



**BUILDING
FOR THE**

FUTURE



21/22 HIGHLIGHTS FOR BIM & PARDEEP SANDHU

JUNE 2022



Dear Bim and Pardeep,

Home is everything. Yet a Section 21 'No Fault' eviction notice is served **every seven minutes**. Last winter, **One in every 50 children in England** who were living in private rented accommodation were at risk of being evicted with just two months' notice. **17.5 million** are trapped in the housing emergency – just as the cost-of-living crisis hits.

But Shelter is making significant steps towards ending homelessness.

Your generous gift of £5,000 in March 2021 contributed to campaigning which led to major policy announcements in the recent Queen's Speech, supported over 20,000 callers to our helpline, advanced our strategic litigation and legal work with great success and launched a training programme to support local communities to fight for home.

The year ahead will bring its own challenges. But Shelter is in a very strong position to help the most vulnerable in their greatest time of need.

Made possible by your gift, this report covers the last year of our work and the impact of our activities which bring our vision closer to reality.

Thank you for the tremendous commitment to Shelter which you and The Coltstaple Trust has continued to give. Your support is vital as we once again enter an extremely difficult time for the people we exist to serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Polly Neate', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Best wishes,
Polly Neate CBE FAcSS**

STANDING UP FOR JUSTICE

The last year has been increasingly busy for Shelter's legal team, as we worked with **2,601 clients** who needed access to support for their housing or homelessness issues. However, our efforts continued to pay off.

In 2021/22, **over 90% of cases Shelter advised on resulted in a range of successful outcomes.** In a proud achievement, over 33% of our clients were housed, rehoused or able to retain their current home as a direct result of proceedings. Others went on to receive damages or improvements to their home.

Further positive results for clients after being advised by us include over 13% being enabled to plan and manage their affairs better and **6% becoming empowered to take their own action.**



2,601

required legal expertise
for a housing or
homelessness issue

20%

were at imminent risk of
losing their homes before
seeking our help

34%

were housed, rehoused,
or retained their home as
a result of our support

SECURING A LIFELINE FOR 120,000 PEOPLE

This year we announced a huge win by our Strategic Litigation team. This saw the High Court hand down a judgment finding the DWP's policy to apply a fixed maximum deduction for court fines from Universal Credit to be unlawful.

Shelter represented four people who were previously street homeless and had high deductions taken from Universal Credit to pay off court fines for rough sleeping associated activities.

The DWP's policy and failure to consider financial hardship in individual cases and lower the deduction rate was found unlawful.

Because of the dedicated work of Sophie Earnshaw in our Strategic Litigation team, over 120,000 people now have the minimum deduction of 5% taken from their subsistence benefit, £21 per month, rather than the maximum rate of 25% at £103 per month.

This landmark win by Shelter, which also saw the DWP change their deductions policy, has been a lifeline for people surviving on low income, including people who after years sleeping rough, find themselves navigating bills, transport costs, tenancies and other new outgoings.



It is extremely tough to move from the streets into settled accommodation, and this blanket policy made it even harder. The law and policy on deductions has changed as a result of the judgment, which will help everyone who has a deduction from universal credit for the repayment of court fines.

SOPHIE EARNSHAW, SHELTER SOLICITOR

DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO A SAFE HOME IN A PANDEMIC

MR E'S STORY

Mr E and his family were living in private rented accommodation when he was diagnosed with a serious heart condition.

This meant he was unable to continue to work as many hours as he usually did in his job as a taxi driver. Even after applying for Universal Credit, this wasn't enough to cover his rent. He fell into arrears and his landlord served him a Notice Seeking Possession in March 2020.

Then the pandemic hit.

While Mr E was unable to be evicted during this time due to government legislation, his taxi driving work and income dried up almost completely. With increasing arrears, it was clear something had to give.

Our solicitor, Reema, advised Mr E to make a homeless application to Westminster Council because his accommodation was not affordable.

She also referred him to Kate, a Shelter Information and Resource Officer, to assist with an application for a Discretionary Housing Payment. The application was successful and helped stop further arrears.

However, the tenancy was still unsustainable. With support, Mr E was granted access to the council's housing register and moved into social housing in Westminster which is affordable and suitable for his family.

Reema's advice helped steer the family from threatened eviction to a social tenancy.



Thank you so much for your honest and professional support non-stop over 18 months. We appreciate your help; it was life changing and we'll never forget it.

MR E, SHELTER CLIENT

LIVES ON THE LINE

Over the past year, Shelter has repositioned its helpline as an emergency helpline to meet the demands of the continued housing emergency and reach the most critical situations, with many exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis.

This shift allowed our helpline to support **22,517 households** and answer **17,068 webchat queries** in the last year.

It also allowed our digital advice team to improve the tools and advice offered through the Shelter website, making it easier for people to access information before reaching crisis point.



Our helpline staff have been trained to respond to the rapidly changing situation, establish the skills and knowledge to support the huge numbers of callers in crisis and know when cases need to be passed to our specialist housing advisers.

Our helpline and webchat are open 365 days a year and is the only of its kind in the UK. Through these services our experts offer a vital lifeline to thousands of people every week providing financial, practical and emotional support to those who have nowhere else to turn.

It's often the first step on a longer journey they have with us to find a safe, secure home.

FACT!

THE AVERAGE CALL LENGTH IS NOW AROUND 47 MINUTES. THIS IS FIVE MINUTES LONGER THAN THE PREVIOUS YEAR, AND 13 MINUTES LONGER THAN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC.



FACT!

LAST YEAR, 41% OF CALLERS WERE AT RISK OF LOSING THEIR HOME - 8% MORE THAN THE YEAR BEFORE



FACT!

FROM MAY-OCTOBER 2021, OUR EMERGENCY HELPLINE ADVISERS SPOKE TO 15,124 PEOPLE IN NEED OF URGENT SUPPORT AND ADVICE.



Shelter was respectful of my situation and gave me extensive advice on where to begin with looking to get myself out of my situation.

MOBILIZING WIDER COMMUNITIES TO MAKE CHANGE

Housing Action Academy

In May 2022, Shelter launched a new initiative with the vision to equip local communities with the skills, knowledge and confidence to campaign and fight for home themselves.

Shelter's Housing Action Academy is a series of training sessions delivered across the country which will unite and empower pockets of strength in rural and urban areas and allow us to work with more people to achieve exponential reach beyond our current network of hubs.

15 different training modules will range from storytelling and negotiating to managing social media and how to plan a listening campaign. This work will build on the idea of creating a movement for change with the voice of people with lived experience at its heart.

The Housing Action Academy will serve as a useful tool to identify and recruit people with experience of housing issues to join the fight for home locally, open not only to individuals but also community groups and local charities.



HACKNEY RESIDENTS CALL FOR CHANGE

Across the UK, of all the residents living in temporary accommodation, a staggering 68% live in the capital. In April 2021, our London Hub in Hackney, led by Community Organiser Tyrone Scott in partnership with Healthwatch Hackney, released the “We Are Still Human” report, the result of a 27 household-strong listening campaign from those living in temporary accommodation in the Hackney area.

The report humanised the statistics around homelessness in the borough and give a voice to those living the experience themselves so we can see the true desperate conditions of temporary accommodation.

The report also highlighted direct recommendations to temporary accommodation from the residents, including all residents should have:

- **Access to wi-fi, free or paid**
- **Access to laundry facilities that work, are within walking distance, and available at a reasonable price – if not free**
- **Information when they move including about where they’re moving to, how to access local services, and what rights they have**
- **Clear access to information about their case, and consistent support from the local authority for their well-being**
- **Their voices heard by those managing temporary accommodation and address their concerns, involve them in open forums and meetings**

Over 3,000 households live in temporary accommodation in Hackney, including nearly 4,000 children. This reflects the scale of the issues raised. But although this work is based in Hackney, we’re acutely aware these experiences are felt by many across the capital. The most recent figures show 58,730 households recorded as homeless and in temporary accommodation in London, including 40,870 families.

We’re excited to see this work replicated in other boroughs across the capital.

MAKING NOISE ABOUT THE HOUSING EMERGENCY



United in the Fight for Home

Since Summer 2021, we have empowered over 190,000 people to join our fight for home by signing petitions and open letters calling on the government to address overcrowding, build more social homes, fix renting and help people sleeping rough during the pandemic.

After Michael Gove was appointed Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in September 2021, our 18,000-strong open letter calling Gove to address the above also triggered 3,000 people to email their MPs urging them to ask about housing issues at his first parliamentary questions and act in his first 100 days.

No one on the streets

In late 2021, with the onset of winter and a new COVID-19 variant, we called on the Prime Minister to get everyone off the streets this winter.

29,000 joined us.

The call asked the government to publish clear guidance to councils that everyone at risk of sleeping on the streets should be offered safe emergency accommodation and support and make sure councils have adequate funding to provide it.

In response, the government announced an extra £28m to help vaccinate and accommodate people sleeping rough in the pandemic.

£28 MILLION

in extra funding from the government for those sleeping rough in the pandemic

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH

After years of tireless campaigning by Shelter, Grenfell United and others, the Queen's Speech in May finally included good news for housing.

Big promises were made by the government which would create a better, safer, fairer system for those in social housing and private renters. Our next hurdle is to make sure they stick to their word and bring reform forward to start fixing the broken housing system millions are trapped in.

- 1** The Renters Reform bill will be brought forward, a property portal will allow renters to find out who their landlord is and there'll be a new ombudsman so renters can lodge complaints
- 2** Finally, Section 21 'no-fault evictions' will be banned, protecting tenants from unfair and revenge evictions which currently come with as little as two months' notice
- 3** The government has promised to bring forward a Social Housing Regulation bill, meaning the regulator can inspect landlords to ensure they're meeting correct standards

These wins create a better, safer, fairer system for those in social housing and private renters. However, there was nothing in the Queen's Speech which ensures more social housing will be built – the only way to end the housing emergency.

But we know the government is listening. Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, recently spoke alongside Theresa May at our Social Housing Conference held in Westminster and pledged to tilt government funding to build more social homes.

Shelter is as driven and inspired than ever as the fight for home continues.



THANK YOU!

For our clients who know more than anybody that home is everything, we thank you for your support which has made these achievements, impact and progress possible. These were fought for and won during an extremely turbulent time. But this has galvanised us to reach our mission, which our 2022-25 strategy will guide us toward.

For more information, please contact:

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To protect the identity of Shelter clients, models may have been used in photographs. Photography by Domizia Salusest and Alexandra Smart.

