

Institute for Public Policy Research



RIGHT TO HOME?

**RETHINKING HOMELESSNESS
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES**

Charlotte Snelling

ABOUT IPPR

IPPR, the Institute for Public Policy Research, is the UK's leading progressive think tank. We are an independent charitable organisation with more than 40 staff members, paid interns and visiting fellows. Our main office is in London, with IPPR North, IPPR's dedicated think tank for the North of England, operating out of offices in Manchester and Newcastle, and IPPR Scotland, our dedicated think tank for Scotland, based in Edinburgh.

Our purpose is to conduct and promote research into, and the education of the public in, the economic, social and political sciences, science and technology, the voluntary sector and social enterprise, public services, and industry and commerce.

IPPR
4th Floor
14 Buckingham Street
London WC2N 6DF
T: +44 (0)20 7470 6100
E: info@ippr.org
www.ippr.org
Registered charity no: 800065 (England and Wales),
SC046557 (Scotland).

©IPPR July 2017

The progressive policy think tank

SUPPORTED BY



Hastoe are proud to be partners of Homes for Cathy, a national alliance of housing associations from across the UK helping to raise awareness of the needs of homeless people. You can find out more about Homes for Cathy at www.homesforcathy.org.uk

Homes for Cathy

CONTENTS

Summary	3
1. Introduction	6
2. Homelessness in England	8
2.1 The national context.....	8
2.2 Current approaches to tackling homelessness.....	9
3. The experience of homelessness in rural England	11
3.1 The extent of rural homelessness.....	13
3.2 The causes of rural homelessness	17
3.3 Challenges for service delivery.....	19
4. What can rural areas do?	22
4.1 A rural homelessness strategy.....	23
4.2 Local homelessness forums	24
4.3 Standardised monitoring.....	25
4.4. Rural community hubs	26
4.5. New models of emergency hostel accommodation.....	27
Conclusion.....	29
References	30
Annex A	33

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charlotte Snelling is a research fellow at IPPR.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank colleagues Luke Murphy, Hywel Lloyd and Miatta Fahnbulleh at IPPR for their support conducting the research and their valuable feedback. Thanks also to our funder Hastoe, in particular Sue Chalkey and Neil Cox. Finally, thanks to all those who participated in the research, including the attendees of our rethinking rural homelessness roundtable and those individuals who set aside time to be interviewed about their experiences delivering homelessness services in rural areas.

Download

This document is available to download as a free PDF and in other formats at:

<http://www.ippr.org/publications/right-to-home>

Citation

If you are using this document in your own writing, our preferred citation is:

Snelling, C (2017) *Right to home?: Rethinking homelessness in rural communities*, IPPR.

<http://www.ippr.org/publications/right-to-home>

Permission to share

This document is published under a creative commons licence:

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 UK

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/uk/>

For commercial use, please contact info@ippr.org



SUMMARY

60-SECOND SUMMARY

Scenes of rolling hills, countryside pursuits and nostalgic ideas about village life can present rural living as offering opportunities for people to escape the pressures associated with England's urban centres, to access a better quality of life. But these idyllic images mask significant experiences of inequality and deprivation to which rural communities are vulnerable. Homelessness, traditionally depicted as an urban street phenomenon, is notably absent in people's understanding of rural life.

Homelessness across England is on the rise. The number of households accepted as homeless by local authorities, in temporary accommodation, and/or rough sleeping have all increased since 2010. Rates are high in urban areas and yet many households in rural areas are threatened with or experience homelessness due to: considerable shortages of affordable housing in rural areas; declining local authority (LA) housing stock; and a more limited range of housing types and tenures on offer. The challenges associated with preventing and relieving homelessness in rural areas can also be qualitatively different, exacerbated by: poor economies of scale; large travel distances and poor transport connections; constrained resourcing for specialist services; isolated communities; an ageing population; and limited alternative and emergency housing provision. The negative impact on affected households is no less significant than in urban areas – and could be even more so.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 seeks to address concerns about rising homelessness. But critical to the success of implementing the legislation – and directing any resources – will be ensuring a full understanding of the nature of the homelessness challenge in any given area. This must extend to understanding the differences between urban and rural contexts. With this in mind, this report starts to explore the scale and nature of homelessness in rural areas, how it varies from urban areas, and how rural housing policies and homelessness strategies might be adapted to better reflect the distinct issues they face.

KEY FINDINGS

- **In 2015/16, 6,270 households were accepted as homeless in England's 91 mainly and largely rural local authorities** (assessed to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need – 'statutorily homeless'), amounting to an average of 1.3 in every 1,000 households.
- In 16 of these predominantly rural LAs, at least two in every 1,000 households was accepted as homeless – more than in urban areas in 2010/11.
- In 2015/16, mainly and largely rural areas in England reported making **12,977 decisions on homelessness approaches – 11 per cent of local authority decisions, nationally** – reflecting a not insignificant challenge in which many households are experiencing housing difficulties.
- From 2010 to 2016, **mainly rural local authorities recorded a rise from 191 to 252 rough sleepers – an increase of 32 per cent. In largely rural areas there has been a leap of 52 per cent**, and an almost doubling in 'urban areas with significant rural' (97 per cent).

- **Many cases of homelessness in rural areas go undetected**, with individuals more likely to bed down in alternative countryside locations, such as outhouses, barns, tents and parked cars. The stigma of being visibly homeless in rural areas can be much stronger than in urban areas and difficulties accessing local authority services can mean households remain uncounted in official records.
- The causes of homelessness are often similar across urban and rural contexts and most frequently relate to the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy or family breakdown. Rural areas can experience additional challenges in their housing markets which exacerbate these struggles: **lower levels of housing affordability; shortages in affordable homes and appropriate tenure options; high prevalence of second and holiday homes; and decline in local authority-owned housing stock.**
- The peculiarities of rural areas can make delivering services to prevent and relieve homelessness particularly difficult. These relate to: balancing economies of scale; providing specialist services; overcoming travel distances and accessing public transport; reaching isolated groups; commissioning in two-tier structures; ensuring accurate monitoring and reporting; finding alternative accommodation; and managing falling local authority budgets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has found that central to addressing homelessness in rural areas will be making sure rural housing markets work for their resident populations by providing affordable accommodation across a range of tenures and types of home.

1. Local and combined authorities should enter into two-way negotiations with central government to develop bespoke devolution deals on housing and planning in which ambitious commitments to increasing affordable supply should be met with a transferral of relevant powers to do so. Rural areas should be clear in identifying their rural-specific challenges and ways in which devolution will help them to implement more locally-focused solutions. As part of these deals, rural areas facing significant pressures associated with holiday and second homes should aim to negotiate devolution powers over council tax, including more flexibility on empty home premiums, to finance dedicated temporary accommodation and homelessness services.

For homelessness itself, the research starts to identify a number of things that could be pursued now, ranging from new rural-specific homelessness strategies to new models of partnership working, from improved monitoring and reporting to community-based service delivery options.

2. Central government should develop a new national homelessness strategy, taking the enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as its lead. This should be cross-government, bringing in DCLG, DEFRA and DWP, and include an assessment of homelessness in rural areas, covering its scale and nature and the distinct challenges faced by rural areas. It should also provide comprehensive rural-specific guidance on how to prevent and relieve homelessness.
3. All rural areas should explore setting up rural homelessness forums as a place for relevant local bodies and agencies – and neighbouring authorities – to share intelligence and best practice and to provide a network through which to develop partnership models for service delivery. As part of this process, rural homelessness forums should conduct an audit of homelessness provision and related services in their areas to understand the type and reach of services on offer; the challenges they face; and where opportunities exist for linking up.

4. Rural homelessness forums should devise a standard monitoring form through which this information can be collected by services and agencies when individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness approach them.
5. All local authorities should record the 'home' local authority of homeless households during initial homelessness assessments through standardised monitoring forms and include this in their quarterly returns to government. This information should then be collated by DCLG to establish patterns of homelessness migration into, within, and out of rural areas.
6. Local authorities, working through rural homelessness forums, should set up rural community homelessness hubs, using local buildings and running weekly drop-in sessions which bring together relevant services to provide advice and support those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

1. INTRODUCTION

England's rural towns and villages are often presented as providing the quintessential experience of idyllic countryside living, offering residents a break from the stresses of urban living and a higher quality of life. Trends of older people relocating to rural and coastal areas and tourists flocking for holiday visits reflect this idealised image – an image which also presents rural areas as less susceptible to many of the social and economic challenges facing urban areas. Such a picture of rolling hills and scenic views, however, masks significant concerns about inequality and deprivation, posing a threat to both health and wellbeing in rural communities (LGA/PHE 2017). Homelessness is an issue that is notably absent in people's understanding of rural life.

Nationally, 14,420 households were recorded as statutorily homeless in Q4-2016, (down only 0.4 per cent on the previous year), and 75,740 households were living in temporary accommodation, a rise of 10 per cent on the previous year and up 58 per cent since the end of 2010 (DCLG 2017a).¹ Rates are yet to eclipse a high of 35,770 in Q3-2003 (ibid), but within the context of a wider housing crisis – characterised by soaring house prices, falling supply and an ever-expanding private rental sector dominated by insecure assured shorthold tenancies – there is little reason to believe recent increases will not continue. Rough sleeping alone increased 16 per cent last year, to 4,134 – a 139 per cent increase on the number in 2010 (DCLG 2017b).

Homelessness has traditionally been depicted by images of 'a life on the street', largely restricted to England's major cities. In predominantly urban areas, 2.8 households in every 1,000 are statutorily homeless (DCLG 2016a).² London alone accounted for just under a third (31 per cent) of all England's homelessness acceptances in Q4-2016 (DCLG 2017a), and 23 per cent of rough sleepers (DCLG 2017b).

However, considerable shortages in affordable housing in rural areas, their declining local authority housing stock, and the limited range of housing types and tenures on offer, mean we cannot assume homelessness only to be an urban phenomenon. In predominantly rural areas, 1.3 in every 1,000 households is still assessed as homeless and in priority need (DCLG 2016a). While this official figure is comparatively lower, (methodological) challenges in accurately recording homelessness in rural areas – where it is often more hidden and varied in its presentation – suggests the number is likely to be higher (Robinson 2004a; Cloke et al 2003; Bevan and Rugg 2006). Moreover, the figure does not reflect the qualitative challenge associated with preventing and relieving homelessness in rural areas, exacerbated by: poor economies of scale; large travel distances and poor transport connections; limited resourcing for specialist services; isolated communities, an ageing population; and limited alternative housing provision.

1 In England.

2 Urban-rural classification taken from: DEFRA (2014) *Rural urban classification leaflet: The 2011 rural-urban classification for local authority districts in England*. For more discussion of methodology, see page 12 of this report.

England's housing markets and the communities they serve are many and varied, and there is no universal challenge or one-size-fits-all solution (Snelling and Davies 2016). This report is borne from the desire to start exploring the scale and nature of homelessness in rural areas and how housing policies and homelessness strategies might be adapted to reflect the peculiarities and distinct challenges they face. It considers the following questions:

1. What does rural homelessness look like and how is it different to urban homelessness?
2. In what ways do rural areas – both the local authorities and community agencies – work to prevent and relieve homelessness and what challenges do they face?
3. What could rural areas do, and what examples might they consider, to address homelessness challenges in their communities?

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, to some degree, seeks to address concerns about rising homelessness by placing a greater duty on local authorities (LAs) to intervene early and prevent homelessness among all groups. This moves away from a model led historically by assigning priority need, assessing vulnerability and the providing emergency support. For many LAs, the Act reflects work they are already doing but will see official numbers for homelessness households going up, so increasing the pressures they are under. Ensuring appropriate levels of funding and resourcing are available will be critical to the success of any new legislation. Understanding the nature of the homelessness challenge in any given area is vital to making sure adopted strategies and approaches are able to meet the needs of the communities in which they operate. It is this process which this paper aims to inform.

2. HOMELESSNESS IN ENGLAND

Homelessness, put most simply, is the absence of safe, secure and decent accommodation. If progressed to its most extreme; it can mean living on the streets with little or no protection. International law recognises access to a home as a fundamental human right (OHCHR 2009). It is clear that for individuals who experience homelessness, the impact on their life chances can be incredibly significant. It contributes to: poor physical and mental health; puts personal safety at risk; and presents obstacles to employment, education and a stable lifestyle. Work by St Mungo's (2016) in London found that, since 2010, at least one homeless individual living on the streets has died every two weeks. Crisis (2011) reported the average life expectancy of someone living on the streets to be just 47 years – 30 years less than that of the general population.

Homelessness has a clear human cost; anyone experiencing it faces significant disruption and hardship. Homeless individuals often suffer multiple disadvantages, in many cases worsened by unstable living arrangements. They are likely to engage with a wide range of services – including local authority housing options teams, the NHS, emergency accommodation providers, rehabilitation programmes and the police – so there is also a financial cost. In a series of vignettes, research by Crisis demonstrates the benefit of early intervention. For example, supporting a man in his 30s who is sleeping rough and who approaches the local authority after just three weeks, might cost £1,400 if resolved quickly through a twelve-week programme of relatively low-intensity support, such as help in finding alternative accommodation and advice on debt management. If the process takes longer, costs can rise substantially, with the individual being more likely to start developing mental and physical health conditions and patterns of substance abuse, for example, which require costlier interventions from the NHS and criminal justice system. If this persists for 12 months, the cost can be as much as £20,000 (Pleace 2015).

2.1 THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Many households and individuals in England struggle to access and sustain secure and stable accommodation. In 2015/16, LAs processed just under 115,000 homelessness cases (Fitzpatrick et al 2017). In Q4-2016 alone, 14,420 households were accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need. However, a further 13,450 households that approached LAs for housing assistance were deemed not homeless (23 per cent of all approaches); homeless but not in priority need (16 per cent); or intentionally homeless and in priority need (9 per cent) (DCLG 2017a).

In 2015/16, 58,000 approaches in total were accepted by English LAs as homeless (assessed to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need – 'statutorily homeless'). This reflects 18,000 more homeless households than recorded in 2009/2010, an increase of 45 per cent (Fitzpatrick et al 2017).

There has been a simultaneous increase in rough sleeping – with an average annual increase of 16 per cent since 2010 (DCLG 2017b). Cases of sofa surfing, squatting and short stays with friends and family point towards concealed

households and a potentially sizeable ‘hidden’ homeless. Estimating this population is difficult. Many of these individuals are unlikely to be engaging with LAs and so are not recorded in official statistics, despite their precarious living arrangements. Research estimates that 62 per cent of single homeless individuals are hidden and that, for every month of homelessness spent accessing formal provision, three months is spent in informal and unstable living arrangements (Reeve 2011).

Many individuals find themselves living in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation, accessed through a range of formal *and* informal routes, and will have minimal contact with LAs (McIver et al 2016). Government data for the end of 2016 reported 5,990 households staying in B&Bs (DCLG 2016a). However, research by Shelter in 1997 found that for the 7,660 individuals reported as living in B&Bs, the actual number was closer to 72,550 (Carter 1997). There is every reason to believe official records of homelessness significantly underestimate the scale of the problem.

Some households will be supported by LAs into some form of supported temporary accommodation, particularly those to which a duty is owed. At the end of 2016, a total of 75,740 households in England were living in temporary accommodation, a rise of 58 per cent in six years (DCLG 2017a). As research by IPPR North (McIver et al 2016) has reported, many individuals in temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfasts, hostels, guest houses and short-stay HMOs (house in multiple occupation), are unsupported. They journey in and out of different accommodation, with periods of rough sleeping not uncommon, and experience deterioration in their mental and physical health. While not permanently roofless, many of the personal challenges associated with homelessness remain.

2.2 CURRENT APPROACHES TO TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

There are two main routes available to LAs and third-sector organisations looking to address England’s homelessness challenge. The first, a preventative or proactive approach, is designed to reduce the number of households becoming homeless in the first place. This can be focused on households themselves, identifying where there are problems and homelessness is a threat, such as financial strain, sudden unemployment, and family or relationship tensions. Then focus can move to taking action to stop these escalating into a loss of home, for example, offering family mediation or financial advice. Alternatively, or concurrently, preventative action can be targeted at local housing markets to address the structural obstacles to households accessing suitable and affordable housing – for example, working with developers and housing association to build more homes across a range of tenures.

The second, a reactive approach, steps in after homelessness happens, typically providing emergency accommodation and support to help households regain stable living arrangements. This might involve outreach programmes, such as the No Second Night Out standard (Homeless Link 2014) and hostel accommodation. Inevitably, there will be some overlap in services between proactive and reactive models of provision. For example, a substance abuse programme may be helpful to both those at risk of homelessness, and those who are already homeless, albeit with potentially different elements.

The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 sets in motion an extended duty for homelessness services in LAs. Key features include: extending the time period for which a threat of homelessness should be acted upon (from 28 to 56 days; encouraging earlier intervention in cases where homelessness is on the cards);

a new duty to help all groups secure accommodation irrespective of priority need status; and greater responsibility for providing advice and personalised plans. While this renewed interest among politicians to take on the issue of homelessness is welcome, alongside the increased emphasis on prevention, for many LAs this is simply a reflection of work they are often already doing. What is less clear from the Act is how LAs will be supported with the necessary resourcing and funding to continue long-term service delivery. LAs will also need a comprehensive understanding of what homelessness looks like in different areas, its causes, and the distinct local challenges.

3.

THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS IN RURAL ENGLAND

Rural areas are home to around a fifth of England's population, with 9.3 million residents (DEFRA 2017a). By comparison, London's population is 8.54 million (GLA Intelligence 2015),³ and yet it enjoys considerable policy attention with its own elected mayor and assembly. Policy across all spheres, not just housing, is frequently developed with a largely urban focus, particularly on issues which are more visible in major cities. In an acknowledgement of the differences between urban and rural areas, the government has committed itself to 'rural proofing' policy and legislation (DEFRA 2017a). This is a process through which policies are assessed – and, where relevant, amended – according to their likely impact on rural areas and the options available to them. However, this approach appears to be inconsistently applied and areas such as homelessness are dominated by urban depictions and considerations. The recent Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) typifies this experience with no mention of or considerations made to reflect rural peculiarities, while the relative absence of up-to-date research on the issue identified by this report further highlights the challenge.

To assess the extent to which experiences of homelessness vary between urban and rural areas, and within rural areas, classification is needed. In this paper, we refer to the 2011 Rural Urban Classification in which LAs are assigned one of six labels, and are grouped according to whether they are predominantly rural or urban (based on 2011 Census, referenced in DEFRA 2014).

Drawing on a range of official statistics alongside wider literature, we consider the scale and nature of rural homelessness and the particular challenges these areas face. This is complimented by the discussions of an expert roundtable organised by IPPR and a series of interviews with LAs, third sector and voluntary organisations, civil servants, and rural housing experts.⁴

In addition, two locations – Devon and Essex – were chosen by IPPR within which to examine issues affecting rural areas as presented by LAs' homelessness strategies.⁵ Neither area is wholly rural but each comprises a number of lower-tier LAs⁶ with mainly or largely rural populations.

3 Population figures for rural areas and London both reflect mid-2014 ONS population estimates.

4 Roundtable held 18th April 2017 with face-to-face and phone interviews conducted over April and May 2017.

5 Full list of strategy documents and references can be found in Annex A.

6 Local authorities which operate at district, borough or city council levels and which have power over local housing markets, as well as areas such as recycling, council tax, and planning.

TABLE 1**DEFRA 2011 Rural Urban Classification**

Rural urban classification	Predominantly rural ≥50% of the resident population areas or rural-related hub towns lives in rural			Predominantly urban ≥74% of resident population lives in urban areas		
Sub-classification	Mainly rural	Largely rural	Urban with significant rural	Urban with city and town	Urban with minor conurbation	Urban with major conurbation
Criteria	Population ≥80% rural, including hub towns	Population 50 to 79% rural, including hub towns	Population 26 to 49% rural, including hub towns	Population <26% rural, including hub towns	Population <26% rural, including hub towns	Population <26% rural, including hub towns
Number of local authorities	50	41	54	97	9	75
Example authority	Isle of Wight	Northumberland	Carlisle	Oxford	Sheffield	Leeds

Source: DEFRA 2014, DCLG 2016b

Devon and Essex were chosen in order to consider some of the particular characteristics associated with rural communities and economies. Devon, in south west England, relies heavily on tourism to drive its economy and its housing market is subsequently impacted by a higher than average prevalence of second homes and holiday lets. It also experiences seasonal fluctuations in employment linked to tourism which can mean migration into and out of the area (Cloke et al 2007). Essex is notable in this comparison for its proximity to London – which could act as a draw for individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness and/or find London’s housing crisis spreading with increasing demand on homes (ibid).

By studying the homelessness strategy documents produced by each LA – both rural and urban – it is possible to assess the extent to which there are similarities and differences in the challenges they report; strategies they adopt; and the degree to which authorities are working in partnership across the county to tackle homelessness.

There are similarities across the documents, particularly where there is evidence of cross-LA activity. However, they were prepared at different times and follow no standardised format, so are not wholly comparable on all elements. For example, their assessments of trends in homelessness vary over the different time periods they cover. Nevertheless, they provide an indication of ongoing thinking about homelessness; priorities for areas they cover; and what each judges to be the major challenges and opportunities.

TABLE 2**Devon and Essex local authorities included in homelessness strategy analysis⁷**

Rural urban classification	Predominantly rural ≥50% of the resident population areas or rural-related hub towns lives in rural			Predominantly urban ≥74% of resident population lives in urban areas		
Sub-classification	Mainly rural	Largely rural	Urban with significant rural	Urban with city and town	Urban with minor conurbation	Urban with major conurbation
Devon	Mid Devon South Hams Torridge West Devon	East Devon North Devon Teignbridge		Exeter Plymouth Torbay		
Essex	Maldon Uttlesford	Braintree Tendring	Brentwood Colchester Epping Forest	Basildon Castle Point Chelmsford Harlow Rochford Southend-on-Sea		Thurrock

Source: DEFRA 2014, DCLG 2016b

3.1 THE EXTENT OF RURAL HOMELESSNESS

In 2015/16, 2,625 households were accepted as being in priority need in England's 50 'mainly rural' LAs, while in the 41 'largely rural' LAs, there were 3,645 (IPPR analysis using DCLG 2016a, 2016b). These reflect just 5 and 6 per cent of England's total homelessness acceptances between April 2015 and March 2016, despite the total number of households for these areas amounting to 9 and 12 per cent of all England's households (see figure 1). In comparison, predominantly urban authorities,⁸ of which there are 181, accounted for 81 per cent of England's homeless acceptances. However, these are estimated to cover 66 per cent of all households.

These figures show an average of 1.3 households for every 1,000 in mainly or largely rural areas being accepted as homeless (down from 1.4 in 2010/11). Across the three predominantly urban areas the rate was 2.79 (up from 1.94 in 2010/11).⁹ Official acceptance of homelessness remains a disproportionately urban phenomenon, although rates in a number of mainly rural LAs are high, for example Huntingdonshire at 3.41, Melton at 3.06 and North Warwickshire at 2.88. In 16 of England's 91 predominantly rural LAs, *at least two* in every 1,000 households were accepted as homeless – more than in urban areas in 2010/11.

LA discretion can mean homelessness applications are assessed in an inconsistent way (Cloke et al 2001) and, as suggested above, statutorily homeless figures may not reflect all cases arising. For example, in the same year (2015/16), mainly and largely rural areas reported making 12,977 decisions on homelessness approaches. While this was only 11 per cent of all decisions in England, it nevertheless reflects a sizable challenge, with many households believing themselves to be sufficiently at risk of homeless to approach their LA for assistance.

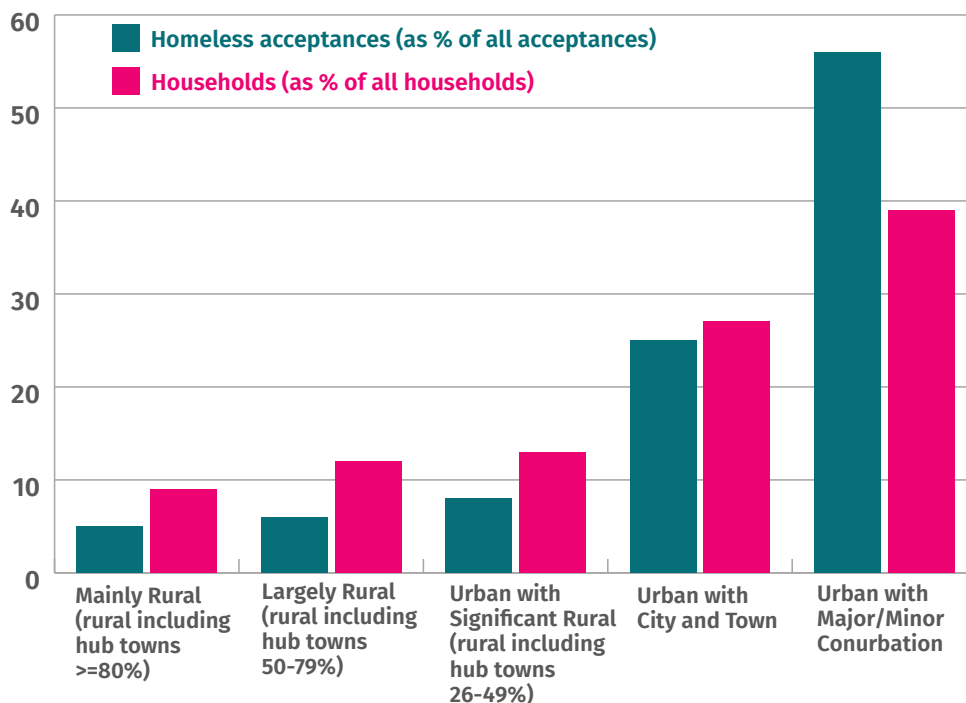
⁷ Homelessness strategy documents used in the analysis are referenced in Annex A.

⁸ Combining 'urban with city or town', 'urban with major conurbation' and 'urban with minor conurbation',

⁹ Urban with significant rural accepted 1.6 households as homeless per 1,000 households.

FIGURE 1

Homeless acceptances are disproportionately higher in urban areas, relative to the proportion of England's households



Number of homeless acceptances and number of households as a percentage of all homeless acceptances and all households, by rural-urban classification

Source: DCLG 2016a, 2016b

For the 6,270 households accepted as homeless in predominantly rural areas, the realities of homelessness are not insignificant. The numbers involved are not negligible. One interviewee from a third-sector homeless community centre told us that up to 100 people are served at their weekly drop-in lunch for individuals who currently access their services or have done so in the past.

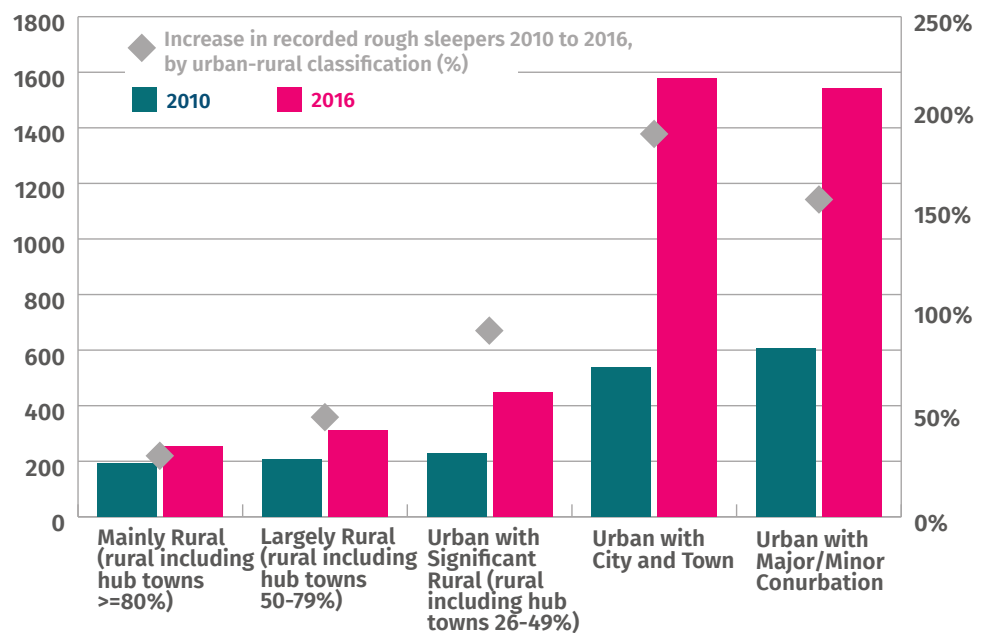
Headcounts estimate rates of rough sleeping are lower in rural areas. More than a fifth (22 per cent) of mainly rural areas did not record a single rough sleeper in their annual return for 2016. For example, in Tendring, a largely rural LA, the homelessness strategy highlights the issue well. Involving more counters and covering a greater area has increased the intensity of the operation. But with a count only taking place on a single night annually, successive operations over the years have identified no rough sleepers. From speaking to local authorities and community agencies working in rural areas, we know that while rare, rough sleeping is not unheard of. We would therefore expect there to be a number of rough sleepers who are not being identified.

It is notable that, between 2010 and 2016, mainly rural LAs have recorded a rise from 191 to 252 rough sleepers – an increase of 32 per cent. Although much of this figure is accounted for by 99 recorded rough sleepers in Cornwall in 2016 (up from 65 in 2010), given the likelihood that for every rough sleeper recorded there will be a considerable number of hidden homeless (Robinson and Coward 2003; Robinson 2004a; Milbourne and Cloke 2006), the rise should not be dismissed. Over the same period, the Isle of Wight has seen its rough sleeper count increase from 1 to 16. Moreover, one of our interviewees, based

in a mainly rural LA, provided an estimate of working on ongoing basis with 16 entrenched rough sleepers, while another discussed growing visibility of street homelessness, some of which is likely to include rough sleepers. The biggest growth has been in urban centres, but in largely rural areas there has nevertheless been a further leap of 52 per cent, to a total of 313, and in urban areas with significant rural the rate has almost doubled (97 per cent) (figure 2).

FIGURE 2

There has been an increase in rough sleepers in both urban and rural authorities between 2010 to 2016



Number of rough sleepers recorded by local authorities in 2010 and 2016, and the percentage increase, by urban-rural classification
 Source: DCLG 2017c

The comparatively lower rates of rough sleeping in rural areas are not unexpected given the smaller populations in these areas but the results are arguably influenced by methodological weaknesses in this way of recording homelessness. Headcount approaches rely on observable homelessness and present a snapshot that is limited to particular dates and areas LAs have the resources and capacity to monitor (Robinson 2004a). Research by Crisis in Somerset, Herefordshire and Dorset has previously found more than three-quarters of the 50-plus homeless individuals spoken to in rural areas had slept rough at some point for a least one night (Evans 1999).

There are alternative ways of counting rough sleepers. The London-based Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) provides a multi-agency approach. A range of outreach and support services working with homeless individuals share information about the number of people they are engaging with and what activities they deliver. Latest figures for October to December 2016 report a total of 2,818 rough sleepers across the capital (GLA 2017) whereas the official estimate for the 2016 calendar year was just 964 (DCLG 2017b). If the same ratio between officially recorded and CHAIN recorded figures (2.9) is applied to current rural rough sleeping counts, the rates in predominantly rural areas could be closer to 1,639.

However, not only is there no similar system operating nationwide, neither the current system nor the CHAIN database can account for more hidden forms of homelessness. The potential for this is often more pronounced in rural areas where there are many and varied presentations. Individuals more often bed down in cars, garages, outhouses, sheds, barns and fields to a greater extent than adopting a traditional form of 'street homelessness' seen in towns and cities (Evans 1999). This is, in part, because of the wider availability of these alternative options but also the additional stigma which can be attached to being visibly homeless in a rural area, with individuals often trying to shield themselves from local gossip (Milbourne and Cloke 2006). Because there are fewer rough sleepers, there are fewer opportunities to find 'safety in numbers' – there is no concentration of homeless individuals to which people might gravitate. In effect, in villages they would risk 'sticking out like a sore thumb' (Cloke et al 2003: 26). Dominant images of rural idylls and picturesque countryside frame homelessness as a greater deviance from appropriate behaviours (ibid; Robinson 2004a). This leads to homelessness being more dispersed and less static, probably resulting in a significant underestimation.

Family breakdown, as expressed in all homelessness strategy studies, is a driver of homelessness in both urban and rural areas. But research also suggests rural individuals are more likely to find support through the hospitality of friends and family when facing homelessness. One study of homelessness (Robinson and Coward 2003) found that in urban centres, such as London, 69 per cent of individuals had stayed with friends and family since becoming homeless, rising to 72 per cent in Sheffield but up to 77 per cent in the mainly rural Craven. Moreover, in Craven, 65 per cent had *only ever* stayed with friends and family, compared to just 13 and 4 per cent in London and Sheffield, suggesting they would be more consistently absent from official statistics (ibid; see also Cloke et al 2001; Robinson 2004a). For example, respondents in Craven were less likely to approach their LA for support – only half of research participants versus 80 per cent in Sheffield. A fear of being 'revealed' as homeless in tight-knit communities (Bevan and Rugg 2006; Cloke et al 2001) and significant travel involved in reaching the LA can exacerbate these tendencies.

Reinforcing this distinction, a survey of homelessness officers has found that 65 per cent of those in rural areas believe many groups do not approach the LA for homelessness support, especially young and single households (Milbourne and Cloke 2006: 87-88).

Migration patterns between areas may be important. Households in rural areas are often reluctant to move away from local connections with friends and family, although there are reported instances of individuals migrating to urban centres (Robinson and Coward 2003; Cloke et al 2003). Support services and emergency accommodation – as well as job opportunities, perhaps as an initial attraction – can be perceived as more abundant, for example (Cloke et al 2003; Williams and Cheal 2002). Work estimating the scale of this phenomenon is limited though. Research from the early 1990s found a third of approaches to a Nottingham shelter had an original address located outside of the city and its immediate surrounding areas, suggesting not insignificant rural to urban migration (Whynes 1991). Today's head counts of rough sleepers do not identify who is local and who is not. Individuals engaging with agencies may be reluctant to share where they have travelled from, for example, if they have

left an abusive relationship.¹⁰ As a result, understanding homeless mobility patterns is not easy but for the reasons outlined above, concerning perceived employment and accommodation opportunities, we would expect some movement from rural to urban areas.

3.2 THE CAUSES OF RURAL HOMELESSNESS

The determinants of rural homelessness are frequently similar to those experienced by households in urban areas, for example a significant change in personal circumstances such as a relationship ending; being a victim of domestic abuse; or becoming unemployed and losing a source of income (Evans 1999; Robinson 2004a). During the course of this research, the Welfare Reform Act 2012 has been frequently cited – in both urban and rural areas – as increasing the number of households at risk of homelessness as a result of financial struggles. By 2020/21, Crisis estimates a cumulative reduction in the incomes of poor households by approximately £25 billion every year (Fitzgerald et al 2017).

Tenancy insecurity is also an increasing contributor to homelessness with Section 21 notices enabling no-fault evictions in the assured shorthold tenancies that dominate the private rental sector. These have risen from 5,000 in 2009/10 to 18,000 in 2015/16 and now account for almost a third (31 per cent) of all new cases of homelessness (ibid). All the homelessness strategies studied, urban *and* rural, identified this as a growing phenomenon contributing to their homeless population. Across the strategies in Devon and Essex, England's worsening housing shortage and unaffordability crisis, alongside wider economic challenges and welfare reforms, are identified as further factors contributing to rising rates of eviction, repossession and subsequent struggles to find alternative accommodation.¹¹

Rural areas – and the households located there – can experience particular challenges that exacerbate these struggles.

Homes in rural areas are, on average, less affordable than those in most urban areas. For example, in 2012, in predominantly rural areas, the average lower quartile house price was 7.9 times the average lower quartile earnings when in predominantly urban areas this was just 7.1 (7.4 in England as a whole) (DEFRA 2017b; see Robinson 2004b). Excluding the exceptionalism of London – where a borough such as Camden has a ratio of 19.2 (on this measure in 2016) – the issues are particularly pronounced in the south west. On the same measure of lower quartile house price affordability, but reflecting 2016 figures, the ratios in East Dorset, North Devon and East Devon are as high as 13.5, 9.4 and 8.9 (ONS 2017; Halifax 2015).

All but one of the ten mainly or largely rural homelessness strategies for Devon and Essex make explicit reference to a shortage of affordable homes as impacting on homelessness in their areas. In contrast, only 67 per cent of nine predominantly urban areas and 33 per cent of urban areas with a significant rural population highlighted this issue. Linked to this is the type of accommodation available. IPPR's interviewees and roundtable participants drew attention to the limited number of one-bedroom properties and rooms for rent in HMOs, which can make it difficult for single person households

10 In the case of LAs, an assessment of 'local connection' may see households being referred to another LA, which may or may not be the area from which the individual has travelled. For example, in situations where personal safety is at risk they will either be supported by the LA to which they have applied or another LA where there is a local connection.

11 In Crisis' 2017 Homelessness Monitor, 65 per cent of local authorities surveyed (n=162) reported it was somewhat or very difficult to find accommodation for small families, rising to 88 per cent for large families and 85 per cent of single 25-34 year olds (Fitzgerald et al 2017).

to access suitable and affordable accommodation. One LA interviewee said that, in the past, a three-month notice period for an individual moving out of supported housing, with deposit and the first-month's rent also provided, was more than sufficient to help them access alternative accommodation. Securing somewhere in this timeframe has now become much more difficult.

The growing mismatch between supply and demand in rural areas, which in turn is driving some of the house price growth, is the high number of second homes and holiday lets in many rural areas. The south west has just short of 52,000 second homes, a fifth of England's total (NHF 2017), which can limit access to homes for the resident population. For example, in Devon almost 12,000 (3 per cent) of its total housing stock recorded in 2016 was accounted for by second homes (ibid; DCLG 2017d).¹² Similar patterns are seen elsewhere, with Cumbria also recording 3 per cent of its housing stock to be second homes, whereas in a more urban setting such as Greater Manchester, it is less than 1 per cent.¹³ The economics of short-term holiday rentals can also make it harder for households to secure year-round lets on affordable contracts (Cloke et al 2007). The Teignbridge homelessness strategy notes the impact of rural and coastal homes being reserved for tourism. Three of the homelessness strategies reviewed for this research also refer to struggles accessing B&Bs within their own borders which are appropriate for use as temporary accommodation, while seasonal availability on caravan park sites was mentioned by one interviewee as similarly affected.

Greenbelt boundaries and a reluctance to 'lose' the charm of village living – which in itself helps to generate tourism (see Cox et al 2017) – can further restrict the scale and type of development in rural areas. There is a clear balance to be had in rural areas between housing the resident population and maximising the economic potential of a thriving tourism industry.¹⁴

Rural areas have experienced a more significant decline in social housing owned by LAs over the past 12 years. There has been a 79 per cent reduction in stock for the mainly rural authorities between 1994 and 2016 with only 35,000 properties remaining in these parts of England (figure 3). Of these, 50 authorities, 23 report having no LA-owned homes. Elsewhere in England, there has been a similar decline but it has been nowhere near as dramatic. In urban areas with major or minor conurbations, the drop has been lower at 51 per cent.¹⁵ This is critical to understanding authorities' ability to prevent and relieve homelessness and the additional pressures it places on housing associations and the private rented sector to step in. For example, two-thirds of LAs sampled from across England have expressed difficulties in supporting applicants into social tenancies (Fitzgerald et al 2017).

This can contribute to further deterring individuals from approaching their LA. From IPPR's interviews it was found that there can be a fear that they will be relocated far away from their current home if social housing options in their own community are in short supply. They may feel there is simply no point, since there will be no appropriate accommodation available for them, which can lead to community agencies stepping in.

12 11,629 second homes out of a total dwelling stock of 365,200.

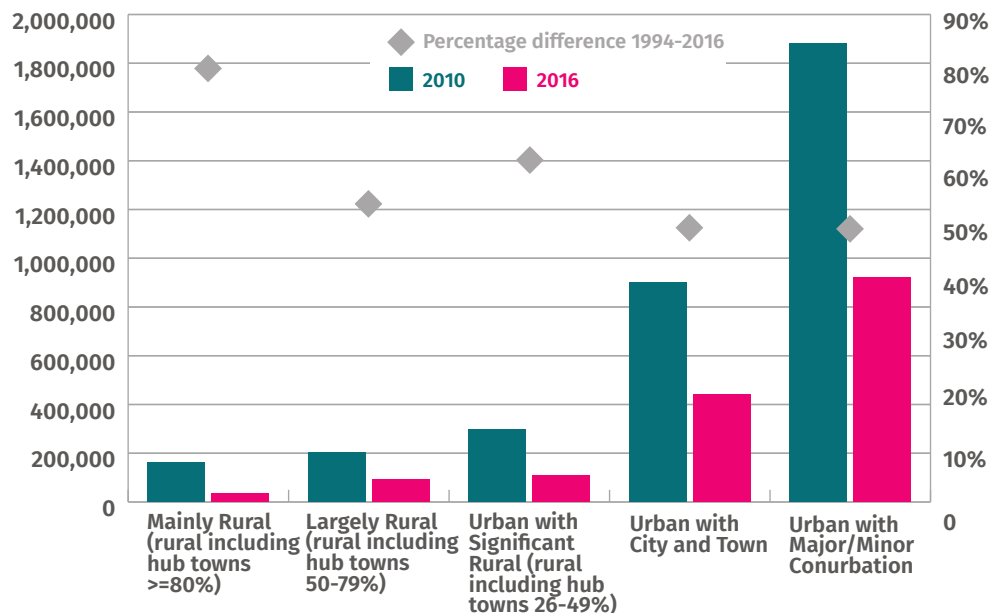
13 Cumbria: 8,230 second homes out of a total dwelling stock of 245,910; Greater Manchester: 9,850 second homes out of a total dwelling stock of 1,195,430 (NHF 2017; DCLG 2017d).

14 Similar discussions are now starting to emerge in urban areas, particularly London, where homesharing for holiday accommodation is growing (Snelling et al 2016).

15 Largely rural areas have seen stock fall by 55 per cent and urban with significant rural populations by 63 per cent.

FIGURE 3

Rural areas have experienced a far greater decline in LA-owned social housing than seen in urban areas



The level of LA-owned dwelling stock, in 1994 and 2016, and the percentage difference, by urban-rural classification

Source: DCLG 2017e

The economies of rural areas have historically experienced seasonal work patterns, responding to peaks particularly in the agricultural and tourism calendars. These persist today and inward migration patterns – both of UK and non-UK nationals – affect the size of the rural population and its needs. Individuals may move to rural areas and then struggle to access accommodation alongside any employment they have secured, while tied accommodation, typically linked to employment, may offer only a fixed-term solution. It can result in homelessness or a move into unsuitable, crowded and non-decent housing (see Cloke et al 2001, 2003).

The attraction of rural living presents an additional challenge for homelessness services in rural areas where there are instances of individuals choosing lifestyles that some people may perceive to be homelessness. In some areas, wayfarers, pilgrims and travellers are reported as setting up camps in forests and embracing what appears a simpler lifestyle that escapes many of the pressures associated with urban living (Cloke et al 2007). More than one interviewee in the Somerset area referred to the draw of Glastonbury for individuals seeking a spiritual community and connection. This can create a distinct group of homeless individuals who, despite issues of intentionality, may require support – for example, in severe weather, which can affect rural areas to a greater extent than their urban counterparts.

3.3 CHALLENGES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Issues with monitoring homelessness, detailed above, inevitably present problems for identifying households at risk of or experiencing homelessness and targeting interventions accordingly. LAs and agencies in rural areas encounter further difficulties, however, when delivering services, many of these

are not unique to homelessness provision. In turn, households in rural areas can be particularly susceptible to deteriorating circumstances in housing and wellbeing when problems start to arise.

Challenges for service delivery

- Balancing economies of scale
- Providing specialist services
- Overcoming travel distances and accessing public transport
- Reaching isolated groups
- Commissioning in two-tier structures
- Ensuring accurate monitoring and reporting
- Finding alternative accommodation
- Managing falling budgets

Rural areas consistently face issues around economies of scale. Homelessness, while significant for those who experience it, remains a relatively small-scale issue for many of these LAs, particularly when measured through current DCLG reporting. For example, of the 11 LAs defined as predominantly rural, the homelessness strategies of all but one¹⁶ refer to their rough sleeping challenge as low; less significant than elsewhere; or not a great problem. It is therefore much costlier per service user to put in place and justify the investment and provision needed – for example, night shelters and hostels – for those experiencing homelessness. Maldon reports the absence of any night shelter makes it harder to support single homeless individuals. The same can be said of the lack of affordable housing and options for private renting in the wider housing market. Sustaining accommodation is arguably especially crucial for rural areas (Bevan and Rugg 2006).

The absence of emergency accommodation in itself can contribute to households' reluctance to turn to their LA for assistance (assuming there to be little support available) and their travelling beyond LA boundaries in search of hostels and services (assumed to be available in urban hubs). This could compound the relative imbalance between urban and rural homelessness and, in turn, further distort attention and resources paid to rural areas. Interviews with rural LAs suggest they often feel overlooked in grant funding opportunities where assessments of need appear based on the number of homeless individuals, without full consideration of the costs of service delivery or patterns of migration between rural and urban areas.

Specialist services – such as those for individuals with mental health conditions, histories of substance of abuse, or experiencing domestic abuse – can be particularly expensive given the need for trained staff and facilities. Maldon's homelessness strategy highlights the difficulties of providing services to address wider contributing issues and the need to work in partnership with other public service agencies and neighbouring authorities to deliver the support some individuals require. LAs in England face a funding gap of £5.8 billion by 2020 (LGA 2017) necessarily impacting further on their ability to deliver these kinds of services, particularly when they have a range of competing priorities. In the absence of readily accessible services, individuals experiencing significant challenges may find these go undetected and unsupported, having a detrimental effect on their wellbeing and ability to avoid homelessness.

Travel times and distances between rural locations increase costs, particularly where floating or outreach services are needed. This might include identifying

16 South Hams and West Devon have a combined strategy, as do Exeter and Teignbridge.

households at risk – either directly at risk of homelessness (for example those entering into rent arrears) or indirectly (where they exhibit multiple disadvantages that could lead to homelessness, for example individuals with a history of substance abuse) – and delivering face-to-face advice and support. If service providers are required to travel longer distances, costs will almost inevitably increase, as we also see in the provision of at-home health and social care (see LG Futures 2014). It is the unaffordability of rural areas has the potential to make this issue harder to overcome, if the workforce delivering these services is forced to live outside the areas they serve.

It is equally important that individuals can reach services easily or, at least, are aware of what support is available and where. Long distances make this more difficult. While individuals in rural areas tend to have higher rates of access to a personal car than in urban areas, the financial strain often associated with a risk of homelessness means public transport is vital. Only 49 per cent of households in England's most rural communities could access a regular bus service close to their home in 2012 whereas for households in urban areas, the rate was almost universal, at 96 per cent (DEFRA 2017b). An assessment of homelessness in rural Scotland highlights the particular challenges created by island communities, suggesting individuals in the most remote areas suffer the most isolation (Bevan and Rugg 2006).

One method of homelessness support deemed relatively successful, both in the literature and during our roundtable discussions, is community 'policing' service StreetLink.¹⁷ This is a government-funded service set up to provide the public with a way of contacting a LA online, via an app, or by phone when they are concerned about the wellbeing of a rough sleeper, so that outreach can be targeted to that individual. Rural LAs IPPR spoke to reported this being a useful method of identifying rough sleepers, albeit with regular pushes and promotion of the service being required to maintain public involvement.

It is harder for these services to operate in rural areas given the large distances between residential areas, absence of 'street' lighting, and tendency for rough sleepers to stay outside village centres. Remoteness can also create safety concerns for outreach staff. They may be required to go into badly lit environments with difficult terrain (for example, coastal areas, caves and woods), with limited mobile phone reception and far away from other homes and services.

One interviewee reflected on the difficulties of identifying cases of domestic abuse or financial difficulty given the isolated nature of many homes. This makes it harder to intervene early to support individuals experiencing severe personal problems and minimise the likelihood of them losing their home.

Local governance structures create further complications. Many rural areas are governed by two-tier arrangements, with implications for commissioning and partnership working where the processes vary between LAs. Issues also arise where responsibilities for different policy areas rest at different levels. This is evident in supported housing. Upper-tier authorities which are responsible for managing health and social care budgets may need to prioritise sheltered accommodation for elderly residents with care needs. Lower-tier authorities, where housing is typically managed, need to provide more transitional housing options to mitigate rising levels of homelessness.¹⁸ This tension is likely to increase as LA budgets continue to feel a financial strain.

17 <http://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

18 See St Mungo's (2017) and Crisis (2017)

4. WHAT CAN RURAL AREAS DO?

A combination of significant welfare reforms (placing more households at risk of homelessness) and a growing shortage of affordable and social housing (leading to an over-reliance on insecure private rental tenancies) make it increasingly difficult for LAs to prevent and relieve homelessness. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort across government departments and at all levels. However, in a rural context, it is clear that rural-proofing will be crucial to any discussions of homelessness and housing legislation, policy or strategy. Planning for new homes should not be governed by urban need only.

Many of these questions are beyond the scope of this research, which is focused on what rural areas can do now, within this context of welfare reform and housing shortages, to tackle their own homelessness challenges. Nevertheless, central to any intervention must be to make sure rural housing markets work for their resident populations and reflect local characteristics. This should include seeking ways to use levers currently available to provide affordable accommodation across a range of tenures and types of home in a way that reflects residents' needs. It might also include thinking about how second homes and holiday lets are regulated.

The government's housing white paper, *Fixing Britain's Housing Market* (DCLG 2017f), commits to pursuing bespoke deals with local and combined authorities on housing and planning, which could provide a vehicle for this kind of activity. IPPR North has previously argued for this, calling on local areas to commit to ambitious plans and for the government to transfer power in return. The ways in which this can be used to speed up development and boost affordable housing supply are presented in its publication *Closer to home: next steps in planning and devolution* (Snelling and Davies 2016). Taking the government's white paper as a starting point, rural areas should actively explore these opportunities for assuming more power over their housing markets, especially on issues of empty homes, holiday lets and affordable housing, which can be particularly significant to housing options in rural areas.

Rural and coastal areas where short-term holiday lets and second homes affect available housing supply might look to secure flexibility over council tax premiums on empty homes and encourage a more efficient use of existing stock (ibid; see Davies 2014). Currently empty homes must be vacant for at least two-years to qualify, excluding holiday accommodation which may be occupied only for part of the year. The resultant funds should be reinvested into homelessness services and temporary accommodation. They may also look to implement regulations on home-sharing, as has been introduced in London to restrict short-term lettings.¹⁹ The population of St Ives voted 80 per cent in favour of reserving any new homes for full-time residents – a decision which has been given the backing of a High Court ruling (BBC 2016).

Local and combined authorities should enter into two-way negotiations with central government to develop bespoke devolution deals on housing and planning in which ambitious commitments to increasing affordable supply

¹⁹ For more details, see Snelling et al (2016).

should be met with a transferral of relevant powers to do so. Rural areas should be clear in identifying their rural-specific challenges and ways in which devolution can help them implement more locally-focussed solutions.

As part of these negotiations, rural areas facing significant pressures associated with holiday and second homes should aim to secure devolution powers over council tax, including more flexibility on empty home premiums, to finance dedicated temporary accommodation and homelessness services.

For homelessness itself, the research has begun to identify a number of approaches rural areas can pursue now in order to employ some of the strategies operating in urban areas; to more effectively implement new and expanded duties emerging from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017; and to present a case for more investment and attention.

4.1 A RURAL HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

It is notable in the analysis that, despite an acknowledgement of homeless across the LAs studied, urban and rural; there is limited consideration of issues surrounding rural homelessness in wider research and policy. The Homelessness Monitor 2017 (Flanagan et al 2017) and the final report of the Ministerial Group on Homelessness (DCLG 2015) do not mention rural considerations. Similarly, DCLG's homelessness and rough sleeping statistical releases focus almost entirely on London versus rest-of-England comparisons (DCLG 2017a, 2017b).

Given the higher prevalence of homelessness in urban areas, this is not unexpected and yet it contributes to the under-recognition of housing challenges in rural areas faced by many households and the services supporting them. If a policy problem is not fully acknowledged, it is harder for effective policy interventions to be designed. While for some rural areas statistics suggest homelessness is not as significant an issue compared with other community priorities, there are clear risks involved in ignoring it. Affected households struggle to access support, increasing the likelihood of becoming and/or remaining homeless. Government must therefore develop a clear strategy for tackling homelessness as part of its wider housing strategy detailed in the recent white paper. This should draw on lessons emerging from LA's activities as part of its homelessness prevention fund²⁰ but also through direct consultation with rural areas and service providers, in a way that identifies clear targets and relevant interventions for rural areas.

Central government should develop a new national homelessness strategy, taking the enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as its lead. This should be cross-government, bringing in DCLG, DEFRA and DWP, and must include an assessment of rural homelessness, covering its scale and nature and the distinct challenges faced by these areas. It should also provide comprehensive rural-specific guidance on how to prevent and relieve homelessness.

With the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 set to increase the number of households to which a duty is owed and bring forward the point at which an LA should start engaging with any household threatened by homelessness, even those rural LAs where homelessness rates are low may need to give new thought to the way in which they organise and deliver services.

There is scope for predominantly rural LAs to reflect more upon the impact of their rural character within their homelessness and housing strategies,

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/40-million-homelessness-prevention-programme-announced>

including the challenges it presents and what it means for the strategies they are to adopt to prevent and relieve homelessness in their areas. For example, giving greater consideration to how to monitor homelessness in rural communities and overcome rural problems of isolation, large travel distances and affordable housing shortages. This research has demonstrated high levels of awareness on these issues across rural LAs and practitioners and we encourage them to address them explicitly in their housing strategies.²¹

4.2 LOCAL HOMELESSNESS FORUMS

Partnership working is key to mitigating the challenges associated with economies of scale and to ensuring specialist services can be accessed by all households at risk of or experiencing homelessness. This is especially true for more rural areas where it is not currently feasible for the LA to provide dedicated services when the number of homelessness acceptances and rough sleepers is low in official records. Rural areas should look to develop local homelessness forums to bring together relevant partners – for example:

- Local housing options teams and commissioning officers
- health (including mental health) services
- substance misuse teams
- local housing providers
- third-sector providers and voluntary community organisations
- police and probation services
- environmental health teams.

The aim would be to: increase understanding of homelessness specific to a given rural area; identify ongoing work in the area; identify opportunities to link up services, share best practice; and improve monitoring activity, both of homelessness cases and the interventions being used. Areas should establish how often to hold forum meetings (depending on need and each agency's commitments) but a quarterly schedule would be recommended (McIver et al 2016a).

From one of IPPR's interviews with a mainly rural LA, a housing hub can meet as regularly as every fortnight to discuss specific cases, offering an opportunity to consider more innovative ways of supporting individuals who may have a complex combination of needs.

While additional resourcing is inevitably required to oversee and coordinate the activities a forum like this would want to pursue, the partnership structure should minimise inefficient replication in service delivery across local agencies. A formal framework through which LA housing options and homelessness teams are kept up-to-date with issues arising in their areas helps them to intervene earlier and prevent often costlier homelessness relief efforts. In the long-term, this has the potential to generate financial savings for other public services, such as the NHS, which often provide assistance to homeless households, which might be minimised with earlier interventions (see Pleace 2015). In cases where LAs join with neighbouring authorities, resources might also be pooled to support the process, and their commitments to this kind of partnership working be highlighted to government in their devolution negotiations.

Parish councils will have an important role to play where they provide and/or support community facilities such as village halls, recreation areas and public

²¹ Of the homelessness strategies studied, 12 make no direct reference to their rurality, including six of the mainly rural, largely rural, or urban with significant rural LAs.

toilets, as well as maintenance of closed churchyards and cemeteries, which may be areas that homeless individuals gravitate towards (IPPR interviews; see also Robinson and Coward 2003).

Previous work on unsupported temporary accommodation by IPPR North (McIver et al 2016b) has explored similar models of working through the establishment of temporary accommodation boards. These are designed to be new formal place-based bodies which bring together the activities of neighbouring housing authorities, public services and homelessness sector practitioners to address the challenges in finding secure bed spaces. Manchester has already established a temporary accommodation board with the intention of sharing local intelligence, compiling accommodation databases and setting set locally agreed standards. IPPR North has recommended that other areas consider this model, setting out a guide on how to do so in conjunction with Justlife, a charity focused on individuals experiencing housing vulnerability (ibid).

As with temporary accommodation boards keeping a record of bedspaces, homelessness forums might also be used to support a homelessness audit which can inform rural homelessness strategies by providing an up-to-date picture of local issues; capacity for dealing with these; and future needs likely to emerge.

There must also be an opportunity for the views of individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to feed into these forum meetings, to ensure the decisions also reflect their needs.

CASE STUDY: CUMBRIA HOMELESSNESS FORUM

Across Cumbria, six district LAs have come together to facilitate a joined-up approach to tackling homelessness across the county, an area with both urban and rural areas. Meetings are held quarterly and provide members with the opportunity to discuss local challenges and shared solutions, as well as thinking ahead to potential future issues. It is a multi-agency forum involving both statutory and voluntary homelessness service providers in Cumbria and with a flexible agenda where, when wider issues arise, other statutory agencies are included. Cumbria's districts' homelessness strategies have been developed in consultation with this forum and using the data each district holds, to ensure it accurately reflects the issues they face.

All rural areas should explore setting up rural homelessness forums as a place for relevant local bodies and agencies and neighbouring authorities to share intelligence and best practice. This should provide a network through which to develop partnership models for service delivery.

As part of this process, rural homelessness forums should conduct an audit of homelessness provision and related services in their areas, to understand the type and reach of services on offer; the challenges they face; and where opportunities to link up exist.

4.3 STANDARDISED MONITORING

One of the major challenges affecting rural areas is the high likelihood of a significant hidden homeless population unaccounted for in official statistics. This can be difficult to target through outreach, given the limited knowledge about whom and where the affected people are. This is encountered in

developing both preventative and relief activities. The homelessness forum model can provide a structure through which increased monitoring of homelessness can be carried out.

Anonymity considerations are important, particularly where individuals and households are in a vulnerable position, so any sharing of personal data must be permitted by the individuals involved. There are nevertheless ways in which the scale of the homelessness challenge in rural areas can be observed by partners adopting a standardised form of record keeping and sharing aggregated data, as has been demonstrated in London through the CHAIN database discussed above (see GLA 2017). For example, agencies can maintain a record of how many individuals homeless or at risk of homelessness access their services over a defined period; the number that make approaches from within and outside their geographic area; and the issues they face. Combining this data at area-wide level risks overestimating the scale of the problem through double-counting. But it also offers a useful enhancement of LA approach and acceptance figures. Trends and patterns across each service can be examined to shape the strategies required.

This will be important as rural areas look to understand and justify further investment into homelessness provision because it will raise the profile of the issue by providing a more detailed demonstration of the challenges.

Rural homelessness forums should devise a standard monitoring form through which information can be collected by services and agencies when individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness approach them.

Understanding migration patterns is a further element of the monitoring process that is particularly important in the case of rural homelessness. When approached by an individual or household, LAs must undertake an initial assessment of need and duty owed. Part of the process includes establishing local connection and whether they are responsible for the individual; whether the individual should be referred back to the LA where they were last resident; or whether there is an alternative LA where the individual can be supported and has a local connection (for example, related to work or family connections). Published records only report eligibility and decisions taken, and so do not make clear how many households present to LAs having migrated from other areas. In order for rural homelessness to be counted as a policy issue, the potential for migration from rural areas must also be counted (see Cloke et al 2003).

Where the person approaching an LA is not considered to have a local connection, the team making the assessment should make an anonymous record of their 'home' LA. In their quarterly return, this data should be provided to DCLG which should then use it to establish numbers for rural and urban migration and to inform their rural homelessness strategy.

All LAs should record the 'home' LA of homeless households during initial homelessness assessments through standardised monitoring forms and include this in their quarterly returns to government. This information should be collated by DCLG to establish levels and patterns of homeless migration into, within, and out of rural areas.

4.4. RURAL COMMUNITY HUBS

Households in rural areas face difficulties in accessing services where there are significant distances to be travelled between areas and different services are located in different areas. Online resources can be helpful in overcoming some of these issues but interviews and roundtable discussions have highlighted the

limitations of relying on an online platform. Broadband speeds are, on average, lower in rural areas than in urban areas,²² 80 per cent of rural premises are unable to access 4G connectivity (NIC 2016), and closure of libraries and community centres in some rural areas can make getting online hard. Through partnership working and rural homelessness forums, services should also seek opportunities to create community hubs where there is sufficient resourcing in order to bring together a range of services in one building, providing advice and support to individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness. This may not always be explicitly or exclusively focused on housing issues. Interventions could be aimed at mental health, substance abuse, or financial strain, but all with the intention of preventing homelessness. To minimise financial risks, this can be piloted with a weekly drop-in session, allowing outreach workers to assess cases and signpost accordingly. Sessions held throughout the area would maximise reach.

There should be consideration of the potential for holding these sessions in existing community buildings known to local populations, such as GP surgeries and health centres, Citizens Advice Bureau centres, hostels (where these exist), libraries, schools and colleges, or faith group buildings.

CASE STUDY: FREEDOM CENTRE, NORTH DEVON

The Freedom Centre in North Devon hosts the Engage Community Hub day centre, open Monday to Friday, 12-4pm, offering a wide range of services to the local population. Since December 2016, the number of people accessing the centres has risen to between 45 (which was typically during a quiet time between Christmas and New Year) and 80, with an average of over 60 most days. It provides a free hot meal, showers, internet access, job search and CV writing support, debt advice, health promotion and volunteering opportunities. These are services which, given the distance between urban centres like Exeter, might otherwise be difficult for members of rural communities to access. These services help to both prevent and relieve homelessness, as they are available to homeless individuals and households encountering challenges which, if not picked up early, could contribute to homelessness in the future. A key feature is that the LA has an office at the centre and a weekly presence, strengthening the link between LA and voluntary sector organisations in the area. This enables households at risk of or experiencing homelessness to be easily signposted to LA services without having to face a potentially intimidating environment of a council building.

LAs, working through rural homelessness forums, should set up rural community homelessness hubs, using local buildings and running weekly drop-in sessions bringing together relevant services to provide advice and support to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

4.5. NEW MODELS OF EMERGENCY HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION

Many urban LAs have hostels that can provide emergency accommodation when they identify new rough sleepers or are approached by individuals and households with urgent housing needs. This is less common in rural areas, given the cost involved in running this kind of accommodation and the relatively low density of roofless homelessness at any one time, when

²² In 2014, the average broadband speed for England was 24 Mbit/s but in rural areas, just 13 Mbit/s (DEFRA 2017b).

assessed using official rough sleeper counts. From IPPR's research interviews and roundtable, however, it is clear that this often results in rural LAs having to negotiate access to hostel accommodation in more urban neighbouring authorities, which can mean individuals moving away from support networks or simply resisting the move. The former can be a significant concern for families with children for fears of disruption to education, while the latter has been identified as a particular struggle in cases of inward migration, where individuals have purposefully sought out rural living.

There is a need to rethink the ways in which hostel accommodation can be provided in rural areas. One example of a successful model is the Dairy House hostel in Mendip.

CASE STUDY: DAIRY HOUSE, MENDIP

The Dairy House provides direct access accommodation for rough sleepers in the mainly rural location of Mendip. It was launched in 2015 as a partnership initiative between Mendip District Council, Addicott Partners (Manor Farm) and Elim Connect Centre. With six beds, its focus is on providing initial assessment of rough sleepers through which their needs and possible routes out of homelessness are evaluated, before providing 12 weeks' accommodation while arrangements for moving to more sustainable accommodation are secured. During this time, residents can access structured activities – such as animal care and hedge laying – to learn new skills and build community connections.

A community garden and vegetable box scheme, where produce from the garden is distributed to local churches to sell to congregations, helps raise money for the hostel and provides residents with opportunities to stay active. Other individuals in the area, who are threatened with homelessness and need a safe and relaxed place to go, can also work in the community garden.

The hostel's location and surroundings are thought to have been central to its success. Established in a cottage within a working farm as part of a partnership with tenant farmers, residents are able to access to 1,000 acres of woodland and gardens. This can help offer a softer transition back into the community from a position of isolation and overcome individuals' reluctance to access hostel accommodation where it would mean sacrificing a rural lifestyle or moving away from local connections.

It will not be feasible for all rural areas to start these kinds of initiatives but as this example shows, it should not be considered beyond possibility either. Interviews with the partners in Mendip show that a hostel like the Dairy House is the result of many years of partnership working to build up a local profile and network, so will not come together overnight. Rural homelessness forums should have models like this in mind, however, as they consider the best steps for supporting homeless individuals in their areas.

CONCLUSION

Depictions and discussions of homelessness continually focus on urban homelessness. While homelessness certainly presents a significant challenge in these areas, this approach, teamed with the ongoing promotion of the countryside as a rural idyll, often by the tourism industry but also advertisers, mask the presence of households in rural areas who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Official statistics report that 6,270 of households in predominantly rural areas were accepted as homeless in 2015/16, and that there were 12,977 approaches against which decisions were made. These are not insignificant numbers, while the hidden nature of homelessness in rural areas suggests they likely underestimate of the numbers being affected. For those who are affected, the impact is no less severe than in a city or town. Given the difficulties in accessing services and alternative accommodation, the impact could be even more significant for households in rural settings.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places an increased duty on LAs. However, the challenges involved in delivering services in rural areas and the struggle to access affordable homes across a range of suitable tenures can make addressing homelessness – both through preventative and relief activities – more of an issue for rural LAs. In the context of significant welfare reform and shortages in affordable and social housing, it is incumbent upon government to take a leading role in tackling homelessness. This will be by ensuring England's housing markets are able to meet the needs of their residents in housing supply and that structural changes to the welfare state do not result in further households experiencing significant financial hardship.

Within this, more consideration must be given to the obstacles rural areas face and how any homelessness strategies can and should be developed to overcome these, including extending the principles of this research into developing a comprehensive rural housing strategy, exploring all parts of the challenge. This will also require more detailed monitoring of homelessness approaches, acceptances, and migration between and within urban and rural areas. In the meantime, this report has identified a number of ways in which LAs might start to develop homelessness provision. The establishment of structures to facilitate partnership working will be key to any approach, and this report recommends the establishment of rural homelessness forums and community hubs, to coordinate services, share best practice, and gather intelligence. This should then form a central part of further research – something which this report has identified as lacking in recent years – to look in more depth at how good practice can be shared more widely and how rural areas can work to prevent homelessness in their areas.

REFERENCES

- Bevan M and Rugg J (2006) *Providing homelessness support services in rural and remote rural areas: exploring models for providing more effective local support*, Communities Scotland. <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/chp/documents/2006/remoterural.pdf>
- Carter M (1997) *The last resort: living in bed and breakfast in the 1990s*, Shelter.
- Cloke P, Milbourne P and Widdowfield R (2001) 'The geographies of homelessness in rural England' *Regional Studies*, 35(1), pp23-327.
- Cloke P, Milbourne P and Widdowfield R (2003) 'The complex mobilities of homeless people in rural England' *Geoforum*, 34(1), pp21-35.
- Cloke P, Johnsen S and May J (2007) 'The periphery of care: emergency services for homeless people in rural areas' *Journal of Rural Studies*, 23(4), pp387-401.
- Cox E, Murray C and Round A (2017) *Forgotten opportunities: The dynamic role of the rural economy in post-Brexit Britain*, IPPR North. <http://www.ippr.org/publications/forgotten-opportunities-the-dynamic-role-of-the-rural-economy-in-post-brexit-britain>
- Crisis (2011) *Homelessness: A silent killer*. <http://www.crisis.org.uk/publications-search.php?fullitem=337>
- Crisis (2017) *Crisis consultation response on the future of supported housing funding*. <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/briefings-and-responses-search/>
- Davies B (2014) *For future living: Innovative approaches to joining up housing and health*, IPPR North. <http://www.ippr.org/publications/for-future-living-innovative-approaches-to-joining-up-housing-and-health>
- Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] (2015) *Addressing complex needs: improving services for vulnerable homeless people*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/addressing-complex-needs-improving-services-for-vulnerable-homeless-people>
- Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] (2016a) 'Table 784: local authorities' action under the homelessness provisions of the Housing Acts, financial years 2004-05 to 2015-16' [Data] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>
- Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] (2016b) '2011 Rural-Urban Classification of Local Authorities and other geographies' [Data] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-urban-classification>
- Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] (2017a) *Statutory homelessness and homelessness prevention and relief, England: October to December 2016*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-and-homelessness-prevention-and-relief-england-july-to-september-2016>
- Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] (2017b) *Rough sleeping in England: autumn 2016*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2016>
- Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] (2017c) 'Rough sleeping statistics England autumn 2016: tables 1 and 2' [Data] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>
- Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] (2017d) 'Table 125: dwelling stock estimates by local authority district; 2001 to 2016' [Data] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>
- Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] (2017e) 'Table 116: Dwelling stock: local authority stock by district, England 1994 – 2016' [Data] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

- Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] (2017f) *Fixing our broken housing market*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] (2014) *Rural urban classification leaflet: The 2011 rural-urban classification for local authority districts in England*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2011-rural-urban-classification-of-local-authority-and-other-higher-level-geographies-for-statistical-purposes>
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] (2017a) *Rural proofing: Practical guidance to assess impacts of policies on rural areas*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-proofing>
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] (2017b) *Statistical Digest of Rural England - March 2017*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-digest-of-rural-england>
- Evans A (2000) *They think I don't exist: the hidden nature of rural homelessness*, Crisis. <http://www.crisis.org.uk/publications-search.php?fullitem=190>
- Fitzpatrick S, Pawson H, Bramley G, Wilcox S and Watts B (2017) *The homeless monitor: England 2017*, Crisis. <http://www.crisis.org.uk/publications-search.php?fullitem=523>
- Greater London Authority [GLA] (2017) *CHAIN quarterly report, Greater London, October – December 2016*. <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports/resource/9c06d024-897c-46f9-9276-2963f1d4bbe0#>
- Greater London Authority Intelligence [GLA Intelligence] (2015) *ONS 2014 mid-year population estimates: London analysis*. <https://files.datapress.com/london/dataset/ons-2014-mid-year-population-estimates--london-analysis/Update-06-2015-2014-MYE.pdf>
- Halifax (2015) *Halifax rural housing review*. <http://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/globalassets/documents/media/press-releases/halifax/2015/lbg.com-151030-rural-areas-review-final.pdf>
- Homeless Link (2014) *No second night out standard*. <http://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/adopting-no-second-night-out-standard>
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017*. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted/data.htm>
- LG Futures (2014) *Research into drivers of service costs in rural areas: national analysis of unit costs - main report*, DCLG/DEFRA. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/costs-of-service-delivery-in-rural-areas>
- Local Government Association [LGA] (2017) 'LGA analysis: council tax rises will not fix local government funding crisis', webpage. <http://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-analysis-council-tax-rises-will-not-fix-local-government-funding-crisis>
- Local Government Association [LGA]/Public Health England [PHE] (2017) *Health and wellbeing in rural areas*. <http://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/idyllic-countryside-masking-poor-rural-health-0>
- McIver C, Snelling C, Fleming A and Davies B (2016a) *The journey home: Setting up a temporary accommodation board*, IPPR North. <http://www.ippr.org/publications/the-journey-home-building-a-solution-to-unsupported-temporary-accommodation>
- McIver C, Snelling C, Fleming A and Davies B (2016b) *The journey home: Building a solution to unsupported temporary accommodation*, IPPR North. <http://www.ippr.org/publications/the-journey-home-building-a-solution-to-unsupported-temporary-accommodation>
- Milbourne P and Cloke P (2006) 'A national overview' in Milbourne P and Cloke P (Eds) *International perspectives on rural homelessness*. London: Routledge.
- National Audit Office [NAO] (2014) *The impact of funding reductions on local authorities*. <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-impact-funding-reductions-local-authorities/>
- National Housing Federation [NHF] (2017) *Home truths 2016/17: the housing market in the south west*. <http://www.housing.org.uk/resource-library/browse/home-truths-2016-17-the-housing-market-in-the-south-west/>
- National Infrastructure Commission [NIC] (2016) *Connected future*. <https://www.nic.org.uk/publications/connected-future/>

- Office for National Statistics [ONS] (2017) 'Housing affordability in England and Wales: 1997 to 2016', webpage. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales/1997to2016>
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR] (2009) *The right to adequate housing*, United Nations/OHCHR. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/toolkit/Pages/RighttoAdequateHousingToolkit.aspx>
- Pleace N (2015) *At what cost? Crisis*. <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/chp/documents/2015/CostsofHomelessness.pdf>
- Reeve K (2011) *The hidden truth about homelessness: Experiences of single homelessness in England*, Crisis. <http://www.crisis.org.uk/publications-search.php?fullitem=310>
- Robinson D (2004a) 'Rough sleeping in rural England: challenging a problem denied', *Policy & Politics*, 32(4), pp471-486.
- Robinson N (2004b) *Priced out: the rising cost of rural homes*, Shelter. http://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/policy_library_folder/priced_out_the_rising_cost_of_rural_homes
- Robinson D and Coward S (2003) *Hidden homelessness: Your place, not mine*, Crisis/The Countryside Agency. http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/YourPlace_Full.pdf
- Snelling C and Davies B (2016) *Closer to home: next steps in planning and devolution*, IPPR North. <http://www.ippr.org/publications/closer-to-home>
- Snelling C, Colebrook C and Murphy L (2016) *Homesharing and London's housing market*, IPPR. <http://www.ippr.org/publications/homesharing-and-londons-housing-market>
- St Mungo's (2016) *Nowhere safe to stay: the dangers of sleeping rough*. http://www.mungos.org/press_office/2669_nowhere-safe-to-stay-homeless-people-told-to-sleep-rough-despite-extreme-dangers
- St Mungo's (2017) *Consultation on funding for supported housing: submission from St Mungo's*. <http://www.mungos.org/documents/7566/7566.pdf>
- Whynes D (1991) 'Mobility and the single homeless' *Area*, 23(2), pp111-118.
- Williams M and Cheal B (2002) 'Can we measure homelessness? A critical evaluation of the method of 'capture-recapture'' *International Journal of Social Research*, 5(4), pp313-331.

ANNEX A

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY DOCUMENTS

- Basildon District Council (2014) *Homelessness prevention strategy*. <http://www.basildon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=291&p=0>
- BBC (2016) 'High Court rules second homes ban in St Ives will remain', 10 November 2016. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-37938885>
- Braintree District Council (2013) *Homelessness strategy & review 2013-2018*. https://www.braintree.gov.uk/downloads/file/2117/homelessness_strategy_and_review_2013_to_2018
- Brentwood Borough Council (2013) *Homelessness prevention strategy 2013-2018*. <http://www.brentwood.gov.uk/index.php?cid=1752>
- Castle Point Borough Council (2012) *Homelessness review and strategy action plan 2012-2017*. <https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/housing-strategies-and-policies>
- Chelmsford City Council (2017) *Homelessness review and strategy 2017-2022*. <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allid=72964>
- Colchester Borough Council (2014) *Colchester's homelessness strategy 2014-2019*. <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/homelessnesstrategy>
- East Devon District Council (2013) *Homeless strategy 2013-2018*. <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategies-and-policies/homelessness-strategy-2013-18/>
- Epping Forest District Council (2015) *Homelessness strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18*. <http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/home/file-store/category/436-business-plans?download=3476:homelessness-strategy-215-18>
- Exeter City Council / Teignbridge District Culture (2016) *Homelessness strategy: working better together 2016 to 2021*. <https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=47306&p=0>
- Harlow Council (2015) *Homelessness strategy 2015-2020*. <http://www.harlow.gov.uk/draft-homelessness-strategy-2015-2020pdf>
- Maldon District Council (2013) *Homelessness strategy and review 2013*. https://www.maldon.gov.uk/downloads/file/11623/homelessness_strategy_and_review_sept_2013
- Mid Devon District Council (2014) *Draft homelessness strategy 2013-2018*. <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/homelessness/>
- North Devon Council (2013) *Homelessness prevention policy*. <http://www.northdevon.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/housing-policies/>
- Plymouth City Council (2015) *Homelessness in Plymouth*. http://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/documents/s59798/Homelessness_in_Plymouth.pdf
- Rochford District Council (2011) *Homelessness strategy 2011-2014*. http://fs-drupal-rochford.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/plans_and_strategies_homelessness_strategy.pdf
- South Hams / West Devon (2016) *Joint homelessness strategy 2017-2022*. <https://mg.southhams.gov.uk/documents/s2487/Appendix%20A%20-%20Draft%20Homeless%20Strategy%202017-2022.pdf>
- Southend on Sea Borough Council (2014) *The Southend-on-Sea homelessness prevention strategy 2014-2017*. <http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200232/housing/141/homelessness/3>
- Tendring District Council (2009) *A homelessness strategy for Tendring 2009-2014*. <https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Homelessness%20Strategy.pdf>

Thurrock Council (2015) *Thurrock homelessness review and prevention strategy 2015-2020*. https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/homelessness_review_2015.pdf

Torbay Council (2015) *Torbay homelessness strategy 2015-2020*. <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/media/6759/torbay-homelessness-strategy.pdf>

Torrige District Council (2013) *Homelessness strategy 2013-2018*. <http://www.torrige.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=12357&p=0>

Uttlesford District Council (2016) *Homelessness strategy and review 2016-2021*. <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1237&p=0>

Institute for Public Policy Research

GET IN TOUCH

For more information about the Institute for Public Policy Research, please go to www.ippr.org

You can also call us on +44 (0)20 7470 6100, e-mail info@ippr.org or tweet us @ippr

Institute for Public Policy Research

Registered Charity no. 800065 (England & Wales), SC048557 (Scotland), Company no, 2292601

The progressive policy think tank