

A Northern Ireland Free From Homelessness

Priorities for the 2027 Assembly Election



About Simon Community

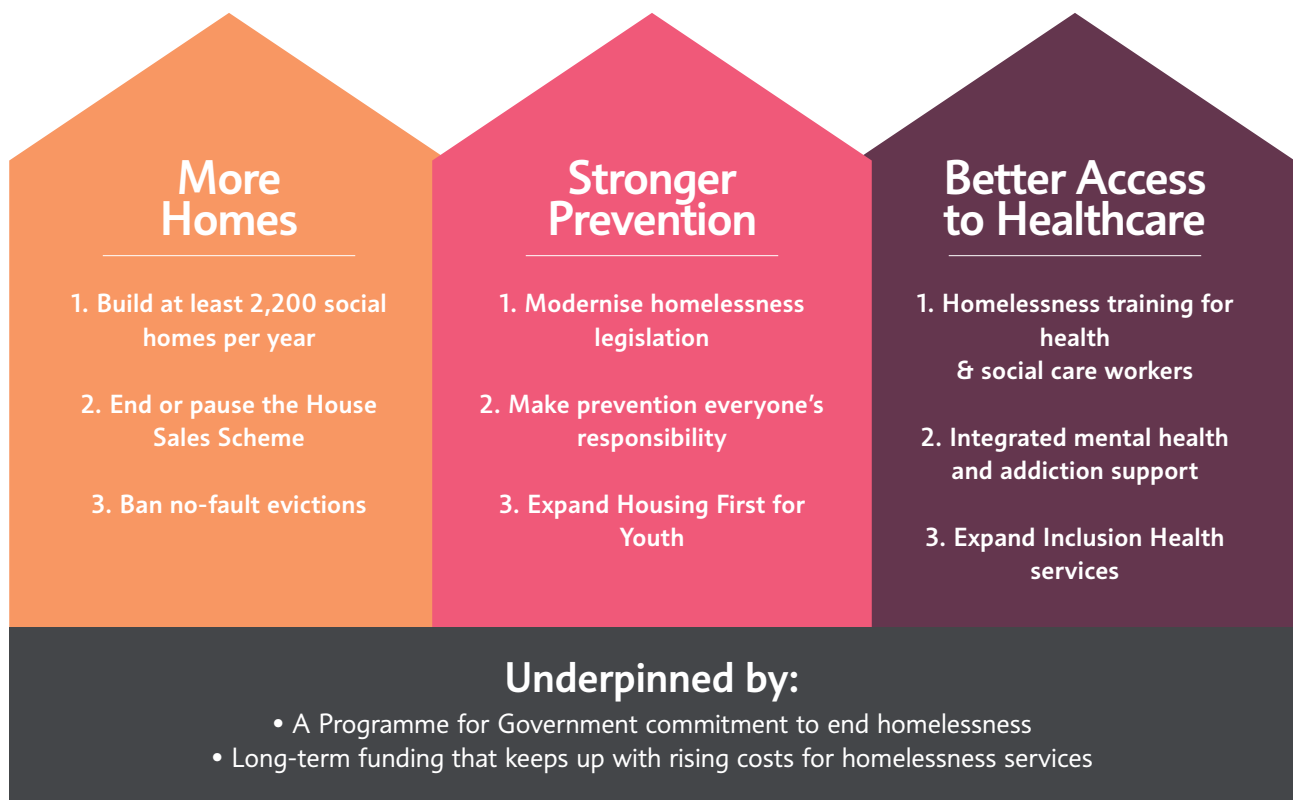
Simon Community is committed to ending homelessness and creating a society where everyone has a safe and secure place to call home. As the largest homelessness charity in Northern Ireland, we provide over 480 temporary accommodation beds every night alongside a wide range of preventative and specialist services. This frontline experience gives us a unique insight into the realities behind homelessness – realities that go far beyond housing need.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who helped to shape this manifesto, including people with lived experience of homelessness who shared their stories and insight to inform our asks for the next government, and our frontline staff, whose dedication and compassion show that a Northern Ireland free from homelessness is possible.

A Northern Ireland Free From Homelessness.

What the next Executive must deliver



This manifesto sets out practical, evidence-based proposals to build a Northern Ireland free from homelessness. Simon Community's priorities for the next government are shaped by the voices of over 150 people with lived experience of homelessness and the frontline colleagues who support them. They told us clearly what needs to change: more affordable housing, a stronger focus on prevention, and better access to health care.

Homelessness is more than just a housing issue. It is linked to health, social care, education, justice and employment. **Ending homelessness must therefore be a cross-Executive priority in the next Programme for Government with every department sharing responsibility for building a Northern Ireland free from homelessness.**

This means:

- Shared targets and timescales for preventing and ending homelessness.
- Adequate multi-year funding, linked to inflation, to deliver long-term, sustainable change.
- Genuine co-production, with people with lived experience at the heart of designing policies, services and solutions.

From Homelessness to Hope: Ngaire, Expert by Experience



For me, **homelessness was more than just not having a home – it was a total loss of security.** I felt like my whole life had fallen apart. Every day was filled with uncertainty: not knowing where I'd be staying next, how long I could stay there or what would happen tomorrow. It was lonely, frightening, and exhausting. You start to lose confidence in yourself and feel like people only see your circumstances rather than you as a person.

Once you become homeless, everything becomes harder: navigating services, finding somewhere safe to stay, trying to keep going day after day. In my experience, there's not enough support before people reach crisis point. There isn't enough permanent housing and people spend far too long moving between temporary places that never allow them to settle.

Mental health and addiction services are difficult to access and too often, services often work in isolation rather than together. When you're already struggling, having to repeat your story over and over again can be overwhelming.

Homelessness affects every part of your life, not just where you sleep.

That's why political leaders need to treat ending homelessness as a real priority. That means building more affordable homes, reducing the time people spend in temporary accommodation, and ensuring support is available when people need it. It also means listening to people with lived experience and giving us a voice in decisions - because we understand what homelessness is really like and what needs to change.

And change is urgent. Rising costs and a shortage of homes means more people than ever are at risk. Without action from our political leaders, more people will be pushed into crisis and suffer harm to their health, confidence and future. But homelessness isn't impossible to solve. If government, charities and communities work together and invest in the right support, it can be prevented for many people.

I know change is possible. Throughout my journey, I've met people who genuinely care and who didn't give up on me when I was struggling. I know others who were once homeless and are now living independently and helping others. I now have a safe home of my own which is so much more than just a roof over my head. It is peace of mind, privacy, stability and the chance to focus on my future instead of just surviving. It allows me to look after my health, rebuild relationships and feel like I belong somewhere again.

All of this gives me hope - hope that we can build a Northern Ireland free from homelessness for everyone. Hope for a future where no one has to worry about where they will sleep tonight, where people get help before they lose their home, where people are treated with dignity instead of judgement and where everyone has the chance to rebuild their life.

A home should be something that everyone can count on, not something they have to fight for.

My question to political leaders is this: *Will you commit to the action that is needed to build a Northern Ireland free from homelessness?*

Why action on homelessness can't wait: Jim Dennison, Simon Community, Chief Executive



Imagine a place where more than one in every 30 people is experiencing homelessness.

A place where over 64,000 people do not have a safe and secure home. Where thousands of children are growing up without the stability of a permanent place to live. Where families spend years in temporary accommodation and frontline services are stretched to their absolute limit. Where tens of thousands of people are waiting for an affordable home, and where every set of new homelessness statistics seems to reveal the same thing: the numbers keep going up.

You might assume this was a problem facing somewhere else. It isn't. This is Northern Ireland today.

Homelessness on this scale is not inevitable. It is the result of choices, priorities and missed opportunities.

The consequences are measured not only in statistics but in lives. Every day at Simon Community we meet people whose health has deteriorated because they have nowhere safe to live. We see young people leaving care with homelessness waiting around the corner. We hear from families trapped in temporary accommodation, unable to plan for the future because they are focused solely on getting through today.

We should not accept this as normal.

Despite homelessness being regularly described as a crisis, it is rarely treated like one. Demand for

homes continues to outstrip supply, prevention services remain under-resourced and too many people are left waiting until crisis point before support arrives.

Yet there is reason for hope and the people of Northern Ireland recognise this too. Our recent research found that 72% of people believe homelessness can be resolved if government takes the right action.

We agree.

At Simon Community, we know the reality of homelessness because we see it every day. But we also see what works. We see people rebuild their lives when they have a secure home. We see crises prevented when support arrives early enough. Most importantly, we see that homelessness is not a permanent condition. It can be ended.

This manifesto focuses on three priorities: delivering more affordable and secure homes, putting prevention at the heart of homelessness policy, and improving access to healthcare for people experiencing homelessness.

Ending homelessness is not beyond our reach. But achieving it will require us to think differently, act differently and lead differently.

If we do, a Northern Ireland free from homelessness is not just an ambition.

It is an achievable goal.

An Escalating Crisis

Homelessness in Northern Ireland is rapidly rising¹

1 in 30  people are experiencing homelessness¹

That's

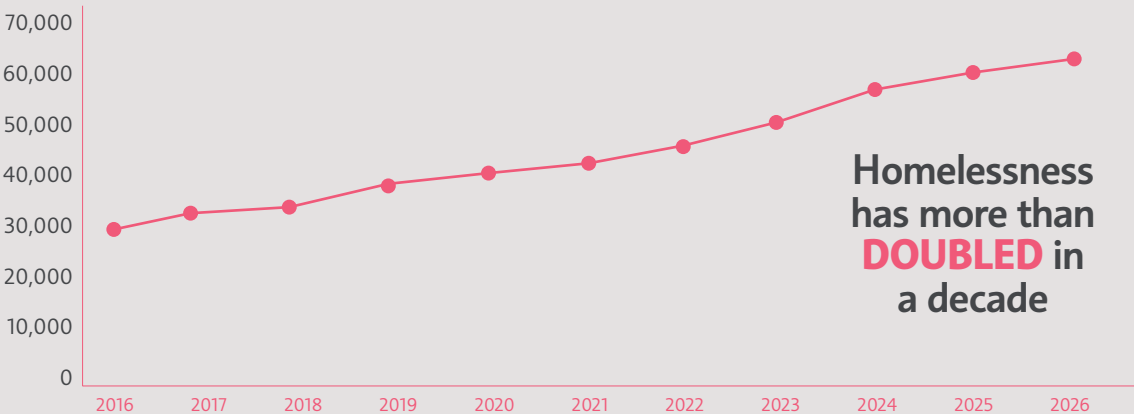
64,417 

people without a safe and secure home

That includes

19,441 

children and young people under 18

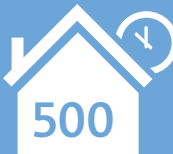


More households than ever are stuck in temporary accommodation²

5,633 

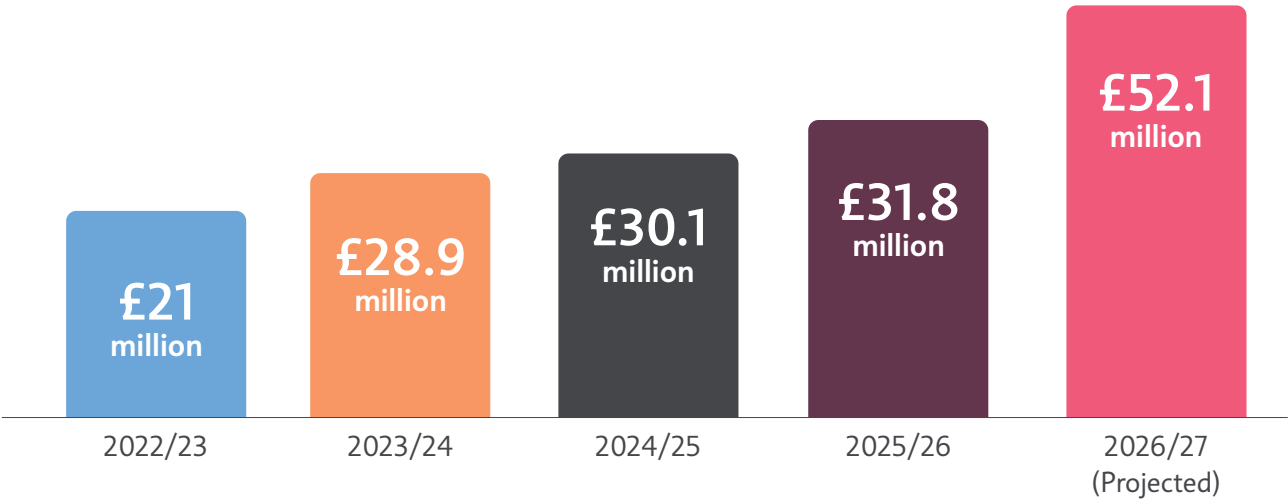


Including
4,837 children



Nearly 500 households
have been there for
over 5 years

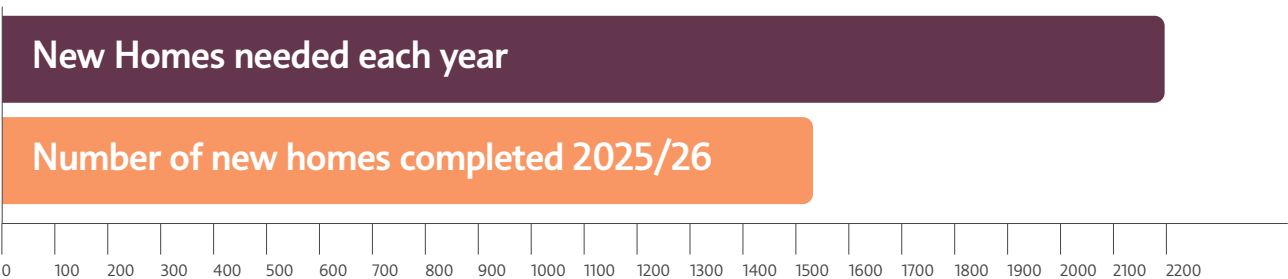
Temporary accommodation costs are soaring^{3 4}



There is a severe shortage of social and affordable homes^{5 6}



Just 1,538 new social homes completed in 2025/26
vs 2,200 that is needed each year



Northern Ireland's housing and homelessness crisis is growing faster than solutions are being delivered.

Without urgent action, more people will be pushed into homelessness.

01

**Deliver more
affordable and
secure homes**



Building a Northern Ireland free from homelessness depends on one thing above all else: an adequate supply of affordable, decent and secure homes.

What needs to happen:

The next government must:

01.

Deliver at least 2,200 new social homes per year to meet the agreed target of 33,000 new social homes by 2039.

02.

End or pause the House Sales Scheme to protect existing social housing stock.

03.

Bring forward a ban on no-fault evictions to provide private renters with more security.

Why this matters

Housing is a human right and the foundation for health, education, family life and strong communities. When people have a safe and affordable home, they thrive, can look after their health and can participate fully in education, employment and community life - creating a stronger and more productive society for everyone.

But Northern Ireland urgently needs more affordable homes, particularly social homes. Without action, housing shortages will deepen, pushing up rents, placing strain on public services and forcing more people into homelessness.

A social housing programme that matches need

Social housing is one of the most effective ways to prevent and end homelessness. With rents set below market rates, social homes are genuinely affordable, protecting people from being pushed into poverty and housing insecurity as private rents continue to rise. They also provide a stable route out of temporary accommodation and homelessness.

Yet successive governments have failed to build the social homes Northern Ireland needs. Today, 92,700 people are on the social housing waiting list, equivalent to around one in every 21 people in Northern Ireland. Demand is overwhelming supply.

When there are not enough social homes, homelessness rises. People who cannot afford rising private rents have nowhere affordable to go, while those already experiencing homelessness cannot move on from temporary accommodation because no permanent homes are available.

The human cost is significant. People experiencing homelessness spend years trapped in the limbo and uncertainty of temporary accommodation where prolonged stays erode health, support networks and hope. For children, the impact can be especially damaging and long-lasting, disrupting learning, development, health and wellbeing.

The financial cost is also significant. Millions of pounds are spent each year on temporary accommodation – including hotels and B&Bs – instead of on building the social homes that would prevent homelessness in the first place. Around £31.8 million was spent on the provision of temporary accommodation in 2025/26, an increase of over £10 million in just three years¹⁷. This is money spent managing a crisis rather than ending it.

Delivering the social homes that Northern Ireland needs must be a top priority for the next Executive. This will require sustained investment throughout this mandate and beyond, alongside immediate action to increase social and affordable housing supply. Without it, homelessness will continue to rise.

Protecting the homes we already have

Alongside building new social homes, the next Executive must protect the homes that already exist. **Pausing or ending the Housing Executive's House Sales Scheme** is one of the fastest and most effective ways to do this.

Over the past 50 years, around 123,000 social homes have been sold for significantly less than what it costs to replace them⁸. This has steadily reduced affordable housing stock, particularly in Belfast, and Derry and Strabane council areas where housing need and homelessness are highest⁹. Each sale permanently reduces the number of social homes available to people in need, and replacement has consistently failed to keep pace.

Simon Community estimate that pausing or ending the scheme could retain around 5,000 social homes between now and the end of the Housing Supply Strategy in 2039¹⁰. Combined with ambitious development of new social homes, this would help rebuild the social housing system Northern Ireland urgently needs and reduce homelessness.

A fair and affordable private rented sector

The shortage of social housing is forcing more people to turn to the private rented sector in search of somewhere to live. While it works for some, rising rents, variable standards and insecure tenancies in this sector are pushing many households into poverty and homelessness.

'Loss of rented accommodation' is now one of the top reasons people present to the Housing Executive for support, accounting for 16% of all presentations between April and June 2026¹¹. Average private rents in Northern Ireland have reached over £1,000 per month and the financial support available – the housing element of Universal Credit calculated by the Local Housing Allowance – is nowhere near enough to cover the true cost of rent.

Every day, Simon Community hears from people forced out of their private rented homes – either through no-fault evictions or because rising rents have become unaffordable. Many describe living with a constant fear of eviction making it harder to challenge poor conditions or ask for essential repairs.

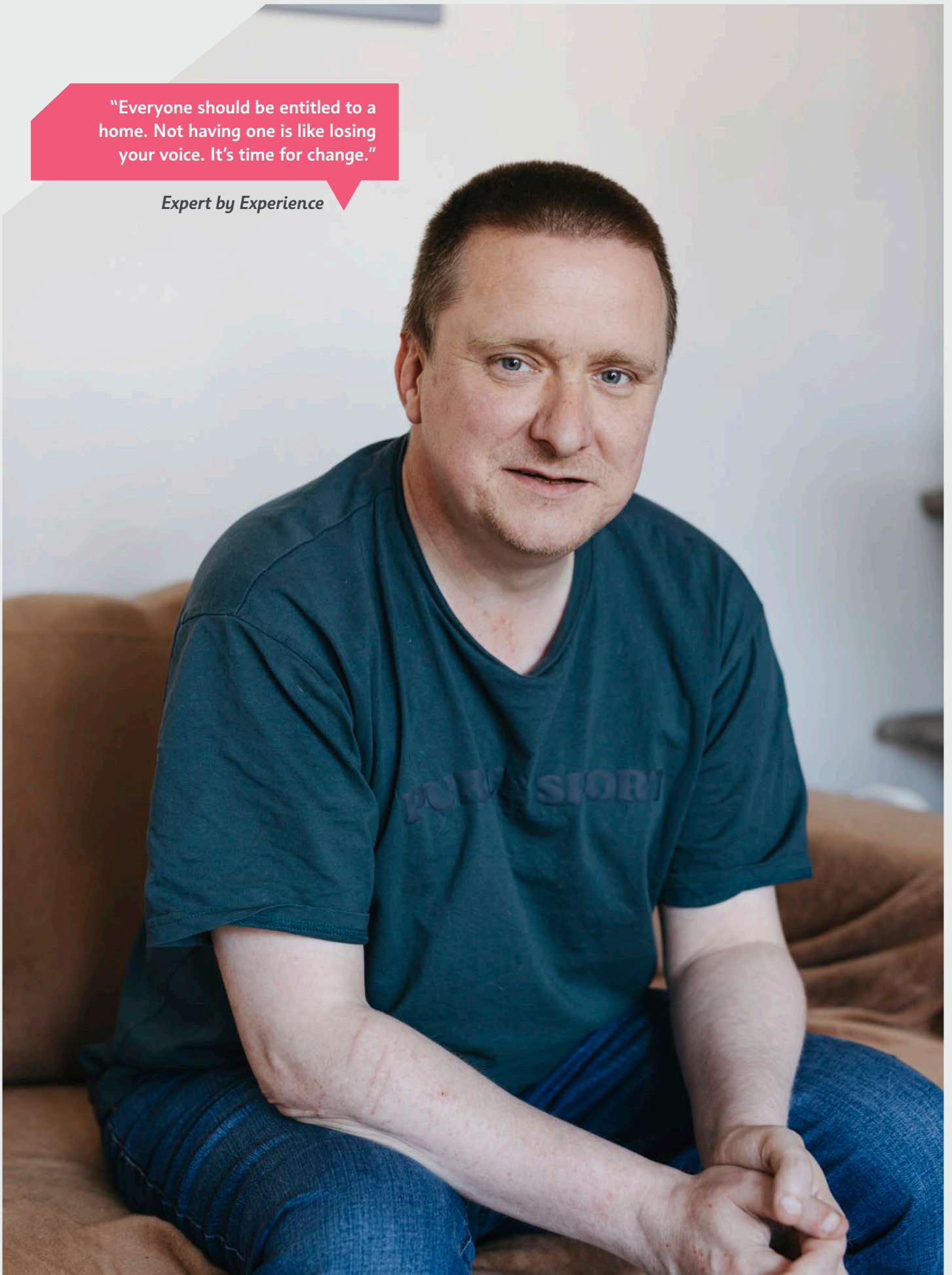
Simon Community will continue to call on the UK Government to unfreeze Local Housing Allowance to help private renters meet rising costs. But the Northern Ireland Executive must also act to make private renting more affordable and secure.

Banning no-fault evictions is one immediate step the next Executive can take. Ending no-fault evictions would mean landlords could only evict a tenant for a valid legal reason, such as wanting to move into the property themselves. This would give tenants greater security and confidence to report repairs without fear of losing their home.

Reform is already happening elsewhere. In England, the Renters' Rights Act 2026 has abolished Section 21 (no-fault) evictions. Private renters in Northern Ireland deserve the same protection.

"Everyone should be entitled to a home. Not having one is like losing your voice. It's time for change."

Expert by Experience



02

Place prevention at the heart of homelessness policy



Northern Ireland cannot end homelessness if most support arrives only after crisis hits. We need a system that acts early, prevents harm and keeps people in their homes.

What needs to happen:

The next government must:

01.

Modernise homelessness legislation by extending the definition of 'threatened with homelessness' to 60 days and introducing a Statutory Prevention Duty for the Housing Executive.

02.

Create cross-sector prevention duties for key public bodies including health, social care, education and justice to identify risks sooner, share information appropriately and act before crisis hits.

03.

Expand Housing First for Youth to all Trust areas so no young person leaves care and immediately slips into homelessness.

Why this matters

Preventing homelessness is one of the most effective investments our government can make. It means acting early, before someone loses their home, through measures such as providing financial support, family or landlord mediation, helping people sustain tenancies and resolving problems before they reach crisis point.

The benefits are clear. Prevention spares people the trauma, uncertainty and disruption of homelessness, protecting their health, relationships and wellbeing. It also reduces pressure on public services and is far more cost-effective than responding once a person has already become homeless.

Preventing homelessness for just one year could reduce public spending by around £9,200 per person¹². Preventing homelessness for 100 people could therefore deliver close to £1 million in savings.

"This experience has taught me that homelessness can happen to anyone. It isn't always about addiction, poor choices or failure. Sometimes it's about circumstances and systems that don't protect people when they should."

Expert by Experience

Yet too often support arrives only after people have reached crisis point. The Northern Ireland Audit Office found that the Housing Executive typically spends less than 10% of its annual homelessness budget on prevention and early intervention, with the vast majority directed towards responding to homelessness once it has already occurred¹³. This leaves people without the support they need to stay in their homes, pushing them into temporary accommodation, sofa surfing or rough sleeping and increasing pressure on already overstretched public services.

Transformation through legislative change

Northern Ireland's homelessness response is still largely governed by the Housing (NI) Order 1988, legislation written nearly 50 years ago when the scale and nature of homelessness looked very different. Under this legislation, the Housing Executive's only legal duty is to respond once homelessness has already occurred by providing temporary accommodation and securing permanent housing for those who meet statutory criteria.

The law also sets a low threshold for intervention, defining someone as 'threatened with homelessness' only if they are likely to lose their home within 28 days. This leaves a very limited window to prevent homelessness before crisis hits.

Homelessness legislation has evolved in other jurisdictions. In England, Wales and Scotland, the definition of 'threatened with homelessness' has been extended to at least 56 days and prevention duties have been introduced requiring housing authorities to identify risks earlier and take reasonable steps to help people remain in their homes or secure alternative accommodation before they become homeless.

Northern Ireland has no equivalent duty, despite repeated calls from a range of organisations and bodies including the Public Accounts Committee.

As a result, Northern Ireland's response to homelessness remains overwhelmingly reactive, stepping in only when people are already in crisis rather than addressing the issues that put them at risk in the first place.

The next Executive must modernise Northern Ireland's homelessness legislation by extending the definition of 'threatened with homelessness' and introducing a statutory prevention duty for the Housing Executive. This would enable the Housing Executive to act earlier and provide practical support - like working with landlords to resolve disputes or securing alternative accommodation. Most importantly, it would shift the system's focus from managing homelessness to preventing it.

Prevention is everyone's responsibility

Homelessness rarely begins on the day someone loses their home. For many people, the warning signs emerge months or even years earlier. During this period, people often come into contact with health, social care, justice and employment support services long before they seek help from housing and homelessness services. By the time someone presents to the Housing Executive, multiple opportunities to prevent homelessness have already been missed.

Preventing homelessness cannot be the responsibility of the Housing Executive alone.

Any new statutory prevention duty must also place clear responsibilities on other public bodies, including Health and Social Care Trusts, to identify people at risk, provide support within their existing powers and make timely referrals when housing problems emerge.

Scotland's new 'Ask and Act' duties – introduced in late 2025 and currently being piloted to inform full roll-out - offers a potential model. Under the new duties, public bodies across health, justice, housing, social care and social security are required to proactively ask about a person's housing situation and take action to prevent homelessness. Early evidence shows that this approach helps people sustain tenancies and delivers significant savings by preventing homelessness upstream¹⁴.

The next Executive must explore how similar cross-sector prevention duties could be introduced here, informed by learning from Scotland and shaped by people with lived experience of homelessness. A multi-agency duty would help ensure people receive support at the first signs of housing instability, rather than only after they have reached crisis point.

Targeted support for those most at risk

At Simon Community, we know homelessness is rarely random. Some groups face a far greater risk than others, and few are more vulnerable than young people leaving care. Without stable relationships and adequate support, care leavers can struggle with managing finances, sustaining a tenancy and navigating independent living.

These pressures make them far more vulnerable to homelessness – not because of personal failure but because the systems around them have not provided the long-term support they need.

Unlike some who are at risk of homelessness, we know exactly who these young people are, where they are and when they will leave care. There is no justification for a system that allows them to fall into homelessness.

A Systemic Failure

- Over ten years, 64% of care leavers presented as homeless, compared with 10% of young people with no social care history.¹⁵
- Around 150 young people presented as homeless after leaving care in 2025/2026.¹⁶
- 1 in 5 people in single adult homelessness accommodation were in care as children.¹⁷

Simon Community is closing this gap for some young people through our Housing First for Youth service – a global, evidence-based model providing immediate access to a stable home and intensive 24/7 support for young people leaving care. For a care leaver this means a safe home of their own and intensive support to build independence before homelessness can take hold.

Young people supported through this model show improved health and wellbeing, stronger community connections, greater stability and reduced risk-taking behaviour.

But the service currently operates in only three Health and Social Care Trust areas, meaning support is not there for every young person who needs it.

To ensure no young person leaves care into homelessness, **the next Executive must provide sustainable funding for Housing First for Youth** across all five Health and Social Care Trusts.

A survey of public attitudes to homelessness in Northern Ireland shows that 92% of people believe that preventative services and housing for young people leaving care is essential to ending homelessness in Northern Ireland.

"The transition to adulthood from care is a grey area which is rarely acknowledged, and I believe is the reason services like Housing First for Youth exist. It's within this grey area, when young people age out of the care system and when support is scaled back, that young people fall through the cracks.

Housing First is a vital safety net. It catches young people when other systems have failed and helps them piece their lives back together."

Gemma, Housing First for Youth Project Manager

03



Better access to
healthcare

Homelessness drives severe and avoidable health inequalities and the people who need care most are often the least able to access it. Northern Ireland needs a health system that is accessible to everyone.

What needs to happen:

The next government must:

01.

Fund a region-wide pilot project to deliver homelessness training for health and social care staff, focused on tackling stigma, embedding trauma-informed practice and removing the barriers people face when trying to access care.

02.

Create clear, integrated pathways between mental health and addiction services to deliver a 'no wrong door' approach and rapid access to support.

03.

Expand Inclusion Health services across Northern Ireland, particularly in areas currently relying on a single Homeless Health Nurse, so people receive consistent and holistic care.

Why this matters

People experiencing homelessness have far poorer health outcomes than the general population. Many of the drivers of poor health - such as childhood adversity, family breakdown, poverty and limited support - are common in people's pathways into homelessness, meaning many arrive at homelessness services with complex and overlapping needs.

And these needs are growing. Homelessness services like Simon Community are supporting people with significant physical health conditions, severe mental ill-health and substance use challenges, and these conditions are often co-occurring. The stress of not having a safe place to live intensifies anxiety, depression, trauma and social isolation. For many, substance use is a way to cope with this trauma, instability and absence of reliable support.

Without stable housing, it is much harder to stay well, recover from illness, attend appointments, store medication safely or manage long-term conditions. As a result, many health issues go untreated driving people into expensive emergency care, unplanned hospital admissions, ambulance call outs and repeat A&E visits.

This cycle is often reinforced by people being discharged from hospital without safe accommodation to return to. Simon Community research found that over half (53%) of single adults in temporary accommodation have been hospitalised for a mental health issue¹⁸. Being discharged from hospital onto the streets is dangerous for patients and makes it much harder for them to recover physically and mentally, inevitably leading to further readmissions.

Homelessness is therefore not just about housing. Without access to the right healthcare and support, people can become trapped in a cycle of poor health and housing instability.

"Alcohol is easier to get than help."

Expert by Experience

Health inequalities among people experiencing homelessness

- People experiencing homelessness die, on average, around **30 years earlier** than the general population.¹⁹
- **57% of people in single adult homelessness accommodation have a condition or disability** limiting daily activities – more than double the rate in the general population of Northern Ireland (24%).^{20 21}
- **74% of people in single adult homelessness accommodation have a diagnosed mental health condition** – nearly four times higher than the general adult population in Northern Ireland.²²
- The proportion of people experiencing homelessness prescribed medications for **mental ill health, alcohol dependency or substance use disorders increased from 40% to 51% between 2012 and 2021.**²³

Removing barriers to healthcare

Despite having some of the highest levels of health need, people experiencing homelessness routinely face barriers to accessing healthcare and support, especially for mental health and substance issues. These include a lack of suitable local services, difficulties registering with a GP, limited transport to appointments and fragmented provision^{24 25}.

However, two barriers are raised most consistently:

- **Stigma and discrimination:** People experiencing homelessness frequently report feeling judged, dismissed or treated differently when seeking help, particularly when they have co-occurring mental health and substance use needs. This can erode trust and prevent people from accessing ongoing care. **Mandatory training for health and social care professionals, focused on reducing stigma and embedding trauma-informed practice,** would help ensure services are more accessible, effective and responsive to need.

- **Poor coordination between mental health and addiction services:** People experiencing homelessness are too often passed between services, face long waits, and are repeatedly required to retell traumatic experiences. This fragmented approach delays access to support, undermines recovery, and leaves people without help when they need it most. **The next Executive must prioritise the creation of clear, integrated pathways between mental health and addiction services** so that people can access timely, coordinated support regardless of where they first seek help.

"The people we support often face a revolving door - sent to services where they do not meet criteria and having to repeat their story and the challenges they are facing over and over again. Rather than being trauma-informed, this can retraumatise and trigger people, and stops them seeking help."

Georgie, Senior Wellbeing Practitioner

These gaps leave homelessness services managing increasingly complex health needs without the clinical expertise or resources required. Frontline workers in Northern Ireland estimate that 50–70% of their time is spent addressing unmet health needs such as helping people to manage medication, register with a GP or attend appointments²⁶.

The pressure this places on staff is significant. Many report high levels of stress and burnout as they try to bridge the gaps left by the wider system. Their role is vital and should be recognised by statutory services, but homelessness services cannot continue to compensate for failures elsewhere in the system. The next Executive must take action to remove barriers to healthcare for people experiencing homelessness and ensure they can access the support they need, when they need it.

A survey of public attitudes to homelessness in Northern Ireland shows that 91% of the public believe that mental health and addiction support must be part of the solution to ending homelessness in Northern Ireland.

Expanding Inclusion Health

Access to healthcare for people experiencing homelessness can be improved through an Inclusion Health approach that adapts services to meet people where they are. This includes outreach, drop-in clinics and practical support to navigate complex healthcare systems. By bringing care closer to people and reducing barriers to access, Inclusion Health can improve health outcomes and prevent health problems from escalating into health crises.

An Inclusion Health Hub has operated in Belfast since 2018, offering GP, dental, mental health and social work services in one place for people experiencing homelessness.

Across the rest of Northern Ireland, Inclusion or Homeless Health Nurses provide vital care - supporting people with mental, physical and sexual health needs, substance use, and vaccinations.

These services are often the only point of consistent healthcare contact for people who have been failed by mainstream provision or whose previous experiences have left them reluctant to seek help from traditional services.

Despite their impact, Inclusion Health services remain limited and unevenly distributed across Northern Ireland. In some Health and Social Care Trust areas, a single Homeless Health Nurse is responsible for supporting people across an entire region. When staff are on leave or off sick, support can disappear altogether.

This patchy provision leaves many people without timely access to care and places additional pressure on homelessness services already struggling to meet increasing levels of need. **The next Executive must expand Inclusion Health Services across Northern Ireland** so that people experiencing homelessness can access the support they need when and where they need it.

Homeless Health Nursing in Practice

Mark* became homeless after returning to Northern Ireland from Scotland. Following a period of rough sleeping, he came to Simon Community's Bangor service, where he was finally able to access healthcare support from Homeless Health Nurse, Lisa:

"I have been struggling with undiagnosed ADHD along with some other health issues and I have been through a lot in my life. I had never really addressed my health before and I never had the drive to pursue it. Having Lisa coming to the hostel once a week and checking in has made a huge difference. I now feel more empowered over my health and having Lisa here really does help keep me on top of things."

Homeless Health Nurses help people experiencing homelessness access the healthcare services many of us take for granted. They support people to register with a GP, attend vital appointments, access dental care and receive essential health assessments.

Mark believes this support should be available to everyone experiencing homelessness:

"Having a Homeless Health Nurse in hostels is vital. A lot of people staying here may not have the drive to go to the doctor, or they might go once and then not attend again. Lisa will come by and knock on your door. She is not forcing you to say anything or be part of it, but just having that knock at the right time can lead to getting the help you need. It helps people get onto that first rung of healthcare and from there they can access the support they need."

Mark is now looking to the future and credits Lisa for providing him with the support and stability he needed to secure accommodation of his own and find a new job.

"Having Lisa help and support me has been amazing. I do not think I would have made these changes or been able to stay on the right path if it was not for her involvement. I am really looking forward to starting my new job in the coming weeks. She has made a real difference to my life and I am so grateful."

*Name has been changed to protect identity



Meabh's Story

"I first became homeless when I was 16. For years I moved between family, friends' sofas and sometimes the street. I was still just a kid the first time it happened, and I thought, 'I'll just make it work.'"

"I slept on a park bench in North Belfast and later spent two months sleeping rough in the city centre. Every morning, I stood outside the Housing Executive before the shutters went up. Eventually, I was offered a place in Simon Community's Belfast Foyer. That changed everything."

"For me, Simon Community has been respite. When you're homeless, you don't feel safe and, without safety, you can't do anything. You can't get a job."

You can't better your life. When I look around my room now, it's not the fridge, the mattress or the shower that's important. It's the door with the lock on it. Here, I feel safe."

"There is a community here. I've made friends I hope to keep for a long time. The staff have supported me, and I'm getting back on my feet - I have a job lined up and I'm hopeful for the future."

"Homelessness is not a choice, and it's not a life sentence. I'm not looking for sympathy - I'm asking for a chance. The same chance every young person deserves."

A Northern Ireland Free From Homelessness.

Homelessness is not inevitable. With the right political leadership, Northern Ireland can be a place where everyone has a safe, secure home.

The next Northern Ireland Executive has the opportunity to deliver the transformational change needed. It will require bold ambition, sustained commitment and decisive action from every Minister and department. The decisions taken over the next five years will determine whether homelessness continues to rise or whether we take meaningful steps towards ending it.

Will you help us build a Northern Ireland free from homelessness?

Simon Community is calling on all political parties to commit to the actions in this manifesto and deliver the following by the end of the mandate in 2032:

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- ✓ A year-on-year decrease in the number of people who are experiencing homelessness.
 - ✓ At least 11,000 new social homes.
 - ✓ An end or pause to the House Sales Scheme.
 - ✓ A ban on no-fault evictions.
 - ✓ A Statutory Prevention Duty for the Housing Executive.
 - ✓ An extended definition of 'threatened with homelessness' to 60 days .
 - ✓ A Housing First for Youth service in all Health and Social Care Trusts.
 - ✓ A pilot project of homelessness training for health and social care staff.
 - ✓ An integrated referral pathway for mental health and addiction services for people experiencing homelessness.
 - ✓ An expanded Health Inclusion service with increased Homeless Health Nurses in each Trust.
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These are not just policy commitments. They are commitments to people. Every social home built, every eviction prevented, every young person supported and every barrier to healthcare removed represents a life changed for the better. These actions would give thousands of people the stability and opportunity they deserve.

Together, we can build a Northern Ireland free from homelessness.

References

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