

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness

Inaugural General Meeting

Wednesday 11 September 2024, 10:45-11:45

Attendees:

Parliamentarians

Paula Barker MP (Elected Co- Chair), Bob Blackman MP (Elected Co- Chair, Registered Contact), David Smith MP (Elected Vice-Chair), Emily Darlington MP (Elected Vice _Chair), Dan Carden MP, Lee Pitcher MP, Rachel Hopkins MP, Danny Beales MP, Baroness Thornhill, Abtisam Mohamed MP, Mike Amesbury MP, Afzal Khan MP, Lorraine Bevers MP, Imran Hussain MP, Harpreet Uppal MP, Kate Osamor MP, Nadia Whittome MP, Paulette Hamilton MP, Marsha De Cordova MP

Apologies from APPG Members

Baroness Lister, Baroness Armstrong, Baroness Healy, Helen Morgan MP, Chris Vince MP, Kim Johnson MP, Ellie Chowns MP, Bishop of Manchester, Layla Moran MP, Lord Best, Neil Coyle MP, Chris Ward MP, Ellie Chowns MP, Sian Berry MP, Chris Murray MP, Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP, Jess Asato MP, Florence Eshalomi MP, Dierdre Costigan MP, Charlotte Cane MP

Speakers

Manoel Filho, Expert Lived by Experience Campaigner
Jasmine Basran, Head of Policy & Campaigns, Crisis

Parliamentary staff

Damian Bailey, Office of Paula Barker MP, Cello Crompton, Office of Paula Barker MP, Harriet Shoosmith, Office of Bob Blackman MP

Secretariat

Rosie Perkins, Crisis, Sarah Goulbourne, Crisis, Matt Bold, Crisis

Minutes

<u>Paula Barker MP</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcomed and thanked parliamentarians for attending the inaugural meeting to re-establish the APPG for Ending Homelessness. Paula remarked the meeting is an opportunity to unite and refocus efforts in the new parliament towards ending homelessness for good.• To kick start, we must deal with the formalities, elect officers, and fully comply with the new rules for APPGs introduced earlier this year. Firstly, we must re-elect officers and then secondly, approve any financial statement and declare any interests. Paula asked the Secretariat to set out and manage the election process and record for official purposes.
<u>The Secretariat</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Secretariat set out the rules, that parliamentarians must elect and set the number of Officers at 4 and a show of hand is counted to represent a vote.• Paula Barker MP Bob Blackman are both standing to be re-elected as Co-chairs. Layla Moran and Lord Best wish to re-elected in absentia as Vice-chairs. Emily Darlington MP also expressed an interest in standing as Vice



	<p>Chair and similarly David Smith MP expressed an interest in standing as Vice Chair.</p> <p>Election Result</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Chairs: Paula Barker MP & Bob Blackman MP - Elected unanimously. • Vice-Chairs: Emily Darlington MP & David Smith MP - Elected unanimously.
<p>Paula Barker MP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanked the Secretariat for conducting the elections and noted that an income and expenditure statement is not necessary at this stage – for the records though, the APPG has not received any funds, however Crisis the national homelessness charity are to continue to provide the Secretariat to the APPG which will be declared as a benefit in kind. • On due diligence, confirmation was given that the relevant rules have been considered. It was pointed out that Parliamentarians are also requested to formally declare any interests. • We have successfully recruited over 30 members for inaugural meeting and interest is growing, we are delighted to be joined by so many dedicated members in the room today. It's clear that there's a lot of expertise in the room, which will add value to future work streams. • The Secretariat will formally register the APPG with the Parliamentary Commissioner later and the list of officers and members will be published. • Paula proposed a meeting with the new officers at the earliest date possible. • Following the formalities, Paula moved on, to the next agenda item, welcoming to parliament Jasmine Basran from Crisis and Manoel Filho, thanking him for agreeing to share his personal experience with the group.
<p>Manoel Filho</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manoel opened by stating that he wanted to share his story and why the APPG matters. He explained that he came to the UK after fleeing persecution and was made homeless after an eviction notice, he is currently living in unsuitable temporary accommodation. • He went on to explain the difficulties he faces on a day-to-day basis - it's difficult for him to cook or clean his clothes. This has a particular impact due to a health condition so shared facilities makes it much more difficult for him to manage, for example in the evening when he needs take strong medication with food as prescribed, the kitchen is always closed. • Manoel said there's restrictions on having visits, so it can get lonely. The environment has an enormous impact on both his mental and physical health, it isn't a home. Nevertheless, he feels that he has been helped a lot and wants to do so much for the community, to give back and help others. But being left behind in a place that isn't good for his mental health, doesn't help anyone. • As a member of the LGBT community, he knows very well just how homelessness can impact marginalised groups differently and the risks and impacts are different. He shared that he had to move from another temporary accommodation in a different area, because someone attacked him, resulting in a broken wrist, he no longer feels safe to express his true self. He pointed out that he is just one person with his own story, but sadly there's lots of people in a similar situation. • He explained that he wants MPs in the room to keep his story in mind when working to end homelessness. To remember that no one journey out of homelessness is the same, and that any approaches to ending homelessness need to be person centred and trauma informed. And to really achieve this, policy makers must talk to people with experience of homelessness when designing policies. His story is just one example of

	<p>why there's an urgent need to look at all different policies across Government, that can impact someone's experience of homelessness. His journey has interacted with Home Office policies, the healthcare and welfare systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manoel said more needs to be done to help people before they are forced to sleep rough or spend time in temporary accommodation to stop them from facing trauma and discrimination and developing even more complex needs. Before we create a much bigger problem for later. • On the issue of funding, Manoel was shocked to learn the amount of money being spent to keep him in temporary accommodation, to keep him stuck there unable to reach his full potential. • The plea to room is there must be a way that the Government can manage this system differently. This money isn't doing anything to address the causes of homelessness and in some cases is making people's situations even worse. Instead, money should be spent on delivering the affordable and social homes needed to end homelessness'. He stressed that there's an urgent need to do something now to deal with this emergency, to see some immediate results as he can see things getting really difficult around him in London. • Manoel mentioned the budget coming up next month-Government can and must invest in helping to fund councils so they can deliver important services to help people. He wants to see them invest in delivering the homes we need. • He said Crisis was there for him when I needed them- they've given him so much more than just housing advice. He shared that he has had so many opportunities to learn and contribute to the work they do to end homelessness, like being here today. So he is looking forward to one day having a secure home, getting his life back and doing even more to campaign to end homelessness. • He thanked parliamentarians for joining this APPG -the APPG matters because we know an end to homelessness is possible, we just need politicians to deliver it.
<p>Paula Barker MP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanked Manoel and expressed the importance of listening to lived experience – Manoel touched on Temporary Accommodation and the funding issues for councils – noting it as an issue that both her and Mike Amesbury MP in their roles as Shadow Ministers worked tirelessly on to prepare policies ready for the new Labour government to take forward. • Paula invited Jasmine Basran to provide an overview on the current state of homelessness in the UK.

<p>Jasmine Basran</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On behalf of the homelessness sector, Jasmine thanked Paula Barker MP and Bob Blackman MP for reinstating this APPG in the new parliament, and for continuing to champion homelessness in parliament. She remarked the level of interest in the APPG is incredible. • Jasmine highlighted that Crisis as secretariat work alongside a sector-led steering group who input to the work of the APPG, and that collectively we can support the work of Parliamentarians to end homelessness. The sector is looking forward to working closely with this APPG going forward – the team at Crisis along with the steering group, connecting members to the homelessness sector, are there to support members with service visits, briefings and raising issues in parliament. We are happy to provide briefings, data on your constituencies and suggested parliamentary questions. • Jasmine stated that, for decades now, successive governments have not taken the critical steps needed to end homelessness. And the latest figures highlight the pressing situation the new government is facing and throw into sharp focus the urgent need to get a grip on this crisis. • She outlined that we know that homelessness can be ended with the right policies and leadership. We already see positive outcomes when we implement innovative approaches to homelessness that prioritise securing a stable home with access to support that is responsive to what people need – such as Housing First programmes and programmes that help people keep their tenancies. This approach has been proven to work in countries like Finland, where they have applied the principles underpinning Housing First across the homelessness system. The new Government has an opportunity to do things differently. • Jasmine pointed towards the recent government announcements -a series of measures aimed at increasing social housebuilding and reforms to the planning process. Noting, these are important and positive first steps, and the sector will be looking to ensure this translates into social housing delivery on the ground. • She stated that Crisis warmly welcome the recent announcement from the Secretary of State, Angela Rayner – they have waited so long for cross coordination of government policy so with the right input from experts in homelessness, including people with lived experience, councils, Mayors and organisations and the backing of the Prime Minister, this would enable the government to deliver on its manifesto promise of creating a cross-government strategy to get us back on track to ending homelessness and ensure steps are taken to bring these numbers down.
<p>Paula Barker MP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanked Jasmine for sharing an expert insight from the sector. • The APPG has consistently focused on evidence-based solutions of what works. We know that to end homelessness, we need to see a person-centred, trauma informed response to homelessness and cross-Government collaboration to ensure it is prevented in the first place. And this is what I am personally passionate about. • We need a change of approach, we cannot go back and use the same old methods - there are evidence-based, innovative solutions that work, and things can be done differently. • Paula noted that in the short space of time, things are already looking up. The Government was elected on a manifesto commitment to get us back

	<p>on track to ending homelessness. And in the early days of this government, we have seen notable steps some in the right direction. The Secretary of State, the Right Honourable, Angela Rayner will chair an Inter-Ministerial Group on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, and we finally have a commitment to develop a cross-government strategy on homelessness, not just narrowly focused on rough sleeping. All underpinned by a clear commitment to boost delivery of social housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She remarked that Angela will take personal responsibility on the cross-government coordination of policy to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping – this signal fills me with hope that this issue is being taken seriously, and that we will finally see the systemic changes so desperately needed. The Vice-chair noted that she was delighted with Harpreet Uppal MP, PPS to the Secretary of State, presence at the meeting to bridge links and support for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
<p>Bob Blackman MP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bob outlined the previous successes of the APPG for Ending Homelessness was set up in 2016 in response to growing numbers of people who were experiencing or facing homelessness in the UK. Its purpose is to put homelessness at the top of the political agenda and raise awareness of important issues and solutions amongst parliamentarians and how they can work to help end homelessness. • Bob started the discussion on potential areas of focus for the APPG in this Parliament by outlining areas of concern: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Renters Reform Bill- concerned that in the Homelessness Reduction Act the trigger for local authorities is Section 21 – clarity is required on what will replace it. 2. Regulation of Supported Housing Act -still have the scandal of rogue landlords, so the Government need to bring forward the consultation and guidance. 3. Support for People- there are trials like Housing First, yet people are being released from prison with nowhere to go, there's an ongoing issue with the Armed Forces, both central to the increased levels of homelessness. Housing First works, let's roll it out- we need to speak with one voice in support of this programme. 4. Vagrancy Act-worried that there will be back tracking, so there's enormous work to do, we must challenge the Home Secretary to deliver what was promised in the last parliament and finally put the Vagrancy Act firmly in the history books.
<p>Open Discussion</p>	<p>Other points raised:</p> <p>David Smith MP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanked Manoel for sharing his expertise and noted the importance of having lived experience in the room, asked about his experience engaging with services. <p>Manoel Filho</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charities are doing a lot – it's the way I survived. Local Authorities want to help but have limited resources and capacity. <p>Emily Darlington MP</p>

- Need to have the voice of lived experience – that will empower the NHS to deal and support people properly while living in Temporary Accommodation- so that they fully understand health issues and potential implications.

Lee Pitcher MP

- Shared with the room he had experienced homelessness as a child and was moved to hear Manoel's story. He asked Manoel 'what would be the one thing you would change'? Manoel responded by saying 'End rough sleeping- people need help, even if it's just somewhere to sleep in one place' – he pointed out that his own mental health declined significantly when sleeping on the street.

Mike Amesbury MP

- Pointed out the lack of homes and truly affordable homes is at the root of the problem and the new government must deliver more homes to change the situation.

Baroness Thornhill

- Noted that she is delighted the focus in the room is on known solutions for ending homelessness. She raised concerns about bidding wars happening over Home Office accommodation and temporary accommodation- such bidding wars cannot continue. She pointed out that we need to look at fast solutions and should consider how modular buildings helped in the post war era.

Paula Barker MP

- Reflecting on the points raised by Baroness Thornhill on bidding wars – Paula noted there are issues in Liverpool with pitches against the Home Office and Serco offering appalling accommodation.

Emily Darlington MP

- Agrees with the points made on Housing stock and associated issues. Nevertheless, she stated the importance of looking at the longer engrained complex issues that are more than just about housing. Noting that there is a false dichotomy between housing and support, really the solution lies in both. She pointed out there has been some success in Milton Keynes with this approach.

Paula Barker MP

- Noted that she feels passionate about having a trauma led approach- and is happy to meet the Vice- Chairs to go through the focus of the APPG in this Parliament.