

Executive Summary

Tackling Temporary Accommodation

What could an incoming Labour Government do about the cost and condition of temporary accommodation in England?

Every part of the housing system is in crisis. One of the consequences of this is that temporary accommodation is being used to house more people than ever. Temporary accommodation is never a home and is often low quality, unsafe and expensive. Recent [figures released by DLUHC](#) show that from Apr 2022- Mar 2023 **£1.74 billion** was spent on temporary accommodation, up 9% on the previous year.

Since Labour Housing Group (LHG) began this piece of work, what was a terrible situation has become steadily worse. The very viability of Local Authorities across the country is under serious threat, due in a large part to the cost of temporary accommodation and too many people have their lives on hold while they wait for a home to call their own.

Within this paper LHG has been looking for policy and practice initiatives that will enable an incoming Labour Government to:

- Decrease the use of temporary accommodation (TA)
- Reduce the cost of TA, partly through reducing the reliance upon TA in the private sector.
- Improve the standard of TA, regardless of the agency that funds or provides it.

Solving this crisis will not be easy and will require any future Labour Government to take a long term 'invest to save' approach. In recognition of macroeconomic financial realities, this paper offers suggestions for where investment can best be directed to tackle this problem.

We group our recommendations into three sections:

- A. Enabling actions**
- B. 'Low cost high-impact' policies**
- C. 'Long term, high-impact' policies**

A. Enabling actions: essential if we are to make a difference

- Create a national, cross-cutting homelessness strategy, and establish the role of a Homelessness Tsar to oversee it.
- Ensure all homelessness strategies are informed by lived experience.
- Improve data collection and use.
- Recognise the uneven impact of homelessness and combat domestic abuse.

B. Essential low cost, high impact policies to be implemented quickly

- Reform allocations to speed up move-ons into social housing by reforming allocations systems.
- Help access to the PRS by increasing Discretionary Housing Payment and expanding the provision of deposits and rent in advance in all local authority areas.
- Make prevention of homelessness 'everyone's business.'

C. Essential Long term, High Impact Policies

- Build more social housing, with a target of 90,000 social homes per year.
- 'Invest to Save' by increasing the Homelessness Prevention Grant Fund, and removing restrictions & increasing capital investment to enable housing acquisitions by local authorities for both permanent homes and temporary accommodation.
- Raise incomes by ensuring Local Housing Allowance covers the lowest 30th percentile of market rents and by removing the Benefit Cap.
- Improve regulation of TA standards and develop and fund a more robust inspection and enforcement regime.