

25<sup>th</sup> January 2021

XXXX MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear MP,

The National Federation of ALMOs is the membership body for local authority arms-length housing organisations (ALMOs). We represent 29 ALMOs across the country managing just under 400,000 council homes. A number of our members have responsibility for the delivery of homelessness prevention and relief services on behalf of their parent local authorities.

We would like to draw your attention to our best practice report on homelessness, *Can social housing rebalance the homelessness equation?* which explores the structural causes of homelessness and the best practice work that ALMOs are doing in the areas of prevention and relief. The full report is available [here](#), and an Executive Summary [here](#). We provide 11 in-depth case studies from areas as diverse as Newcastle, Barnet, Wolverhampton and Cornwall, all of which demonstrate the value of prevention, the need for strong local partnership working and strategic leadership, and innovation on the ground.

While it is true that 2020 was a year dominated by COVID-19 and there were brilliant efforts through 'Everyone In' to provide a safe roof for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, it is crucial to remember that this has come at the end of a long period of ever-increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness, in unsuitable housing or living in temporary accommodation. For example, the total number of households in temporary accommodation in December 2019 had risen to over 88,000, the majority of which had children.

While we need to sustain the efforts of 'Everyone In', we also need to look at the structural causes of rising levels of homelessness: a scarcity of genuinely affordable housing, increasing reliance on insecure and unaffordable private rented sector, austerity cuts to wraparound community services and local authorities, and the prevalence of domestic abuse. Added to this, some well-defined groups of people are more likely to become homeless, including care leavers and prison leavers. We will not achieve the government's pledge to end rough sleeping by the end of this parliamentary period without an integrated strategy across a number of policy areas.

Key policy adjustments from the government that could greatly assist local authorities and ALMOs in their duty to tackle homelessness, include:

- At least 90-100,000 new socially rented homes a year to make sure that everyone has a home that they can genuinely afford. Building these homes in the social housing sector would also guarantee their residents the wraparound housing support some may need to

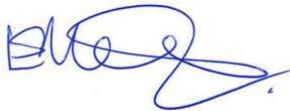
help maintain tenancies and improve their life chances, so preventing further homelessness.

- Regulation of the private rented sector should be adjusted to stop it being a route into homelessness. Section 21 evictions should be banned, and the government should implement their proposed reforms within the PRS as soon as possible.
- Urgent welfare reform is needed to remove its current triggers of homelessness: permanent lifting of the LHA rates to reflect the true cost of rent; scrapping the Benefit Cap; and reform of Universal Credit so that it is not a barrier to maintaining a home.
- Long-term, sustainable, and sufficient funding is needed to develop prevention and relief strategies, with built-in monitoring and evaluation to show they work. This includes long-term funding for those with complex needs through Housing First projects.

We are increasingly concerned that the Government's 'Everyone In' strategy has become fractured across the country and is not on track to deliver the hoped for sea-change in the delivery of services for those sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough. We are also becoming increasingly concerned about the people who are left out of 'Everyone In', including those with no recourse to public funds.

We would welcome your support for the proposals made in our best practice report and would be grateful if you might be prepared to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government urging them to keep attention focused on the long-term ending of all types of homelessness.

Yours sincerely,



**Eamon McGoldrick**

Managing Director, National Federation of ALMOs