

Reducing homelessness – opportunities and challenges for local government

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The challenges ... Vulnerable single people

- Reduction in hostel funding streams (started with unringfencing of Supporting People ...)
- Growing number without recourse to public funds (NB how will Brexit change this?)
- Provider uncertainty over supported accommodation housing benefit
- People “dropping between cracks”, increased “gatekeeping” of services geographically and by sector
- Capacity issues in mental health services
- Shortage of “move on” accommodation from hostels
 - LHA rates too low and in many places it’s a landlords’ market
- Universal credit issues – payment delay, landlord reluctance, communication issues on claim progress
- Single Room Rate for U35s



The challenges – families at risk of homelessness

- Growing need for accommodation, fewer nominations available (about supply and need, not about allocations!)
- Uncoupling of Local Housing Allowance from “real rents” – swathes of country unaffordable
- Household benefit cap
- Obstacles to new build family accommodation:
 - HRA restrictions
 - Social rent reduction
 - Interface with HB reduction
 - Uncertainty over “forced sale”



A new challenge

- Gearing up for significantly reduced housing benefit entitlement for U21s

- **But** there are still things we can do ...



Questions to ask ourselves ...

1. What use are we making of climate of low interest rates to support housing (or social) investment?
 - “Resonance” model
 - Temporary Accommodation purchase using retained RTB receipts and borrowing
2. Are we maximising joint working with health authorities around rough sleeping / supporting the vulnerably housed?
 - Could be some opportunities as health and social care move closer together
 - Joint commissioning of services for vulnerable singles
 - Impressive models away from hostel settings – may be financial and performance benefits



Questions to ask ourselves ...

3. How are we gearing up for the Homelessness Bill?

- Some short-term “trailblazer” funding
- Good work on “upstream” predictors of homelessness, to avoid prevention (e.g. school attendance, domestic abuse issues)

4. How much control are we retaining on development involving public land?

- Don’t just rely on the planning process and volume housebuilders if you can help it!
- Factor in revenue benefit of nomination rights

5. Are we looking to maximise opportunities flowing from Housing White Paper?

- Land Assembly / CPO / DevCo
- Support for Local Housing Companies

