

**NPC Housing Working Party
review of Housing Policies**



**Ending the
Housing Crisis**

Introduction

It's now been three years since the 2019 Biennial conference of the NPC agreed its first comprehensive set of Housing Policies.

In 2018 the London region of the NPC made submission towards the Mayor of London's consultation exercise on housing. This led to many of these ideas and those from others being adopted at the 2019 Biennial NPC conference after a substantial consultation exercise had taken place which involved all regions of the NPC and the national affiliated organisations.

In 2019 after the Biennial conference had taken place a new housing working party was established. Since then, the working party has met on average every 6 weeks including throughout the pandemic. We started with on average 4 members attending our meetings and currently have an average 8 members attending.

The background to the review

Since 2019 the crisis over housing has become much worse. Numerous unkept promises have been made by the Government that has affected all generations:

- The promise to end 'no fault' section 21 evictions.
- The promised ban on leaseholds in new build homes in England and strengthening of rights of existing leaseholders.
- Promising to build 300,000 new home per year, as well as supplying a million new homes by the end of the Parliament in 2024 when between 2018 and 2020 they built on average far less at 180,000 per year. Promising to build more social rental homes. Yet on average only 27,000 social rental homes were built in the same period.
- We have more evictions and the consequent increase in homelessness despite the continual promises made by the Government to end homelessness.
- They made other unkept promises and opposed or have procrastinated on other important housing decisions for pensioners.

The scale of the housing crisis was revealed in a report published on 23rd September 2019 by the National Housing Federation. Extracts from this report said:

- More than 8m people in England – around 1 in 7 – are living in an unaffordable, insecure, or unsuitable homes. 8.4m people are hit by the broken housing market. They face a wide range of issues, from homelessness and serious debt to overcrowding and ill health, and many children are missing out on a fair start in life.
- It reveals that more than 3.6m people are living in overcrowded homes, while 2.5m people can't afford their rent or mortgage.
- 2.5m adults are stuck living with parents, with an ex-partner, or with friends because they can't afford to move out.
- Almost half (43%) can only afford to live decently if they are in social housing – 3.6m people. Social housing rents are on average 50% cheaper than from private landlords, contracts are more secure, and many properties are designed specifically for older people with mobility issues.
- To meet the housing demand the country needs 340,000 new homes every year to be built, including 145,000 social homes.
- The National Housing Federation, along with Shelter, Crisis, the Campaign to Protect Rural England and the Chartered Institute of Housing, is calling on the Government to build these social homes by investing £12.8bn every year for the next decade.

Recent research by the BBC shows one of the main reasons why we have such a huge housing crisis: In the 30 years to 2021, three million fewer properties were built than in the previous 30 years. Yet during this time the population, has increased by more than nine million BBC online news 11/10/2021

The way forward - We will:

- Ask that all NPC members work with us to continue challenging and exposing all those who carry out policies against housing for pensioners - be they from national and local Government, landlords, private building contractors, property and land speculators, and others.
- Continue to carry out housing research, particularly targeting, and intervening in housing consultation groups so that we can help add to our publicity and activity.
- Continue to attend housing related meetings and protests as NPC platform speakers to forcibly argue our case for housing policies.
- Try to hugely expand and spread the word on the work we are currently doing. We cannot do this work without having many more NPC members willing and able to get involved.
- Benefit from strength in numbers by expanding the joint work we do with other like-minded organisations.
- Strongly campaign for our politicians to agree with our policies and for them to make the necessary changes in law that will allow them to be put into practice.

Please note:

Our housing policies in the main relate to the housing situation in England, some variations exist in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

The Housing Working Party amendments are shown below the existing police number as underlined

Recommendations

- 1. A minimum of at least 85,000 properties need to be built every year for older people to meet the current demand and the projected population rise**
- 2. House building, maintenance and adaptations must be based on the Lifetime Homes Standard**
- 3. Local authorities must be enabled to build and repair houses using their own Direct Labour Organisations which provide proper terms and conditions for their staff**
- 4. Fast track building applications for those developers who propose affordable and suitable accommodation for older people**
- 5. Older people must be at the heart of house planning decisions**
- 6. Local authorities must be required to publish a strategy explaining how they intend to meet the housing needs of older people in their area**
- 7. Improve the support and advice given to those wishing to right size**
- 8. Introduce further regulation of the Equity Release market to safeguard older people from financial penalties**
- 9. Strengthen the rights of older tenants by restoring the provisions contained in the Rent Act of '1977' and the Government must stop its delay in implementing its promise to end 'no fault' Section 21 evictions (England)**
- 10. End the Right to Buy policy**
- 11. End the 'Bedroom Tax' for all social tenants**

- 12. The current definition of affordable housing is not fit for purpose**
- 13. Reverse the huge cuts made to the Supporting People Programme**
- 14. The Government must keep to their promise made in December 2017 by the then Communities Secretary Sajid Javid when he announced he would ban leaseholds in new build homes in England and strengthen the rights of existing leaseholders.**
- 15. The Government must introduce legislation in supported housing, which includes sheltered housing, for the right of residents to form tenants and residents' associations and for them to have consultation and collective bargaining rights with their landlords**
- 16. Tackle fuel poverty**
- 17. Introduce rent caps in both the public and private sector to more accurately reflect local conditions**
- 18. Introduce new legislation to prevent the hoarding of land by building companies, restore the 2004 Housing Act requirements to prevent private properties being left vacant for more than six months and make it easier for local authorities to buy private homes where there has been a default on mortgage payments**
- 19. Introduce a strategy to tackle and end the growing problem of homelessness among older people**
- 20. Local authority and social housing must be refurbished and maintained to the highest standards, with any proposed demolition and regeneration schemes being subject to the approval of the residents affected**
- 21. Scheme managers must be reinstated to all sheltered accommodation**
- 22. Housing Associations, Tenant Management Organisations and Arm's Length Management Organisations must be properly regulated and subject to greater accountability to local authorities**
- 23. Review the balance between state subsidies for home ownership and renting to ensure equity in public funding and support**
- 24. Recognition that certain sections of society, especially older women, minority elders, LGBT pensioners and older people with disabilities may face greater levels of housing discrimination which requires specific action**
- 25. The government must recognise the link between housing and health and social care and introduce a national strategy for older people's housing**
- 26 Changes in longevity and economic circumstances are leading to more single person households and planning requirements for suitable housing need to recognise this.**

**National Pensioners Convention
Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street
London WC1N 1AB
info@npcuk.org
www.npcuk.org**