



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Preparing for the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

**Locata Spring Housing Event**

**23rd March 2018**

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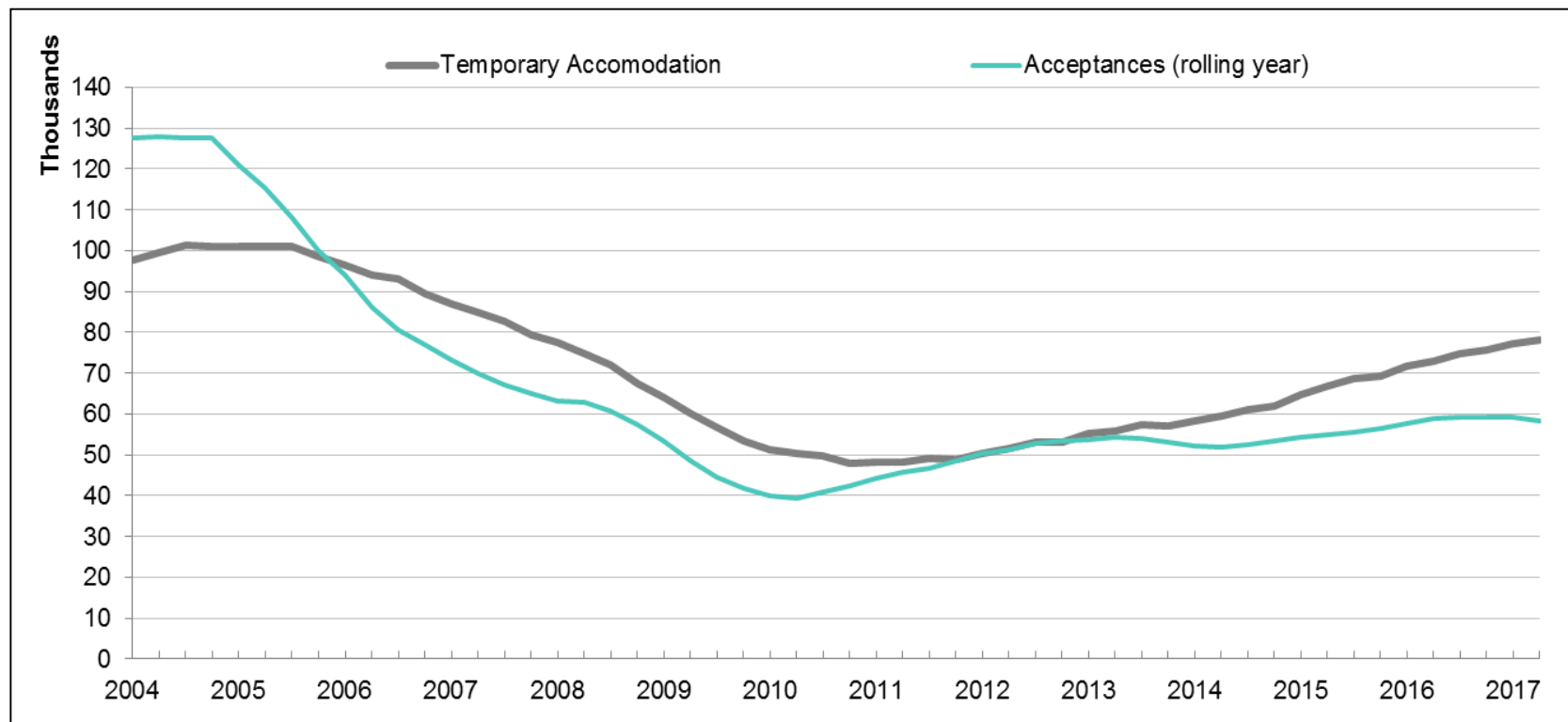


- **Context to the Homelessness Reduction Act**
- **The main changes introduced through the Act**
- **Key challenges and opportunities**
- **MHCLG Support to Local Authorities**



# Homelessness –national trends

## Acceptances and households in temporary accommodation

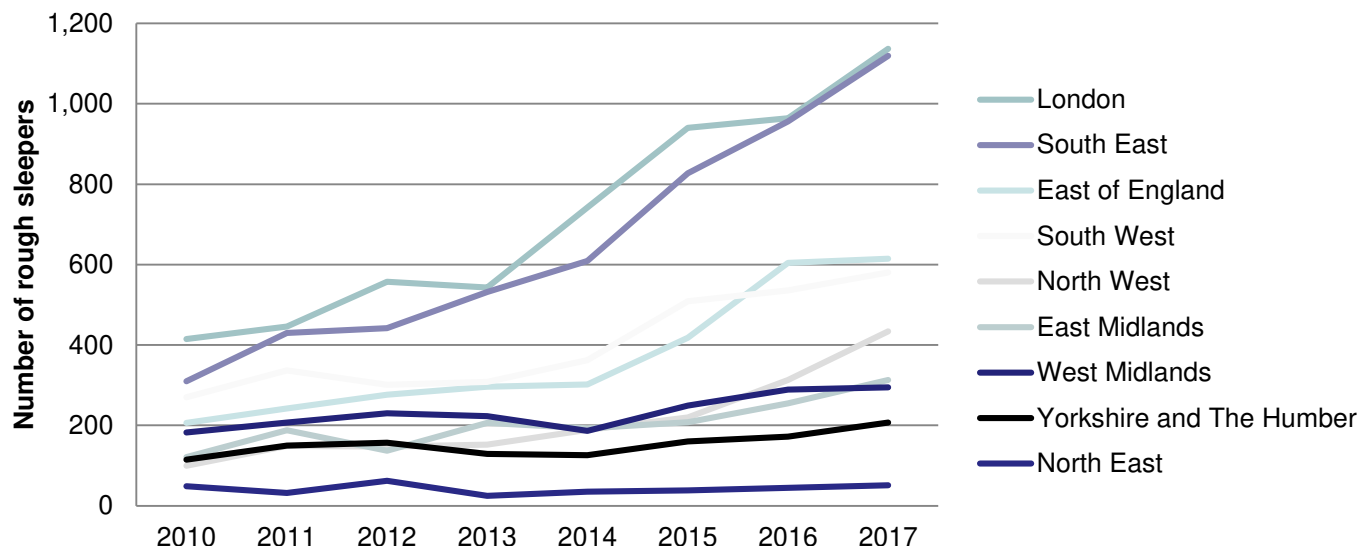


Statutory homelessness and numbers in temporary accommodation are rising. The number of households in TA is up 65% on the lowest point in 2010



# Homelessness - the current position: Rough sleeping has more than doubled since 2010

**Number of rough sleepers by region 2010 - 2017**



- 4,751 people slept rough on a single night in Autumn 2017, up 15% from 2016.
- Rough sleeping becoming increasingly visible in wider communities and no longer only in large towns and cities.
- Despite general rises some areas have managed to reduce levels of rough sleeping – primarily due to increased partnership working.



# The Homelessness Reduction Act: Context

- Enacted from private members bill which achieved Government and cross party support in context of rising homelessness, and lack of help for single people
- Welsh Legislation, Crisis 'Turned Away' Report and Expert Panel, DCLG Select Committee
- HRA key to Government response to reducing homelessness
- Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Taskforce will drive activity across Government – including delivering on manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027 and halve it by 2022
- A Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel including local authority and charity sector reps is supporting the ministerial Taskforce to develop a Rough Sleeping Strategy by summer 2018



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Prevent more people from becoming homeless in the first place by identifying people at risk and intervening earlier with solutions we know work

- Homelessness Reduction Act - **prevention duty** and support LAs with service development
- Bring prevention further upstream increase co-ordination, learning through **£20m Trailblazers**
- Make it easier for local areas to spot those at risk of homelessness by **improving data**
- Enable LAs to redirect costs from TA to prevention through **£402 million ringfenced Flexible Homelessness Support Grant**

Intervene rapidly if a homelessness crisis occurs, so it is brief and non-recurrent

- Homelessness Reduction Act – **relief duty** for all eligible homeless households
- Help new rough sleepers, or people at imminent risk of sleeping rough, get support needed quickly through more joined up services and a better understanding of what works, starting with **£20 million rough sleeping fund**
- Helping to open access to the private Rented Sector with **£20 million fund towards deposit schemes**

Help more people recover from - and exit -homelessness by getting them back on their feet

- Support the most entrenched rough sleepers through local personalised support, starting with **£10 million Social Impact Bond**
- Enable former single homeless people to move out of hostels through **£100m investment in 2,000 units of new accommodation**
- Investigating whether Housing First can work at scale **with £28 million for Housing First pilots in Manchester, Liverpool and West Midlands areas**



## HRA: New Duties

- **Expanded advice and information duty** to all residents AND advice designed with vulnerable groups in mind: care leavers, former armed forces, people leaving custody, victims of domestic abuse, people leaving hospital and people with mental health issues
- **All applicants who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness must have assessments of housing needs, circumstances and support needs**
- **Prevention duty** owed to all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days irrespective of 'local connection' 'priority need' or 'intentional homelessness'. Includes tenants served with valid S21 notice which expires within 56 days
- **Relief duty** owed to people who are actually homeless, irrespective of 'priority need' or 'intentional homelessness'; the local authority MAY refer to another LA if the applicant has no local connection to their authority and has a safe local connection elsewhere



## HRA: New Duties

- Prevention and relief duty each last for up to **56 days** and delivered through a **personalised housing plan (PHP)** agreed with the **applicant**
- PHP sets out the '**reasonable steps**' that the LA and the applicant will take to prevent homelessness and/or help to secure accommodation and will be regularly reviewed
- If an applicant '**deliberately and unreasonably refuses to cooperate**' with their reasonable steps, the LA can serve notice bringing the duty to an end BUT only after issuing a warning
- New regulations will require LAs to have **written procedures** for non-cooperation notices which will involve second officer sign off
- LAs must provide **temporary accommodation** for homeless applicants they have reason to believe MAY have priority need, during the relief stage





**Care leavers aged 18 - 20** will have more choice on **local connection**. They will have a connection with the authority which has looked after them and with another area if they have lived there for 2 years, including some time before their 16th birthday.

**Requirements on the suitability of private rented sector accommodation** are extended to all placements of applicants who have priority need, except where they find the property themselves

From October 2018 certain public bodies will have a new **‘Duty to Refer’** with consent, their service users who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local authority of their choice



**Public Bodies with Duty to Refer from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 are:**

- (a) prisons;
- (b) youth offender institutions;
- (c) secure training centres;
- (d) secure colleges;
- (e) youth offending teams;
- (f) probation services (including community rehabilitation companies);
- (g) Jobcentre Plus;
- (h) social service authorities;
- (i) emergency departments;
- (j) urgent treatment centres; and,
- (k) hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care.
- (l) Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the armed forces

**Local authorities and partners are encouraged to build referral protocols and procedures with ALL service providers that can help identify and support people threatened with homelessness**



## Challenges and Opportunities

- **Increase in duties and workload for local authorities** – more applications, decisions , case loads and case management requirements
- **Increase in review points** but aim is to increase consensus and reduce formal challenge
- New **MHCLG data collection requirements** from April 3<sup>rd</sup> – the ‘H-Clic’ system – will gather much more comprehensive data on homelessness, needs, outcomes and actions taken by LAS – these will inform local and national policies on causes and remedies
- **New focus on prevention is needed** to help households retain accommodation where it is suitable. Offers of PRS accommodation are not the only solution



## Challenges and Opportunities

- **Partners must be involved** whether through ‘Duty To Refer’ or because ‘homelessness is everybody’s business’ . Earlier identification and prevention means working better together. **Housing departments cannot deliver this alone.**
- **Reducing rough sleeping is an urgent priority** the Act will require assessments, support, referrals where needed BUT genuine and sustainable solutions must involve contribution from partners- health and social care, employment and training, criminal justice...
- **Changing the culture is essential to improving customer experience** . This is a key challenge for partners and advocates, as well as local authorities.



## Challenges and Opportunities – New Delivery Models?

### **Specialist services co-located or integrated with partners**

- St Basils Youth Hub in Birmingham – delivers prevention and relief to 16-25 year olds, 80%+ prevention rate
- Greenwich youth hub The Point – integrated service prevents homelessness and YP becoming Looked After at 16-17

### **Take the service to the customer**

Wigan Council non-office based service, with housing options officers co-located with partners (including two officers based within hospitals) and strong focus on home visits

### **Partners on board**

Southwark Council has brought partners into the office to co-deliver personalised housing plans and prevention activity – Shelter, Women's Aid – and have open referral system for ALL agencies in the borough



## MHCLG support for implementation

**The Homelessness Advice and Support Team (HAST)** is offering advice and support to LAs in preparation for, and following commencement, of the Act.

- 11 regional events to support planning for implementation
- Over 200 visits to authorities to provide individual advice and support
- Attendance at multiple national and regional events.

**The statutory Code of Guidance and secondary legislation have been published** following a period of consultation.

Available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>

Joint DfE/MHCLG guidance on 'Provision of accommodation for 16-17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation' will remain separate and in being updated.



## MHCLG support for implementation

**Funded Trailblazers** are trying out new approaches to prevention that others can learn from, including some 'upstream' interventions.

**LB Southwark** has been funded as an 'early adopter' and have implemented the Act early. LBS are hosting visits, sharing PHPS and all other tools to LAS on request.

**The National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS)** has been funded to deliver training to frontline staff – this is free for local authorities to access,

**New burdens funding** has been increased to £72.7 million following engagement with local authorities around the delivery of the Act. Flexible Homelessness Support Grant has also been used in many areas to extend resources and focus on prevention.



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# ANY QUESTIONS?

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