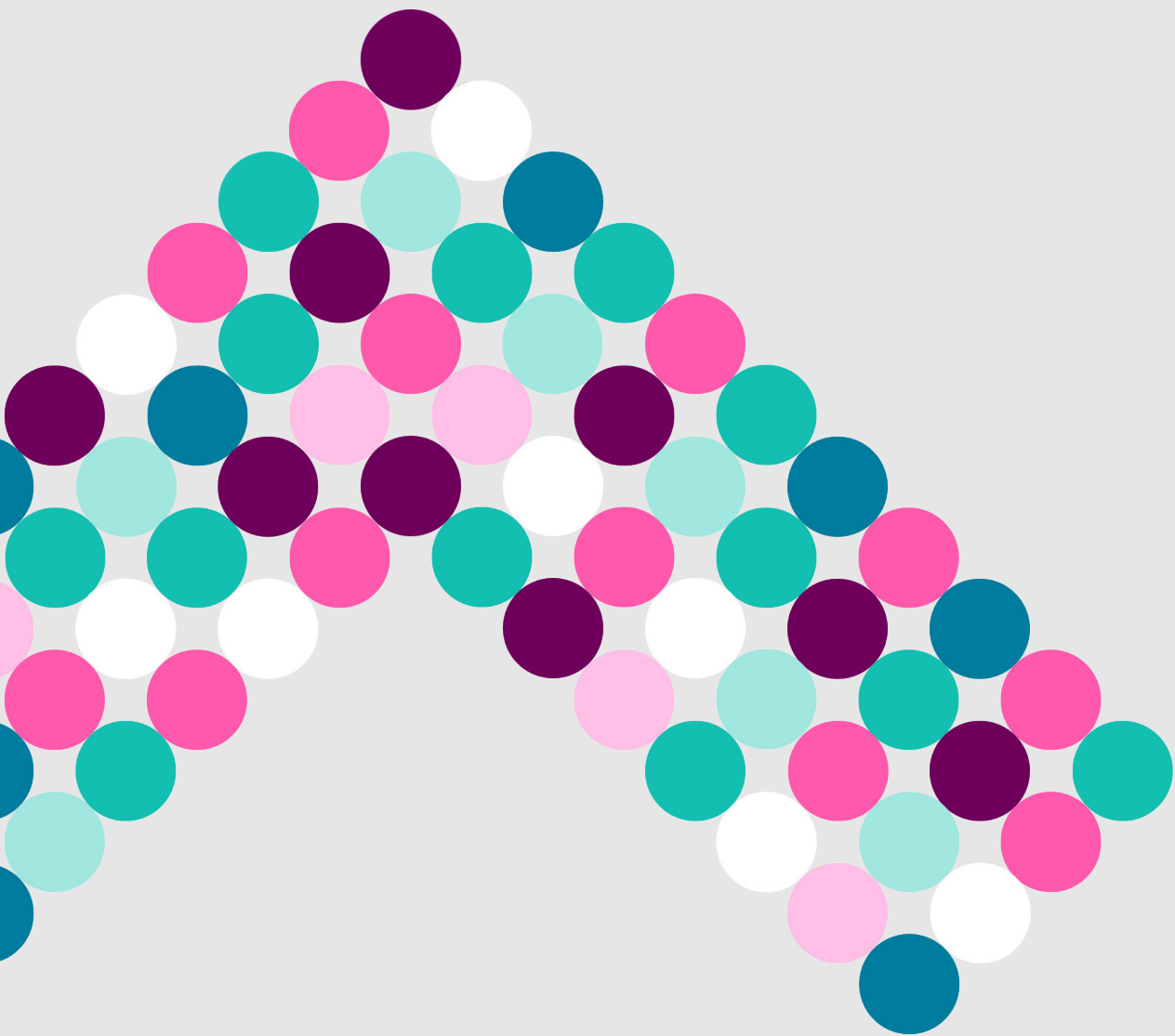


Vital solutions to ending migrant homelessness

Resource pack



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Engaging with your local MP about migrant homelessness

Your local MP

Following a general election is a great time to write to your local MP(s) and arrange a meeting on migrant homelessness. You may have a new MP or still have the previously incumbent MP. Either way, MPs are always keen to hear from organisations delivering services who operate in their constituency. **New MPs will be keen to engage with the local community straight away, meanwhile previously incumbent MPs are usually aware of migrant homelessness issues as these often makes up a proportion of their postbag.** If not, this is an opportunity to bring their attention to the problem.

Finding your MP

If you don't know who your MP is, you can find out by **putting in the postcode of your service into the [TheyWorkForYou](#) website.** If your service operates in more than one constituency you should feel free to write to all the relevant MPs, but make sure you explain that you have a service in their constituency.

Drafting a letter

The best way to contact an MP is by writing to them. **We have produced a template letter for you to use to help in this process** (see page 5). However, it's important to personalise your letter as much as possible. For example, if you have met the MP previously, either during the previous Parliament or the election campaign, then make sure to mention that so they remember you and try to include local statistics and insight.

Additionally, doing some internet research around your MPs interests can also help personalise your approach.

- If they have served as an MP before, looking up things like whether they're part of an All Party Parliamentary Group and/or whether they sit on a Select Committee, as well as what have they said in the past about migrant homelessness can be very helpful. Useful websites include [TheyWorkForYou](#) (records what MPs say in the commons and how they vote) and [UK Parliament](#) (has details of membership of APPG's and Select Committees).
- If the MP is new to Parliament, look via Google at what they have done in their career up to this point and what they said about migrant homelessness in the past.

Finding statistics to include in your letter

While accurately estimating how many people with restricted eligibility are experiencing homelessness is extremely difficult, you can use [statutory data](#) to draw MPs attention to the estimated number of migrants experiencing homelessness, or rough sleeping in your community. If you look in the annual or quarterly local authority tables found [here](#) you can find stats on the number of people owed either a prevention or relief duty whose reason for homelessness is leaving Home Office accommodation, alongside number of people who are former asylum seekers.

Rough sleeping snapshot statistics can provide an estimate of the number of non-UK nationals rough sleeping on a single night in your local area which you can use.

Sending your letter

Every MP has a public facing email address, which you can find on their profile page on the [UK Parliament](#) website.

MPs inboxes can receive a huge amount of correspondence, and many new MPs are still recruiting their support staff, meaning it can be slow for MPs to respond. MPs will also have an email for internal use so if you have this for your MP then send it to this address too, as well as copying in any of the MP's staff if you have their contact details. Calling the constituency office to ask for the best contact emails is a good idea. Many people also recommend sending a hard copy of the letter, as well as your email, to the constituency office to bypass an MP's bloated inbox.

Following up

MPs are likely to receive a lot of correspondence post-election. It may take a little while for them to reply. **If you haven't received any response to your letter within two/three weeks then it is worth sending a follow up email** enquiring about it to keep it on the MP's radar, as well as calling their constituency office.

Meeting with your MP

Have some 'asks' of your MP ready to go. Asking your MP to take actions after the meeting can be a great way to keep your relationship going and utilise it to further your interests. Try to have more than one ask up your sleeve to give yourself options. The specifics of these will depend on the content of your meeting, but some possible asks which you can leave with your MP are included in this pack.

Engaging with your local authority about migrant homelessness

Local authority teams and councillors across the country play a key role in responding to and supporting migrants experiencing homelessness. It can therefore be highly beneficial to engage with and build a partnership with your local authority which you can draw when engaging with your MP and calling for national policy change.

Connecting with your local authority

You can find which local authority to write to by entering your postcode into this government [search bar](#). This will identify your local authority and provide the local authority website you can use to look up the contacts details of your local migrant homelessness team.

If you are unable to find this, you can also search google for a public email you can request the relevant contact details from. You can also call your local authority to ask for the best contact emails.

Connecting with your local councillor

You can also find your local councillors by entering your postcode into – [WriteToThem](#) which will show you the councillors in your ward.

To find the lead members of your local council to write to, you can Google search "<council name> Leader" or "<council name> Cabinet" and this should bring up a list of the names, portfolios and contact details of the councillors in leadership.

While it's not always clear who is responsible for migrant homelessness, you can always write to the Leader of your council.

Template – Letter to MP

Dear *insert MP name*,

I am writing to you from *insert organisation name* to congratulate you on your election as MP for *insert constituency* and to request a meeting to with you to discuss how we can work together to end migrant homelessness in the *insert constituency* area.

Who we are

Insert any past meetings you have had with the MP as well as a summary of your organisation and your impact.

Migrant homelessness is rising

Our service supports migrants experiencing homelessness in *insert constituency*. These migrants are more vulnerable to homelessness than people with UK citizenship, and those with restricted or undetermined eligibility to public funds even more so. For example, ***Insert local rough sleeping estimates from statutory rough sleeping statistics*** non-UK/EU nationals were recorded rough sleeping on one night in 2023. This was an increase of ***insert constituency percentage*** from ***insert year***.

These statistics are symptomatic of a wider national trend. For example, national rough sleeping snapshot data estimates that the number of migrants rough sleeping has increased each year. This is difficult as we want to support everyone who walks through our doors, however, the increasing number of migrants turning to us after leaving the asylum system community means our service is buckling under the growing pressure of homelessness. Sadly, we have no option but to turn vulnerable people without anywhere to go away.

Working together

Despite our best efforts, we see first-hand that the current immigration and asylum system is driving migrants into homelessness. I firmly believe that changes to the immigration and asylum system can drastically improve the lives of the people we support, whilst preventing more migrants becoming homelessness. Alongside our local insight and ideas, we are supporters of Homeless Link's (the membership body for homelessness services) [Manifesto to End Homelessness](#).

Insert summary of MPs demonstrated interest in homelessness/migrant rights.

Therefore, I would like to arrange an initial meeting with you to build a partnership that can make sure no one in ***insert local area*** is homeless as a result of their immigration status.

Your sincerely,

Insert name and job title

Meeting with your MP

Preparation before the meeting

- **Decide what you want to focus on.** Most MP meetings are strictly half an hour long, so you won't have time to cover a wide range of issues in detail. This meeting will focus on homelessness among non-UK nationals, but still try to know specifically what issues you want to prioritise within that.
- **Do some research about your MP.** For example, what have they said on homelessness/immigration in the past? Or are they a member of any relevant APPPGs or Select Committees? Useful websites include TheyWorkForYou and the UK Parliament website. You can also have a look at an MP's social media feed to get a sense of what matters to them. Connecting the issue to what the MP values can help persuade them of its importance.
- **Have some statistics ready to go.** MPs want to know what's going on within their constituency so having statistics demonstrating issues you're seeing can be helpful. Examples could be an increase in referrals for newly recognised refugees or changing demographics or support needs of the people you support.
- **Re-read our joint policy briefing with NACCOM.** Connecting local issues with national solutions will help show the decisive role Parliament needs to take in reducing homelessness among non-UK nationals.
- **Have some 'asks' of your MP ready to go.** Asking your MP to take actions after the meeting can be a great way to keep your relationship going and utilise it to further your interests. Try to have more than one ask up your sleeve to give yourself options. Possible asks could include:

1. **Table Parliamentary Questions and take part in relevant debates (see examples below)**

Home Office: *To ask the Secretary of State what steps her department is taking to prevent people from experiencing homelessness after leaving asylum accommodation.*

MHCLG: *To ask the Secretary of State of Housing, Communities and Local Government what measures her department are taking to (a) assess homelessness levels among non-UK nationals and (b) reduce homelessness among non-UK nationals.*

2. **Join the APPG for Ending Homelessness and/or the APPG for Migration**
3. **Write to the Homelessness Minister, attaching our briefing**

Getting to the meeting (if in Westminster)

- **Most MPs have their offices in Portcullis House.** You should allow at least 15/20 minutes to get through security before your meeting. MPs have very strict diaries so it's important you aren't late.
- **Meetings often take place in the Portcullis House Foyer.** Many MPs have very small offices so don't be surprised if your meeting takes place in the foyer area.
- **For meetings in Central Lobby,** make sure you allow at least half an hour to get through security and take a look at this [Visitors Guide](#) beforehand.

During the meeting

- **Remember you are the expert on this subject.** You will know far more about homelessness/immigration issues than them, so be confident in your points and opinions and show your passion for the issue.
- **Be concise.** Remember, MP meetings are short. Try to limit your introduction to the issue at the start to five minutes to allow time for questions and discussion.
- **Listen to your MPs responses.** Understanding your MPs views on issues can help you find common ground and continue to work together in the future. If there is more than one person from your organisation present, nominate one person to take notes beforehand.
- **Try not to focus solely on local issues.** Sometimes MPs, especially when your local council is run by a different party, want to focus entirely on what more the council should be doing. Try to switch the conversation back to national solutions and what the MP can do to support these.
- **Don't get 'Party Political.'** It maybe that your political views differ from your MPs, but it's important to try and find some common ground and not be argumentative.
- **Ask for the email addresses of the MPs staff.** Public MP email addresses receive a lot of correspondence. Having the email addresses of an MPs staff can help you cut through the noise in the future.

- **Get a photo.** At the end of the meeting, please get a photo with your MP and share it on social media.

After the meeting

- **Follow up with the MP.** Send an email a few days after the meeting, thanking the MP for meeting with you and reiterating any asks they have agreed to and sharing Homeless Link and NACCOM's policy briefing.
- **Stay in contact.** Look out for ways to stay in touch with your MP moving forward based on what they are interested in. For example, if they were interested in the outcome of a particular service, you run you could send them regular updates on its impact and invite them to meet someone who had benefited from its support.

Local MP asks

Within Parliament

Table Parliamentary Questions and take part in relevant debates

- Questions could be to the Home Office or MHCLG (see examples below).

Home Office:

To ask the Secretary of State what steps her department is taking to prevent people from experiencing homelessness after leaving asylum accommodation.

MHCLG:

To ask the Secretary of State of Housing, Communities and Local Government what measures her department are taking to (a) assess homelessness levels among non-UK nationals and (b) reduce homelessness among non-UK nationals.

Join the APPG for Ending Homelessness and/or the APPG for Migration

Write to the Homelessness Minister, attaching our briefing

- Homeless Link and NACCOM can assist with drafting letters

Within your constituency

Meet regularly with providers of homelessness and migrant support services in your constituency

- Homeless Link and NACCOM can connect you to services in your constituency

Work with local authorities in your constituency to make sure it has a strategy in place to reduce homelessness amongst non-UK nationals

About Homeless Link

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

About NACCOM

The No Accommodation Network (NACCOM) is a UK-wide network of 140+ frontline organisations and charities that work together to end homelessness and destitution amongst people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants going through the UK asylum and immigration system.

Homeless Link

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