

# The Cambridge Homelessness Charter

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**We invite you to join in a collaborative movement towards ending homelessness in Cambridge**

## Why we need this

Cambridge is recognised as a dynamic and prosperous city: Europe's largest technology cluster, home to innovation and wealth creation, world-class universities, and a target for government investment, with large numbers of new homes being built.

So, why are so many single people sleeping rough or homeless, with nowhere to call home? Why are so many families forced into temporary accommodation, with long waits for suitable housing?

Shockingly, people experiencing homelessness in the UK have an average age of death of just 47 for men and 43 for women.

We cannot rest easy while poverty rubs shoulders with such wealth. Homelessness represents a fracturing of society, broken communities and huge inequalities. We all have a part to play to do something about it -- and it can be ended.

This Charter is a call to make rough sleeping and homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring, and to make Cambridge a city where no-one is forced to sleep rough, and where everyone has somewhere to call home.

## How we do it

Much great work has been and is being done by organisations and individuals to prevent a housing crisis resulting in homelessness or rough sleeping, and to provide support and accommodation to secure a journey away from the street. The situation would be much worse without all this. But we are not on a path to ending homelessness.

No one organisation or authority can achieve the goal of making rough sleeping and homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. It must be done boldly, publicly and collaboratively – with the voice of lived experience at the centre, with organisations, authorities and institutions contributing resources and expertise, leveraging the good-will of those who want to “give back”, celebrating what has been and is being done by so many and so well, and moving the public and media conversation away from common stereotypes.

## What we do

We are proposing six “pillars” of change, each of which is key to ending homelessness:

- **Data** – knowing what is needed and what works, including upstream measures
- **Information** – keeping everyone informed on actions, progress and how to help
- **Housing** – ensuring sufficient emergency, temporary, supported and permanent housing
- **Support** – building trust and collaboration in wrap-around support
- **Health** – ensuring sufficient health services and eliminating barriers to accessing these services
- **Employment** – providing job opportunities, careers advice and training

A Collaboration Group of interested parties from across the city has started to meet to shape the initiative, promote it and build the collaborative actions needed to achieve our goal. Working groups will be set up to address specific issues, and publicity and events will be arranged. Will you join us?

## Next steps

We've set up a website - [www.cambridgehomelessnesscharter.org.uk](http://www.cambridgehomelessnesscharter.org.uk) - explaining more about the Charter and how to get involved. Through the website, you can ask for more information, join our email list, show your support by signing up to the Charter, and tell us how you might be able to help, including joining the Collaboration Group. We look forward to hearing from you, and to working together towards ending rough sleeping and homelessness in Cambridge.