

What's New? Policy Summary



Eviction Ban Extended

The Government have extended the eviction ban once again. The ban was due to expire at the end of **March 2021** but has been extended until **31 May 2021**. Though few details have been announced it is expected that the ban will continue as it has been, with limited exceptions allowing evictions to continue in cases of very high rent arrears (over six months' rent) and ASB. No further exceptions have been confirmed at this stage.

Budget 3rd March 2021

As expected, the main concerns were around supporting the economy and jobs. The main headline on housing focused on home ownership, with a UK-wide mortgage guarantee scheme to help first time buyers and continued tapered cuts to stamp duty land tax. A limited but positive move on welfare was the early introduction of exemption from Shared Accommodation Rate for care leavers up to the age of 25 where they have spent three months in a homeless hostel. This was planned for introduction in 2023 but will now be in place from **June 2021**. The Chancellor also announced the £20-a-week uplift to the Universal Credit will be extended for six months in his budget on **3rd March 2021**.

UK Housing Review

The latest edition of this compendium of statistics and information about the housing sector will be launched on **29th March. (next week)**.

Social Housing Complaints - Make Things Right.

Following on from the Social Housing White Paper, the Government have launched a campaign to raise awareness amongst social housing residents about how to make a complaint about their landlord; Social housing complaints - make things right.

Fuel Poverty

MHCLG have launched its fuel poverty strategy, Sustainable warmth: protecting vulnerable households in England, aiming to support people to access affordable low carbon warmth in the move towards the net zero and fuel poverty targets.



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

MHCLG

The MHCLG will establish a MMC Taskforce, backed by **£10m** of seed funding. It will be headquartered in Wolverhampton. The Taskforce will work closely with local authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities. MHCLG will have a second headquarters in Wolverhampton for both civil servants and ministers, as announced by Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick, as part of the government's levelling up agenda.

People Experiencing Rough Sleeping

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MHCLG has issued the latest figures on people experiencing rough sleeping; the **43 per cent reduction in numbers since 2018** reflects the success of the programme, Everyone In, at the start of the pandemic.

Homelessness



Crisis has published its latest update of its Homelessness Monitor of homelessness and people experiencing rough sleeping in England. This echoes the reduction in rough sleeping due to the Everyone In programme but highlights the rise in the use of temporary accommodation especially for single people. It found that **94 per cent of councils** expect a rise in the number of homeless households as a result of loss of employment during the pandemic and eviction from the private rented sector.

Review of Decent Homes Standard

The review will be conducted in two parts, Part 1 will run from **Spring to Autumn 2021**. The aim of part 1 will be to understand the case for change to criteria within the Decent Homes Standard and begin to understand what should be included in a new standard. For each existing criterion, it will consider the strategic fit with wider government objectives and seek to identify any contradictions or inconsistencies. It will consider whether the criterion reflects present day expectations and concerns. It will seek to identify any unintended and undesirable consequences precipitated by the criterion and consider whether the criterion has been practical and deliverable on the ground. The findings will guide a decision on whether to include, amend or remove the criterion from the new Decent Homes Standard.

Part 2 of the review will run from **Autumn 2021 to Summer 2022**. The aim of Part 2 will be to redefine decency. We will do this by considering the strategic, management, economic and financial case of policy options identified during Part 1 of the review.

Voluntary Right to Buy

A report looking into the Midlands Voluntary Right to Buy pilot has been completed, with Inside Housing assessing the positives and negatives. A total of 44 associations were involved, all owning more than 1,000 homes. Demand was controlled by a ballot and interested tenants were given a month to apply for the draw; of the 9,146 who did, 6,000 were successful. Eventually, 1,892 homes were sold or were close to completing by the time the pilot wrapped up at the end of **April 2020**. Two key elements of the VRTB were under assessment through the pilot: 'portability' and one-for-one replacements, and these appear to have been more challenging parts of the process. Specifically, tenants finding out their property was not eligible after the process has begun.