

Can social housing rebalance the homelessness equation?

NFA 2020 Best Practice Report
Thursday, 24 September 2020

Published today, the [latest NFA Best Practice report](#) concludes that current government strategy on homelessness, focused largely on crisis management rather than prevention, is failing to balance the homelessness equation. The new report is based on the frontline knowledge of its members who manage their parent councils' statutory homelessness duties.

[Report author Lisa Birchall says](#) that, increasingly, the core systemic cause of homelessness in the UK is the chronic shortage of truly affordable homes. While the well-understood triggers of debt, domestic violence and life-controlling dependencies still play a significant part in the loss of a stable home, the loss of a private tenancy or family support now accounts for close to half of all homelessness claims.

The NFA is a member of the Homes At the Heart campaign partnership which spans the social housing sector – with the NFA, Crisis, ARCH, the LGA and Shelter – and is asking government to put the creation of at least 90,000 new social homes at the heart of COVID recovery policy. Publication of this report has been timed to co-incide with the campaign's #Settled Futures week.

NFA Policy Director Chloe Fletcher said:

“ALMOs who manage their parent council's homelessness duties have developed highly targeted prevention programmes designed to block routes to homelessness, such as working with care leavers or those at risk of domestic abuse. This report shows that they're very good at it, but that they're doing it on a shoestring and can't possibly do enough of it.

“That's true for all local authorities in the aftermath of COVID and a decade of austerity cuts. Meanwhile councils are spending more than £1bn a year on temporary accommodation and it makes no sense.

“And as we and our Homes at the Heart campaign partners have been saying since lockdown hit, it really couldn't be plainer - the ultimate homelessness prevention programme is to build more housing that people can genuinely afford.”

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*Note to editors: The National Federation of ALMOs Ltd (NFA) represents England's 31 arms-length management organisations (ALMOs). ALMOs are not-for-profit council-owned housing companies that **manage nearly 420,000 council homes across 34 local authorities.***

First established in 2002 as part of the Government's Decent Homes programme, ALMO companies now work with their parent councils to deliver diverse housing services. These range from new-build development to support for residents' employability, financial resilience and health and well-being.