We will highlight the findings and recommendations from research by Homeless Link to encourage closer working between criminal justice agencies and homelessness organisations¹²
- The National Inclusion Health Board¹³ will work with the NHS, local government and others to identify what more must be done to prevent people at risk of rough sleeping being discharged from hospital without accommodation
- We will introduce a new approach to the provision of accommodation which better meets the needs of Service personnel during and after Service. We will also enhance the resettlement support to Early Service Leavers. For those veterans experiencing homelessness many years after discharge, we will work with voluntary homelessness organisations, the new Veterans’ Information Service¹⁴ and the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency¹⁵ to promote the through-life support available to former members of the Armed Forces
- We will promote work to prevent and tackle youth homelessness and support care leavers, so that they do not become tomorrow’s rough sleepers. We have published statutory guidance for local authorities on homeless 16 and 17 year olds¹⁶ and care leavers¹⁷ which highlights the importance of providing housing with support (and not, for example, Bed and Breakfast accommodation)

¹⁰ The NHS White Paper, *Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS*, 12 July 2010.
www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_117353

¹¹ *Healthy lives, healthy people: our strategy for public health in England*, 30 November 2010.
www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Healthyliveshealthypeople/index.htm

¹² Homeless Link is conducting a research project to explore how the homelessness and criminal justice sectors can best support offenders and determine the role they can play in reducing offending behaviour. This report will be published in July 2011.
www.homeless.org.uk/criminal-justice-project

¹³ A National Inclusion Health Board, chaired by Professor Steve Field, has been established to drive ahead the Government’s Inclusion Health programme which aims to deliver a step-change in health outcomes for the most vulnerable people in society, including the homeless.

¹⁴ The Government has announced that a Veterans’ Information Service (VIS) will be put in place so that 12 months after a person leaves the Armed Forces, they will be provided information offering the opportunity to access guidance and support on health and wellbeing issues. This is scheduled for rollout in early 2012.
www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/DefencePolicyAndBusiness/ImprovedMentalHealthServicesPledgedForArmedForces.htm

¹⁵ www.veterans-uk.info/

¹⁶ *Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation*, Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Communities and Local Government, April 2010.
www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-15005-2010

¹⁷ *Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers*, Department for Education, October 2010.
www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/Lookedafterchildren/Page1/DFE-00554-2010

- We will work with voluntary homelessness organisations to ensure that migrants from the EU Accession States are prepared before they travel to the UK. We will highlight Jobcentre Plus self-help job-search points and other services where relevant to migrants at risk of rough sleeping.

Improving support services

“You need support coming off the streets. A lot of people get institutionalised while on the streets. When I came off the streets, I needed resettling into a lifestyle that was normal for me. I was still drinking a lot but nobody picked it up. There was no help for drinking or mental health.” (Homeless People’s Commissioner)

28. People who have experienced homelessness often need access to specialist services that provide an intensive package of recovery support and address their multiple needs. This requires all relevant organisations to be involved, and the needs of homeless people to be recognised in strategies such as the local Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy so that relevant services are commissioned. The involvement of service users helps to improve planning and build the confidence of the people involved.
29. Some of the most effective delivery models bring services to the homeless person, such as, ‘in-reach’ into hostels. These services work because they are tailored to address personal needs, for example, through the use of personal budgets or the provision of peer support and mentoring from people who have experienced homelessness. They often offer a pathway approach with a single key worker to provide supported access to services. The voluntary and community sector has an excellent track record of delivering innovative solutions, working alongside statutory services.
30. The complicated nature of homeless people’s needs (such as alcohol or substance misuse together with mental health problems¹⁸), plus difficulties caused by living in insecure accommodation, means that homeless people often struggle to access the healthcare they need and rely on acute hospital services. The Government will introduce new duties on the NHS Commissioning Board and GP Commissioning Consortia to reduce inequalities in access to, and outcomes from, healthcare.¹⁹ Local authorities will have a new ring-fenced public health budget with a ‘health premium’ to promote action to reduce health inequalities. Directors of Public Health will be the strategic leaders for public health and health inequalities in local communities. Health and Wellbeing Boards will play a key role in bringing together the NHS, public health and social care services within a local authority area, and developing health and wellbeing strategies based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
31. The Government recognises the importance of the Integrated Offender Management approach to join up local action to identify, target and support the most chaotic and problematic offenders, some of whom may be without suitable and sustainable

¹⁸ See, for example, Department for Communities and Local Government and the National Mental Health Development Unit, *Guidance on meeting the psychological and emotional needs of homeless people*, 2010. www.nmhdu.org.uk/our-work/improving-mental-health-care-pathways/non-statutory-guidance-on-dealing-with-complex-trauma/

¹⁹ Subject to Parliamentary approval of the Health and Social Care Bill 2011.

accommodation and at risk of rough sleeping. By joining up at the local level, criminal justice agencies can work with local authorities and others outside the traditional community safety network, such as voluntary sector homelessness organisations, to provide the necessary support to help break the cycle of re-offending and the factors that drive it, such as homelessness. Government is also supporting the local development of custody suite liaison and court diversion schemes. This will help facilitate closer working between health professionals and criminal justice agencies to ensure that offenders who are homeless or at risk of rough sleeping are able to access treatment services (particularly substance misuse and mental health services).

32. Homeless people very often want to work – 80 per cent of clients helped by St Mungo’s homeless charity said that work was one of their goals.²⁰ Given the opportunity and the right support, many homeless people – including those experiencing multiple disadvantages – can and do work. Employment represents one of the most sustainable routes out of homelessness and priority should be given to work-related activities at the earliest possible stage of engagement. The introduction of Universal Credit²¹ will ensure that work always pays, making it worthwhile for homeless people to undertake work for limited hours in line with their capabilities. Where people are not ready for work, they will be able to instead undertake agreed training or voluntary work aimed at improving their employability, with continued support from the benefits system.
33. Social enterprise offers a growing and important opportunity that can increase the involvement of people in work. Indeed, the homelessness sector pioneered this approach through The Big Issue. Such innovative approaches show how enterprise can get involved and the success that can result from unlocking the potential of homeless people. Many business, trusts and foundations provide invaluable experience and resources to homelessness organisations. Government will explore the potential of a Social Impact Bond to encourage private and charitable investment in developing innovative services that address the multiple needs of rough sleepers.
34. People also need a range of accommodation options to suit their needs and support their recovery. Significant progress has been made in transforming the hostel sector to improve standards, raise aspirations and provide more opportunities for training and work. Government will provide a further £37.5m between 2012-13 and 2014-15 through the Homelessness Change Programme. Some people may be able to move directly into rented accommodation, including those moving-on from hostels, often with support so that the person can manage a tenancy and continue their recovery.
35. Supported lodgings and foyer schemes play a key role in offering supported accommodation tailored to young people’s needs. Women’s refuges and hostels

²⁰ *Just the Job*, St Mungo’s, published in July 2010. www.mungos.org/documents/4021

²¹ *Universal Credit: Welfare that Works*, Department for Work and Pensions, 11 November 2010. www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/legislation-and-key-documents/universal-credit/

for women and couples without children also provide an important source of accommodation, including for people escaping domestic violence. The National Housing Federation is working with its members to examine the role housing associations have in meeting the housing and support needs of vulnerable groups, including single homeless people, and how this can be developed in the future. The Federation will publish its report at the end of the year.

Commitment 2: Helping people access healthcare

Government will:

- support Health and Wellbeing Boards to ensure that the needs of vulnerable groups are better reflected in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments
- highlight the role of specialist services in treating homeless people, including those with a dual diagnosis of co-existing mental health and drug and alcohol problems
- work with the National Inclusion Health Board and the NHS, local government and others to identify what more must be done to include the needs of homeless people in the commissioning of health services.

Commitment 3: Helping people into work

Government will:

- offer voluntary early access to the Work Programme for homeless people who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, in agreement with their Jobcentre Plus adviser
- undertake a review of employment support for homeless people, including access to Jobcentre Plus services
- prioritise access to further education and skills services for the most disadvantaged, including homeless people, and promote informal adult learning as a pathway towards wider learning opportunities.

Business Action on Homelessness will:

- lever in new corporate investment to develop a pre-Ready to Work programme, helping the most disadvantaged homeless people to access pre-employment training, work experience, and job coaching with business volunteers.

Supporting local action to end rough sleeping

“If you have a service tailored to each person, it’s about getting the best service for them. It’s not people getting told the same thing that won’t help them.” (Homeless Link Advisory Panel member)

36. The Government is clear that communities are best placed to respond to local needs and priorities, and should be in the lead on tackling homelessness. Many homeless services originate from community concerns about vulnerable people. Thousands of people volunteer every week in established homeless day centres, hostels and shelters, helping rough sleepers to come off the streets. Local authorities play a vital role in enabling and co-ordinating activities.
37. Tackling homelessness will be challenging over the next few years as we tackle the nation’s deficit. But it is vital that we prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable to prevent damage to individuals and communities, and avoid higher costs for local services later on. The Government has prioritised homelessness funding through the Spending Review and provided a clear expectation that councils should not be targeting disproportionate spending reductions on vulnerable people, particularly those who are homeless. It has also provided up to nine months transitional protection and £190m of additional funding to help people affected by the changes to Housing Benefit.
38. Communities are best able to tackle homelessness when they are freed from unnecessary bureaucratic burdens, have the freedom to align funding to local priorities, and have access to transparent information to monitor the effectiveness of local services. Government has consulted on a new Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency, and will shortly set out minimum standards on the data that should be available and accessible to the public. We will work with the local government sector to support the local collection and publication of relevant data on services to vulnerable people on a comparable basis.

Commitment 4: Reducing bureaucratic burdens

Government:

- has reduced the amount of guidance from central government, such as publishing more coherent and shorter revised regulations and guidance for care leavers
- has simplified the system for funding further education and skills, and given colleges and training organisations greater freedom and flexibility to respond to local demand
- will no longer require local authorities and providers of services to submit ongoing data returns to Government on Supporting People services²² which deflects from the main task of delivering practical help
- will end plans for those seeking to work or volunteer with vulnerable groups to register with the Vetting and Barring Scheme
- has established a red-tape taskforce, which has reported on how to reduce the impact of bureaucracy on charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations²³
- has encouraged local authorities to have regard to their local compact agreements on fair working with voluntary organisations when commissioning local services.

Commitment 5: Increasing local control over investment in services

Government will:

- during 2011, analyse the costs of homelessness and the public services to which they fall, to help communities identify where investment in homelessness prevention can best be made.

The Local Government Group and Government will:

- work together to develop a proposal for the use of community based budgets for homeless adults with complex needs.

²² The Department for Communities and Local Government data collection on Supporting People will cease once data has been collected for the financial year 1st April to 31st March 2011. This includes both authority uploads of Supporting People data via the Supporting People Local System (SPLS) to Steria and Client Record and Outcome data submitted by providers to the Centre for Housing Research, University of St Andrews.

²³ The Big Society De-regulation Taskforce chaired by Lord Hodgson. www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/red-tape-purge

39. Local political accountability is key to driving up the standards of local services in response to community concerns. The Mayor of London has already demonstrated the successes that can be delivered by strong partnership working facilitated by energetic political leadership. We will continue to encourage councils to create a high profile and give clear local political accountability for tackling homelessness, including encouraging any mayors established in our largest cities to take a personal lead in their area.

Commitment 6: Devolving responsibility for tackling homelessness

- In London, the Mayor has been given new responsibilities and £34m of Government investment to help end rough sleeping in the capital by the end of 2012. This will build on work already being led by the London Delivery Board to establish a pan-London approach.

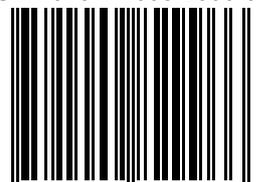
40. The key measure of success of the commitments in this report will be the extent of rough sleeping, as measured by the new more accurate methodology introduced by this Government. In addition, the *No Second Night Out* approach to service delivery will be rolled out across the country. We will continue to use the data available in London to monitor the flow of new rough sleepers and draw on other sources of information, such as research and reports from the voluntary sector. We will use the new outcome frameworks being developed by Government to measure the impact of prevention and recovery services, and will explore the use of a single definition for single homeless people to better track people in government data collection systems.

Working together to end rough sleeping

41. This report sets out shared commitments to end rough sleeping. The Government has prioritised tackling homelessness with a new, more coherent national approach. We have also set out new freedoms to better support local communities, with commitments from local government and voluntary sector partners on the action that they will take. Our aim is to ensure that people receive the help they need as soon as they come onto the streets and that improved, integrated services are able to support them to remain off the streets.
42. The Ministerial Working Group will oversee departmental progress against the high-level commitments in this document and work with partners to address the practical barriers to tackling homelessness. The Group will publish an annual update on its progress.

ISBN: 978-1-4098-2996-6

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