

Written evidence submitted by Royal College of Physicians [IOC 120]

We are writing to provide evidence to your inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on homelessness and the private rented sector.

The government's response to COVID-19 in the homeless population shows what is possible. Local authorities have been asked to house everyone and emergency funding has been released to support the initiative. As a result, we are hearing from our members that most people without a home have been provided with accommodation.

We now need a comprehensive plan in place for when lockdown ends to ensure the support being offered to homeless people continues. We are sure you agree it would be illogical to return people to the streets, and believe the public would agree too.

It would also be an unnecessary burden on the NHS when it is already stretched. I am sure you are aware that homeless people are more likely to have multiple health conditions; in 2016 Crisis estimated that people who experience homelessness for three months or longer cost the NHS an average of £4,298 per person per year.¹

The plan must focus initially on how people will continue to be housed until a more permanent solution for them can be identified. Key to this will be government financial support to local authorities, devolved governments and Public Health England. The plan must be evidence-based, regularly evaluated for impact and learning from its implementation must be shared.

This is also an opportunity to think about how to make sure nobody ever ends up on the streets again. That means better access to Universal Credit, employment support, psychological support and health services. The government has an opportunity to dramatically reduce homelessness and improve the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable forever.

Yours sincerely

Prof Andrew Goddard

President, Royal College of Physicians

About the RCP

The RCP plays a leading role in the delivery of high-quality patient care by setting standards of medical practice and promoting clinical excellence. We provide physicians in the UK and overseas with education,

¹ Crisis, *Better than the cure? Testing the case for enhancing prevention of single homelessness in England*, 2016.

training and support throughout their careers. As an independent body representing over 37,000 fellows and members worldwide, we advise and work with government, the public, patients and other professions to improve health and healthcare. Our primary interest is in building a health system that delivers high-quality care for patients

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