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How do housing associations help prevent homelessness?

Housing people at risk of homelessness has always been a key part of what housing associations do, but our sector is facing challenges.

In May 2023, the National Housing Federation surveyed our members to find out how they help end and prevent homelessness, through providing safe and secure homes, as well as homelessness prevention measures. We hope you can use this resource to call for sustainable funding and policy commitments to help housing associations tackle homelessness. **Our survey found that:**

- Homelessness prevention is a priority for general needs providers, as well as specialist homelessness housing providers.
- The most common types of homelessness prevention support provided are: tenancy sustainment, mitigating eviction risk and welfare advice or support.
- Housing associations value working with Homes for Cathy, and feel a high level of confidence in their membership.
- 79% had rehoused people in long-term accommodation following “Everyone In” and almost half had rehoused people in long-term accommodation following refugee resettlement schemes.
- Building strong relationships with local authority partners where homes are located is a priority for our members. Of the 46 respondents to this question, 85% report a good or excellent relationship.

What barriers do housing associations face when tackling homelessness?

There is an increasing demand for homelessness prevention services, alongside a cost of living and housing crisis. Housing associations face barriers to increasing their homelessness provision and providing crucial services. **Our survey found:**

- The number one barrier to housing homeless households for our members is a lack of homes.
- The second and third largest barriers were the uncertainty of support funding and the rising cost of providing support.
- Most respondents provided furnished tenancies and were confident that they could do so, but lack of furniture was also a barrier to applicants accepting an offer of a property.

What are the solutions?

We need a long-term plan for housing that will address the lack of social housing, affordability challenges and lack of funding for support services.

Our recommendations are:

- We need the party that forms the next government to commit to a long-term plan for housing that will build more social homes, tackle affordability challenges and increase funding for support services.
- With local governments across the country facing a crisis in funding, we're asking the government to boost and ringfence funding for housing related support to ensure spending at least matches the £1.6bn a year allocated to local authorities in 2010.
- To help people facing homelessness as a result of the cost of living crisis, we're asking the government to review the household benefit cap, two child limit, removal of the spare room subsidy, and the five week wait for Universal Credit.