



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

## NPSS Conference: MHCLG Update

Jo Beck

Homelessness Advice and Support Team

1st July 2019

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## Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) Year One...

Before commencement date:

- MHCLG published final Code of Guidance, Secondary legislation, and H-CLIC schema
- The Homelessness Advice and Support Team (HAST) had visited 200+ LAs and held regional HRA roadshows
- London Training Academy set up to support LAs with recruitment and implementation – over 1000 were eventually trained
- £72m new burdens funding for 1<sup>st</sup> two years with commitment to review the HRA within that timescale

Since commencement:

- March 30<sup>th</sup> 2018 Rough Sleeping Initiative launched – LAS funded to implement speedy interventions to reduce rough sleeping in 83 areas supported by a team of rough sleeping advisers
- Summer 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy launched - cross government action based around 3 core pillars- Prevention, Intervention, Recovery – 61 (funded) commitments across government
- PRS Access Scheme launched – LAs invited to bid for funding to reduce homelessness and temporary accommodation

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## Additional Funding for Local Authorities

### **Rough Sleeping Initiative**

- 2018-19 RSI funding of £30 million to 83 areas provided over 1,750 new bed spaces and 500 staff.
- This year an additional £46 million has been allocated to 246 areas –funding for an estimated 2,600 bed spaces and 750 staff.

### **Rapid Rehousing Pathway**

Around £25 million of funding has been allocated to 108 areas which will provide

- 20 new Somewhere Safe to Stay rough sleeping centres – where people on the streets can access professional help and guidance
- Over 130 Navigator posts – specialist support workers who direct people to the services they need, such as counselling, housing advice services, mental health support or substance misuse services
- 61 Supported Lettings Schemes – helping people to secure tenancies in properties that they may not otherwise be able to access
- 30 dedicated Local Letting Agencies – specialist agencies that support vulnerable people into affordable and stable accommodation

**Private Access Funding** of £19.5m allocated to 66 local authorities, includes funding for a Transitional Insurance Initiative led by Southwark Council



## HRA Review

- MHCLG will complete a review of the Act by March 2020, which includes the resourcing of it and the additional burdens
- The purpose is to ensure the legislation is working and that local authorities and partners have the tools and support to effectively implement and operate the changes
- An external evaluation is being carried out by ICF, involving an in-depth review of a sample group of 15 local authority areas

MHCLG is also engaging with stakeholders from local government and other sectors through

- A working group consisting of homelessness organisations, local authority representative groups and local authorities from across the country.
- A call for evidence to be published this summer - we encourage you all to respond



## Key messages from local authorities about HRA

### The HAST feeds into MHCLG learning from our work with local authorities around the country

- The Act represents a major shift in practice, organisation, and culture which will take some time to bed in. Some areas are facing delivery challenges
- The **administrative burden of the Act** combined with new case management systems and the requirements of reporting H-CLIC data have been challenging – we are interested in what changes would help that would not detract from the Act's purpose?
- **Footfall has not increased significantly in most authorities but associated casework has**, with more duties owed and cases held open longer for prevention and relief work

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## Key messages from local authorities about HRA

- Some LAS reported an **increase in TA**, partly due to improved assessment and offer for single people, but also because the strong focus on delivering the HRA led to less resource in the short term going into management of TA
- **Duty to refer is working best in areas with strong partnerships in place**. Most LAS reporting that referrals are generally valid ie people genuinely threatened with homeless, but not always made at the earliest opportunity
- Most (almost all) LAS have **updated their websites to be HRA** compliant and some have embraced opportunity to promote prevention opportunities through better and more accessible advice for customers

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## Key messages TO local authorities

- **Advice and Information** - Ensure your website is fully compliant with S179 and is genuinely helpful to residents wanting to understand their housing options.
- **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies** - must be published and up to date by end of 2019, this is a commitment in the Rough Sleeping Strategy
- **Duty to refer** is working best where LAs have talked to and involved partners and less well in areas where they just have waited for the referrals to arrive.
- LAs **must not reject a referral** that does not come in preferred format or via a portal; a referral is made when the required information is provided – work together on referral arrangements wherever you can
- **Customer Satisfaction** – will be improved if the service focusses on customer care, engages partners and service users in designing and delivering services
- **HAST experience is that positive and effective delivery of HRA is happening in LAs with strong leadership committed to implementing change**

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## Emerging Service Developments

- **Integration of key strategic partners** into the frontline service, joint assessments and shared outcomes
- **Contracting out** whole or part of the service to, or **co-locating** with third sector providers who might engage customers more effectively
- Providing **on-line access** to better information, self-help tools and/or to make an application
- Investment in **recruitment and training** to bring new people into the service, helping to change the culture
- Expanding **private rented access schemes to include single households** – offer may be tiered to reflect different levels of need/priority
- Re-emergence of **home visiting** as a key prevention tool

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The HCLIC system represents a **radical shift in data collection** arrangements for local and national government - many local authorities have experienced significant challenges implementing H-CLIC

We continue to offer support and an ongoing THANK YOU for your hard work to improve data collection

From April–June 2019 return onwards we expect local authorities to submit returns for legacy cases via H-CLIC. We are working with those that remain unable to do so to find solutions

The experimental nature of the data means that its use must be limited. However the statistics can give us a picture of what local authority implementation of HRA is delivering



MHCLG has published **experimental statistics** for the first 3 quarters of the HRA

Prevention duties were owed to 105,230 households; and on cases where the duty has ended:

- 59% were prevented from homelessness
- 66% moved into alternative accommodation
- 34% retained existing accommodation

Relief duties were owed to 84,530 households; and on cases where the relief duty had ended 45% were secured accommodation to relieve homelessness

Main duty acceptances were 20,250 - less than half of acceptances during the same period in 2017

Non-priority homeless decisions were made on 6,020 applications – also a big reduction on the same period in 2017 (14,040)

**However we know that in addition to data quality issues, there is a built in delay in main duty decisions post HRA**



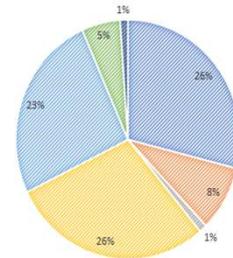
**Type of households owed a prevention or relief duty**

Lone parent & children	26%
Couple & children	8%
3+ adults & children	1%
Single male	36%
Single female	23%
Couple	5%
3+ adults no children	1%

<b>Families</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Single people</b>	<b>65%</b>

HOUSEHOLD TYPES

■ Lone parent and children 
 ■ Couple and children 
 ■ 3+ adults and children 
 ■ Single male  
■ Single female 
 ■ Couple 
 ■ 3+ adults no children

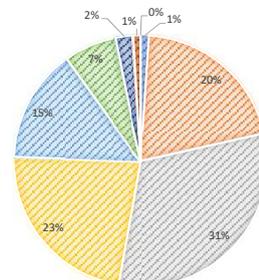


**Top support needs** of households owed a prevention and relief duty

- History of mental health problems – 40,140
- Physical ill health and disability – 25,160
- At risk of/have experienced domestic abuse –17,330
- Offending history –13,650

AGE OF MAIN APPLICANT

■ 16-17 
 ■ 18-24 
 ■ 25-34 
 ■ 35-44 
 ■ 45-54 
 ■ 55-64 
 ■ 65-74 
 ■ 75+ 
 ■ Not known





## Improving Accountability: Tackling Homelessness Together

- MHCLG has consulted on the effectiveness of existing non-statutory and statutory local accountability and partnership structures, whether the Government should introduce Homelessness Reduction Boards, and on how else we might improve local accountability and partnership working.
- Around 350 responses received, including from individuals, charities and local authorities
- Responses to the consultation are being analysed and we will be publishing the results
- MHCLG will continue to engage with stakeholders through task and finish groups and workshops

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## Reforming the Private Rented Sector

- The private rented sector provides homes for 4.5 million households. It has doubled over the last 20 years and is a vital part of our housing market
- The majority of landlords provide quality homes and services for their tenants – but the legal framework they operate in was designed in a different era, and has not kept pace with the changes in society and the housing market.
- **Government is committed to modernising the private rented sector and intends to introduce a new, fairer deal for both landlords and tenants:**
  - ✓ For tenants - improving security of tenure.
  - ✓ For landlords – a robust legal framework with straightforward and swift possession processes
  - ✓ **Consultation announced on abolition of Section 21 evictions, amendments to Ground 8 and improvements to court processes for housing cases**

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## Reforming the Private Rented Sector

**The Tenants Fees Act** took effect from June 1<sup>st</sup> and restricts charges that a landlord can require tenants to make to the following:

- the rent
- a refundable tenancy deposit capped at 5 weeks (or 6 weeks where total annual rent is £50k or more)
- a refundable holding deposit (to reserve a property) of no more than 1 week's rent
- payments to change the tenancy when requested by the tenant, capped at £50, or reasonable costs incurred if higher
- payments associated with early termination of the tenancy, when requested by the tenant
- payments for utilities, communication services, TV licence and council tax
- a default fee for late payment of rent and replacement of a lost key/security device giving access to the housing, where required under a tenancy agreement.

**Local authorities are exempt from these limits when acting on behalf of a tenant**

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## Future Funding

- The Chancellor has said that there will be a spending review this year. Decisions about the future of homelessness funding, along with all other government funding, will be made at this point, which includes FHSG.
- Ministers have made clear that homelessness and rough sleeping are a key priority and have committed to ending rough sleeping - which has been backed by £1.2 billion, so far.
- The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Directorate has been improving our evidence, including on how much TA costs, how it is being used to prevent and relieve homelessness, and how much funding LAs require.
- Thank you for your contributions to the many requests for information that come your way – it has helped us to evidence a funding bid

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**Please contact us on:  
[HAST@communities.gov.uk](mailto:HAST@communities.gov.uk)**