



Creating the change

**Homeless Link's strategy
to end homelessness**

June 2018 to June 2021

Everyone should have a place to call home. This is Homeless Link's vision and, together with our members and experts by experience, we are a part of the solution, taking action and creating the change.



Since the publication of our previous strategy, Making the Difference (2015), our work has had a real and wide-reaching impact, improving services and transforming lives.

As the membership body for the homelessness and supported housing sector in England, representing over 750 diverse organisations, Homeless Link is in a unique position to understand and assess the scale and nature of the challenge to end homelessness. The country has experienced successive year on year rises in the numbers of people struggling to find and keep a home; and a corresponding increase in the complexity and multiplicity of people's needs.

Homeless Link sees the national policy and structural barriers; the constraints of both funding and expertise; the system blocks and attitudinal obstacles. But we also see – and are instrumental in developing – the opportunities. The past few years have brought innovations in service design and delivery; new sources of funding via social investment and increased public giving; and a renewed vigour in our collective efforts to ensure that everybody has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

Our new three year strategy (2018-2021) reflects this changing landscape and sets out in clear terms how Homeless Link will play our part in ending homelessness.



Our vision

Everyone should have a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

Our mission

To develop, inspire, support and sustain a movement of organisations working together to achieve positive futures for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

Our strategy

There is no place for homelessness in the 21st century. Our strategic aims relate to preventing homelessness before it begins, providing responsive and sustainable solutions should it occur, and instilling confidence that ending homelessness is achievable. They bring together our vision and values, and describe the actions that we will take.

Our four strategic aims:

1. Preventing homelessness and ending rough sleeping
2. Showing that ending homelessness is both achievable and sustainable
3. Supporting our members to be more effective, impactful and resilient
4. Being an excellent and inspiring organisation.

Our actions

The most effective organisations are those best equipped to engage others and inspire them to act. This is how we view our role, changing the way that we, as a society, think, speak and act towards people who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

We do this by promoting policy change at a national and local level, working with our members and experts by experience to improve services, and through effective communications.

As the trusted voice for the homelessness and supported housing sector, and a respected member of civil society, it is vital that we have integrity. That means we are effective, efficient, independent and trustworthy. Our approach is to listen and learn, act and then speak.



Listen and learn: To be effective we must first understand evidence, perspectives and motivations. We seek to listen to members, experts by experience and other stakeholders, in order to learn from lived and frontline experience and hard evidence.



Act: Our actions are our most powerful tool in effecting positive change. We base our activity on evidenced solutions that support our long-term goals, working in partnership with our members, local and national government and others to achieve the greatest impact.



Speak: Our voice, like our actions, is an influential asset; we use it to help change perceptions about some of society's most vulnerable people and keep homelessness on the agenda. We base what we say on what we have learned and accomplished, and highlight the strengths people bring rather than problems they may be perceived to have.

Homeless Link's strategy

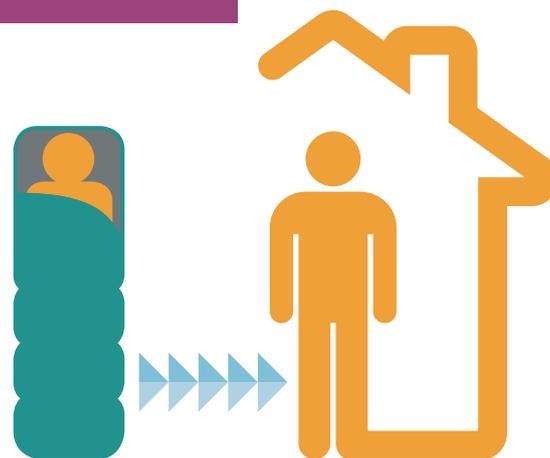
1 Preventing homelessness and ending rough sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most visible type of homelessness, but is just the tip of the iceberg of homelessness in all its forms.

Many people, through no fault of their own, find themselves living in temporary or unsuitable accommodation, sofa surfing or trapped in a cycle of moving from place to place.

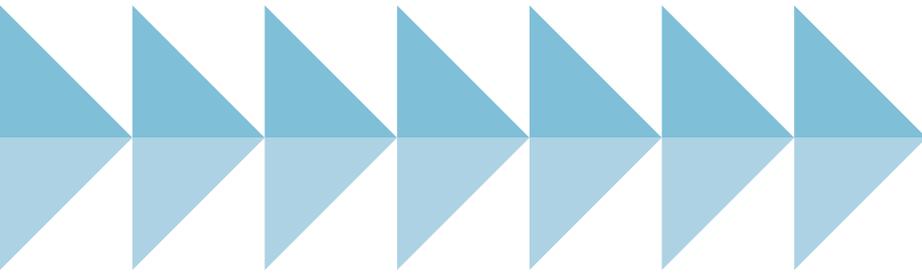
Structural factors such as poverty, the lack of affordable housing, welfare reform and cuts to public services have particularly contributed to the recent marked increase in homelessness.

Homelessness can be prevented, and public and voluntary services should act early to ensure people have the support they need to find and keep a home.



To achieve this, Homeless Link will:

- Ensure that the structural – as well as personal – causes of homelessness are understood, addressed and mitigated in order to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place
- Identify, support and promote policy and practice responses across the whole of government and other agencies that will effectively end homelessness and reduce the numbers of people sleeping rough
- Champion a systems change approach to permanently end rough sleeping that ensures there is no return to current high levels of people sleeping on our streets
- Promote a co-produced, cross sector collaborative approach to supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage and address systemic blockages and barriers
- Identify interventions, opportunities and risks to specifically prevent and tackle youth homelessness.



2 Showing that ending homelessness is both achievable and sustainable

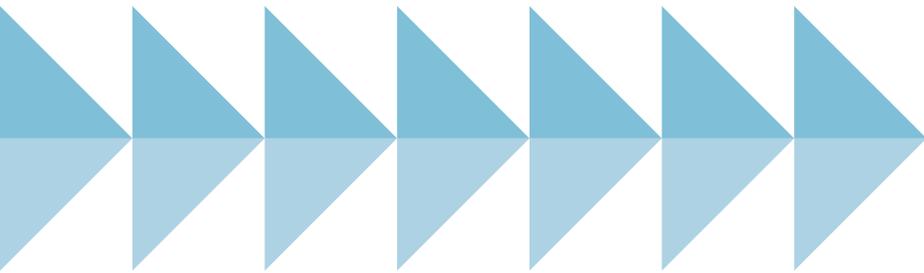
There is genuine public concern about the numbers of people sleeping rough and finding themselves homeless.

This sentiment has galvanised both politicians and service providers to redouble their efforts to reduce and ultimately end all types of homelessness in England. It is vital that we see communities as a resource to help end homelessness, and this means engaging the public in new and different ways, as donors, volunteers, activists and advocates.

To achieve this, Homeless Link will:

- Promote the use of positive images and positive language when describing homelessness and people experiencing homelessness
- Explore the role that existing and new technology might play in raising awareness and developing solutions to homelessness

- Galvanise individuals, agencies and communities to collaborate in positive social action that helps end homelessness and rough sleeping
- Provide a ‘good news agency’ function that celebrates the work our members do and raises awareness of the full range and impact of this work
- Champion initiatives that ensure that co-production and the experiences and views of experts by experience are integral to homelessness policy and practice including our own.



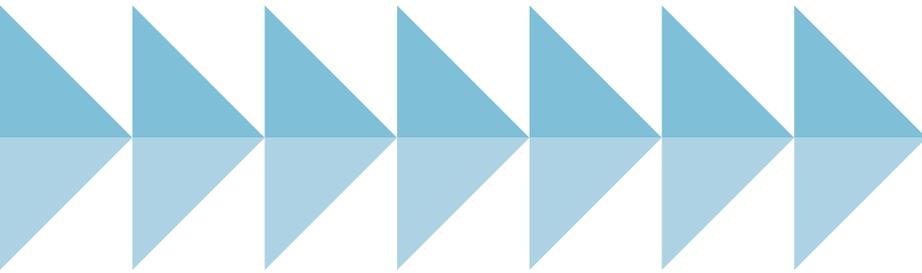
3 Supporting our members to be more effective, impactful and resilient

Our role as the homelessness and supported housing sector's national membership body uniquely empowers us to influence both policy and practice.

We do this by working directly with members to promote innovation and effective ways of working, as well as creating vibrant communities of practice within the sector and beyond. We also collate and harness member data and evidence on the ground to inform policy nationally and locally.

To achieve this, Homeless Link will:

- Support our members to deliver effective service responses to local needs, based on their local knowledge combined with our high quality research and data driven evidence
- Provide our members with the technology, tools, support and services they need to demonstrate their impact
- Promote good governance, leadership and financial diversity as vehicles for ensuring our members' sustainability
- Provide opportunities for people working in the homelessness and supported housing sectors to continually develop their knowledge, networks and skills
- Facilitate partnerships and collaboration within and across sectors to achieve better outcomes for people experiencing homelessness or in vulnerable housing situations
- Ensure that our members' services are designed, resourced and co-ordinated to better serve people facing multiple disadvantage in all local areas.



4 Being an excellent and inspiring organisation

Just like our members, Homeless Link faces challenges in its funding and operating environment.

If we are to thrive, and have the credibility and influence to enable our members to do the same, we must strengthen our own business, structures and operating processes.

To achieve this, Homeless Link will:

- Ensure we are a financially strong organisation able to survive and thrive over the course of this strategy and beyond
- Develop and deliver social enterprise activities that provide surpluses to support mission delivery
- Recruit, retain and develop a talented and skilled staff team to deliver our objectives

- Implement and promote a partnership approach to collaborative working that seeks new partners from across sectors
- Increase our membership and retain current members by developing new, compelling ways of describing our work and defining our value and impact as an organisation
- Act as the trusted and independent voice for – and the knowledge and data centre about - the homelessness and supported housing sectors in England.



What we do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness agencies and the wider housing with health, care and support sector. We work to improve services through research, training and guidance, and to promote policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

Let's end homelessness together

Homeless Link
Minories House
2-5 Minories
London EC3N 1BJ
020 7840 4430
www.homeless.org.uk

 @Homelesslink

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