Settled futures letter to editor

Invest in social housing and give [add place name]’s rough sleepers a place to call home

Dear editor,

In recent months, as we self-isolate and socially distance, our homes have become sanctuaries from the uncertainties of the world outside. Prior to lockdown [number of rough sleepers\*] people in [local authority area or region slept on the streets, without a warm bed or a roof over their head. Under the government’s Everybody In scheme, rough sleepers like them were given temporary accommodation with unprecedented speed and co-operation.

[Add details about the services you have provided for homeless people during the pandemic, including other local charities or organisations you may have worked with – e.g. “At Oakwood housing society we offered empty flats to rough sleepers during lockdown and worked with the Healthy Minds service to offer additional support to those people we housed”] Now many people who were rehoused during lockdown need a permanent place to call home. Hotels, B&Bs and hostels are only supposed to be a stepping stone, but too many experiencing homelessness find themselves with nowhere to move on to next.

[Describe the homelessness situation in your area, and how it is affecting people, in a couple of sentences. For example, you could describe the extra demand for food banks, families being forced to live in overcrowded homes, people sofa surfing with their friends or how hostels have found themselves turning people away. Be as local and specific as you can, to really make clear that homelessness is a local issue.] No one deserves to live like this. If we are to give homeless people a safe, secure and affordable place to live, the government must commit to a once-in-a-generation investment in social housing.

That’s why we’ve joined the Homes at the Heart campaign, calling on the government to make investment in social housing central to its coronavirus recovery strategy. Along with the National Housing Federation, homelessness charity Crisis, the Chartered Institute of Housing, the National Federation of ALMOs and the Association of Retained Council Housing – as well as more than 50 other supporters – we’re calling for more funding to build the social rent homes that those on the lowest incomes need.

Everyone in [add place name] deserves a home they feel secure in – whether we are living in a pandemic or not.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of Chief Executive/senior staff member at your housing association]

\* You can find the number of rough sleepers in your local authority area or region using this [data tool](https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/homelessness-in-numbers/rough-sleeping/rough-sleeping-explore-data) from Homeless Link. The figures are based on MHCLG’s annual count of rough sleepers.