

<b>Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission</b> <b>14<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b> <b>Item 5 – Homelessness and the Impact of Covid-19</b>	Item No <b>5</b>
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## Outline

Councils are subject to a number of statutory duties to accommodate the most vulnerable homeless households and to make efforts to prevent and relieve homelessness. These duties were significantly extended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into operation from April 2018. However there is no duty to provide accommodation or shelter for the majority of rough sleepers who do not meet the vulnerability criteria for 'priority need' in the homelessness legislation. In addition there is less responsibility on councils to provide accommodation or shelter to foreign nationals with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) or those from European Economic Area (EEA) countries not exercising their treaty rights, and in some cases councils have no powers to provide help.

At the end of March the government wrote a letter to the leader of every local authority in England asking them to accommodate all people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough and to find alternative accommodation for those in "shelters" where they could not easily self-isolate, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In the Local Government Association (LGA) report [Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) it highlights the "The success of *Everyone In* demonstrates that, given the mandate and funding, councils, working with their partners, have the means to end the vast majority of rough sleeping."

In response to the additional funding announced by the Chancellor in the Spending Review to support those at risk of rough sleeping and homelessness Cllr David Renard, Local Government Association housing spokesperson, said:

"Councils have done an incredible job getting people sleeping rough off the streets and have accommodated more than 29,000 people who have faced homelessness since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

"It is good the Government has recognized this with additional funding today, which will help councils to continue their ongoing efforts to support people at risk of rough sleeping and homelessness." But long term the LGA is calling for there to be a shift towards investing in homelessness prevention services

and for council to be given the powers to kick start a post-pandemic building boom for affordable housing to rent.

The Commission asked for the Council to provide an update on

- 1) homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough. Covering the Council's work securing homes for those housed during lockdown and their support to the new street homeless.
- 2) the impact of Covid-19 on this service and impact on future provisions and cost implications to the service.

**Reports in the agenda:**

To support this discussion the following reports have been provided as background information from the Local Government Association.

- LOCAL AUTHORITY BRIEFING: housing people who were rough sleeping and those at risk who have been accommodated due to covid-19
- Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**There will be a presentation at the meeting from the Benefits and Housing Needs Service.**

**Invited Attendees:**

**London Borough of Hackney**

- **Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply, Cllr Rebecca Rennison**
- **Head of Benefits and Housing Needs, Jennifer Wynter.**

**Action**

Members are asked to consider the reports, presentations and ask questions.