

# THE CONSERVATIVES' TEN YEARS OF FAILURE ON HOUSING

LABOUR LOCAL ELECTION  
CAMPAIGN BRIEFING



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This pack is produced by Labour’s shadow housing team to support our local council and mayoral campaigns.

John Healey MP	Shadow Secretary of State for Housing
Sarah Jones MP	Shadow Housing Minister
Alex Cunningham MP	Shadow Housing Minister
James Murray MP	Parliamentary Private Secretary



## Introduction – John Healey MP

The big disappointment of our general election defeat in December makes the elections we have in May even more important. Our Labour councils, councillors and elected mayors are not just the first line of defence against the worst of what the Tories are doing at Westminster, they're the demonstration of the difference Labour can make, in Government. And the truth is we don't have four or five years to rebuild after the general election defeat – the fight back against the Tories must start now, with these May elections.

Housing is a big area of strength for our party: despite our overall national poll deficit we managed to secure a 17-percentage point lead on housing at the general election. This is an area where we can win votes for Labour and take the fight to the Tories.

It's not hard to see why the Tories are losing the argument on housing. After ten years of failure, home-ownership is down sharply for young people, with 800,000 fewer young home-owners than in 2010, rough sleeping has more than doubled, private rents have risen, housing benefit spending has increased, and we're now building over 30,000 fewer social rented homes each year than when Labour left office.

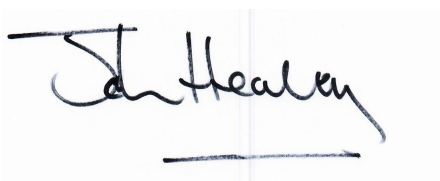
It's not just in the big cities that have seen the sharp end of the crisis. The lack of council and social homes in our towns has meant too many of our young people are forced to move out if they want to get on, the lack of basic rules for private landlords means many rented homes aren't up to scratch, and deep cuts to housing-led regeneration has left many areas without the resources to improve the fabric of their communities.

That's why Labour's alternative vision for housing is so important: a big council and social housebuilding programme on a scale not seen since the 1960s, new rights for renters, help for first-time buyers with new discount homes linked to local incomes, and an end to rough sleeping.

But while we are fighting to set out this alternative in Westminster, the best hope for millions of people across the country at present is Labour in local government – our Labour councillors, councils and elected mayors campaigning to put Labour values into practice in their areas, despite deep funding cuts.

Ahead of the local elections this May, this housing campaign pack aims to give our Labour candidates and activists the facts and figures they need to turn their fire on the Tories and make the case for Labour.

I hope you find it useful.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Healey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

John Healey MP  
Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Housing

# Housing top lines

The Conservatives have presided over ten years of failure on housing, from rising homelessness to falling home-ownership. They have no plan to fix the housing crisis.

The next Labour Government will build the low-cost homes to rent and buy families across the country need.

## ***The Conservatives are failing to build council and social housing***

- Under the Tories, the number of new social rented homes has fallen by over 80%, so we are now building 30,000 fewer socially rented homes each year than when Labour left office
- There are now almost 200,000 fewer council homes than there were in 2010
- It's not just the number of new low-cost homes for rent that's fallen, the number of new low-cost homes to buy like shared ownership has gone down too
- The Tories have changed the definition of 'affordable housing' to include homes to buy at up to £450,000 and to rent at up to 80% of market levels.

## ***The Conservatives are failing to protect private renters and clamp down on rogue landlords***

- One in four private rented homes in England is classed as 'non-decent', meaning they are damp, cold, in disrepair or unsafe to live in
- Tenants collectively pay over £10bn a year in rent to private landlords letting out sub-standard homes
- The Tories have refused to renew landlord licensing schemes in places like Liverpool that keep properties up to scratch and landlords under scrutiny
- Average private rents have risen by over £2,000 a year since 2010, ahead of rises in wages for many.

## ***The Conservatives are failing on home-ownership***

- The headline rate of home-ownership has fallen from 67.4% to 63.8% since 2010
- Home-ownership is down sharply for young people, with 800,000 fewer households under 45 owning their home than in 2010
- Tory Ministers promised to build 200,000 'starter homes' for first-time buyers five years ago, but not a single one has yet been built.

## ***Labour's plan for housing would build the homes the country needs***

- Labour's plan for council and social housing would scrap the Tories' bogus definition of 'affordable' and build over a million new council and housing association homes over 10 years to rent and buy, the biggest such programme since the 1960s
- Labour's plan for first time buyers would help more young people afford a home of their own, with 'first dibs' for local people on homes and new discount homes with prices linked to local average incomes
- Labour's plan for renters would improve standards, security and affordability for people, with controls on rents and new indefinite tenancies
- Labour's plan to tackle homelessness would mean a new national plan to end rough sleeping, starting by making 8,000 homes available for those with a history of sleeping rough and a £100m plan for emergency winter accommodation for rough sleepers.

# The Conservatives' ten years of failure

After ten years of failure, the Conservatives have no plan to fix the housing crisis faced by people across the country.

## Failure on council and social homes

- Under the Tories, the number of new social rented homes has fallen by over 80%, so we are now building 30,000 fewer socially rented homes each year than under Labour.  
MHCLG, Additional affordable homes provided by tenure, England, November 2019, [https://www.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/570005/Live\\_Table\\_1000.xlsx](https://www.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/570005/Live_Table_1000.xlsx).
- Almost 200,000 council homes have been lost since the Tories came to power in 2010, a number equivalent to all the homes in Bristol.  
MHCLG, Dwelling stock: by tenure, England (historical series), 24 May 2019 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/803937/LT\\_104.xls](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803937/LT_104.xls)
- The number of new homes for affordable home-ownership has fallen since 2010.  
MHCLG, Additional affordable homes provided by tenure, England, November 2019, [Table 1000: additional affordable homes provided by type of scheme, England](#).
- Conservative Ministers have failed to deliver the promised replacements for homes sold through the right-to-buy - instead fewer than one in three have been replaced.  
MHCLG, right-to-buy sales, September 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/right-to-buy-sales-in-england-april-to-june-2019>.

## Failure on home-ownership

- There are over 800,000 fewer home owning households aged under-45 than when Labour left office in 2010.  
English Housing Survey 2018 to 2019: headline report, MHCLG, January 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-headline-report>
- The overall rate of home-ownership has fallen since 2009-10 from 67.4% to 63.8% in 2018-19.  
English Housing Survey 2018 to 2019: headline report, MHCLG, January 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-headline-report>

## Failure on private renting

- The number of households in the private rented sector has increased by over a million since 2010. One in four families with children now rent privately.  
English Housing Survey 2018 to 2019: headline report, MHCLG, January 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-headline-report>

- Average private rents have risen by over £2,000 a year compared to 2010, ahead of wage growth for many.  
English Housing Survey 2018 to 2019: headline report, MHCLG, January 2020,  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-headline-report>

#### Failure on homelessness and rough sleeping

- Over 127,000 children are recorded as homeless in temporary accommodation – an increase of 75% since 2010.  
Temporary accommodation tables, England, MHCLG, December 2019,  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>
- Rough sleeping has more than doubled since 2010 according to Government figures, rising from 1,768 in 2010 to 4,677 in 2018.  
Rough sleeping statistics 2018, England, MHCLG, January 2019,  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2018>
- The number of people dying homeless has risen by half in the last five years, to 726 in 2018.  
Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales: 2018, October 2019,  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsofhomelesspeopleinenglandandwales/2018>

#### Failure on high-rise fire safety

- Thousands of people are still living in tower blocks covered with the same flammable ACM cladding as the Grenfell Tower. The latest Government figures shows more than seven in ten residential blocks identified with Grenfell-style cladding have still not had it removed and replaced.  
Building Safety Data release, MHCLG, January 2020,  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/858382/Building\\_Safety\\_Data\\_Release\\_December\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/858382/Building_Safety_Data_Release_December_2019.pdf)

## Labour's record in Government

If we don't talk up Labour's record in Government – local and national – no one else will.

From Southampton to Sunderland, Crawley to Cambridge and from Blackpool to Brighton, Labour councils are leading the way in tackling the housing crisis.

Nationally, Labour can be proud of much of our record on housing between 1997 and 2010.

- Under Labour, the number of home-owners rose by over a million and built almost two million homes between 1997-2010
- Labour undertook the biggest affordable housing investment programme in a generation, committing £9.3bn over three years from 2008 and adding an extra £1.5bn in 2009
- More than 40,000 new social rented homes were built in the last year of the last Labour Government. In 2009, we launched the biggest council house building programme for over two decades
- After years of high homelessness under the Tories, Labour cut homelessness by almost two-thirds between 1998 to 2010
- After two decades of Tory neglect, Labour introduced the Decent Homes standard and made £22bn of public investment in decent homes, improving the housing conditions of over 1.4m council homes. By 2009, 86% of all council and housing association homes were brought up to a decent standard
- When the global financial crisis and world-wide downturn struck, Labour stepped in to help home-owners stay in their homes. Despite the much deeper scale of the recession, Labour's mortgage rescue scheme meant that repossessions were over a third lower than in 1991 with the Tories, when Government did little to help and over 75,000 homes were repossessed.



## **Labour's record in Local Government**

In tough times, Labour councils up and down the country are finding new ways to help local people with the housing pressures they face. Here are just some examples of the difference Labour in power in local government is making, in the face of a Conservative Government hostile to local councils.

### **Norwich**

The council has delivered the largest Passivhaus social housing development in the country. The Goldsmith Street project consists of 93 homes built to Passivhaus standards. This means that every home will contain mechanical ventilation with heat recovery systems, traditional combi boilers and triple-glazed windows. All this will deliver lower energy bills. The council will also manage the social housing on the new development. In October 2019 Goldsmith Street was given the Sterling Prize by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

### **Croydon**

A week after the Grenfell Tower fire, Croydon's Labour Council announced it would retrofit sprinklers in its 25 high-rise blocks, plus one eight storey sheltered block. The £10m programme began in September 2017 and concluded in July 2019. Over 1,252 individual properties across the borough were fitted with new sprinklers despite the Government's failure to provide any financial support for the programme. The targeted sprinkler systems are discreet and triggered only in a room affected by fire, reducing the risk of false alarms and water damage. The feedback from residents has been resoundingly positive.

### **Plymouth**

Plymouth City Council have set up the award-winning 'Nelson Project', where ex-service personnel played a vital role in the construction of a 24-home site that includes 12 self-build homes for military veterans and 12 mixed use affordable homes, including supported housing.

### **Southampton**

To tackle the rising numbers living in temporary accommodation in Southampton, the City has worked in partnership with Hugg Homes to build 44 modular two-bedroom family homes on dormant land in the city. Each home is situated in landscaped courtyards, with private access and private, lockable external storage large enough for a buggy or cycle. All homes come with contemporary and comfortable living spaces with full-service connections, which maximise space and efficiency; and new and durable fitted kitchens with integrated appliances, fridge / freezer and washing machine. Completed just before Christmas 2018, it meant the city could provide homes to those families who otherwise would not have spent the Christmas period together.

### **Rotherham**

On the site of an under-occupied shopping centre and disused multi storey car park, Rotherham Labour built 58 new homes for shared ownership. The Bellows site in Rawmarsh had been taken over by Rotherham as part of the Housing Market Renewal

programme launched by the last Labour Government. This funding ended under the Tories in 2011. In December 2019 the Bellows was named as the Best Shared Ownership Development (urban) by the Inside Housing Development Awards.

## **Blackpool**

The council created My Blackpool Home, a company which purchases, converts and refurbishes disused former guest houses into homes for rent. Properties are designed for families as well as single occupants. Since 2016 the company has leased out over 300 homes. Quality is driven up by the council's company, ending the scourge of shoddy conversions into bedsits and crowded HMOs. My Blackpool Home caps the proportion of 1-bed flats in larger conversions to no more than a third of the total homes created there. Smaller properties are converted into single family homes. The aim is to create a stable community in Blackpool, and already the properties in the scheme are occupied by between 400-500 people at any time.

## **The Best of Labour in Power: Housing Innovations from Labour Councils**

Published at Annual Conference 2019

<http://www.johnhealeyp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-Best-of-Labour-in-Power.-Housing-Innovations-from-Labour-Councils-2019.pdf>

## Labour's alternative

Below are ten of the top policies that showcase Labour's alternative vision for housing. For reference, links to our 2019 housing manifesto and *Housing for the Many* green paper, can be found in the 'useful resources' section below.

Labour's plans for national Government would take far-reaching action to tackle the housing crisis:

1. Build over a million council and housing association homes to rent and buy over 10 years, scrapping the Tories' definition of 'affordable' housing and replacing it with a new definition linked to local incomes.
2. End the right-to-buy and give councils the new funding and powers they need to kick-start the biggest council house building programme in a generation.
3. Scrap 'no fault' evictions, control rents and give councils new powers to enforce standards in the private rented sector.
4. End rough sleeping within five years, with a new £100m plan for emergency winter accommodation for every rough sleeper in every area and 8,000 new homes earmarked for those with a history of rough sleeping.
5. Create an English Sovereign Land Trust to take the profiteering out of the land market and make more land available at a cheaper price to aid the building of new homes.
6. End the leasehold scandal with a ban on new leasehold homes and a new simple formula for leaseholders to buy the freehold to their home, or commonhold in the case of a flat, capped at 1% of the property value.
7. Bring in a new Decent Homes 2 standard for all council and housing association homes to make them warm, safe and dry, and fund the retrofitting of sprinklers in all high-rise social housing tower blocks.
8. Build new homes for 'living rent', with rents linked to a third of local incomes, and FirstBuy Homes where mortgage costs are linked to a third of average local incomes.
9. Scrap the punishing bedroom tax, and the benefit freeze, and relink rents to housing benefit (local housing allowance) for private renters.
10. Introduce a new 'zero carbon' homes standard for new homes to reduce emissions and lower household bills.

## Model motions

Many Labour councillors have got in touch asking for model motions that they can propose for their councils to pass. Below are some examples, which can be amended for local use.

### General motion on housing

This council notes with disappointment the Conservative Government's failure on housing over the last decade, from rising homelessness to falling home-ownership.

Furthermore:

- Under the last Labour Government, 2 million homes were built, 1 million more households became home-owners and there was the largest social housing investment in a generation
- Under the Tories, the number of new social rented homes has fallen by over 80%, so we are now building 30,000 fewer socially rented homes each year
- There are now 127,000 children homeless in temporary accommodation, increased by over 75% since 2010
- The number of home owning households under 45 has fallen by 800,000 since 2010.

This council calls on the Government to back the Labour Party's commitment to:

- Halt the right-to-buy and back councils to build at scale again
- Build over a million new council and social homes to rent and buy over ten years, the majority for social rent
- Back first-time buyers on ordinary incomes who want to own their own home with discounted homes to buy, first dibs for local people on new homes built in their area, and by focusing Help to Buy on first-time buyers on ordinary incomes
- End rough sleeping within a Parliament and tackle the wider causes of rising homelessness
- Help private renters with indefinite tenancies, controls on rents and new legal minimum standards.

### Motion on private renting

This Council Notes:

- That a secure home is at the heart of all of our lives. It gives security, enables aspiration and gives children a stable home in which to grow up
- This council believes that residents living in the private rented sector should have the security to build their lives and futures, and to become an active part of their community, just as residents in other housing tenures should expect
- That nationally one-in-four private rented homes are classed 'non-decent', meaning they are damp, cold, in disrepair and unsafe to live in
- That private tenants collectively pay £10bn per year in private rents to landlords letting sub-standard homes
- That 1.7 million private renters pay more than a third of their income in rents.

This Council backs the Labour Party's campaign to:

- Introduce a private renters' charter including a right to an affordable home, a right to a secure home, and a right to a decent home
- Abolish Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 which allows eviction without the landlord having to establish fault on the part of a tenant
- Introduce open-ended tenancies to help to make renting more secure and protecting tenants from unfair evictions
- Cap rents at inflation and introduce powers for further controls in areas facing run-away rents
- Remove the Ministerial veto on local licensing schemes for private landlords
- Introduce a property 'MOT' consisting of annual, independent checks of private rental properties, tough fines including repayment of rent to tenants, and fresh local enforcement powers.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to call for implementation of the above actions
- Call on the Prime Minister to honour its commitment to abolish 'Section 21' of the Housing Act 1988
- Write to local MPs to ask for their support to in pressing the Government to act.

## **Motion on homelessness**

This Council Notes:

- The number of people sleeping rough on the streets of England has more than doubled since 2010
- The number of homeless children in temporary accommodation in England has risen to 127,000
- The number people dying homeless in England and Wales has risen to 726 a year
- There was an unprecedented fall in homelessness under a Labour Government by 2010.

This Council backs the Labour Party's campaign to:

- Tackle the root causes of homelessness by making 8,000 homes available to people with a history of rough sleeping
- Set up a Prime Minister-led taskforce to end rough sleeping within a Parliament
- Restore central government funding for local housing allowance
- Reinvest in local homelessness services, including £100m a year for emergency accommodation to save lives this winter.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to call for implementation of the above actions
- Write to local MPs to ask for their support to in pressing the Government to act.

## **Motion on building and fire safety post-Grenfell**

This Council notes:

- More than 300 buildings in England are still cloaked in Grenfell-style aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding
- Owners of flats in blocks with ACM cladding are paying thousands of pounds in fire safety costs and leaseholders are facing huge bills to deal with unsafe cladding
- The results of testing on all non-ACM cladding have still not been published by the Government.

This Council backs the Labour Party's campaign to:

- Widen the Government-sponsored programme to cover comprehensive tests on all non-ACM cladding and publish the full results
- Give councils the power to fine and take over blocks whose owners refuse to make them safe, in order to get the work done
- Pass legislation to end the injustice of flat-owners paying for the costs of works simply to make their home safe and bring in financial help for hard-pressed leaseholders billed by landlords for essential interim safety measures such as waking watches
- Set up a £1 billion fire safety fund, including to retrofit sprinklers in social housing blocks
- Establish a new national fire safety taskforce, reporting directly to the Prime Minister, responsible for auditing every high-rise and high-risk building and enforcing the replacement of all types of deadly cladding.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to call for implementation of the above actions
- Write to local MPs to ask for their support to in pressing the Government to act.

## **Motion on leasehold**

This Council Notes:

- The rise in leasehold sales of homes in recent years. A total of 4.3 million properties across England – almost one in five of all homes – are now classified as leasehold
- The growing concern among home-owners who feel ripped off by their leasehold contracts, locked into arrangements which force them to seek permission to make basic alterations and find they're obliged to pay extortionate ground rents and/or rip-off service charges
- That many leaseholders didn't understand what being a leaseholder meant until they had already purchased the property, and more than nine in ten leaseholders regret buying a leasehold property at all.

This Council backs the Labour Party's campaign to:

- Set up a national inquiry into the scandal of leasehold mis-selling
- Ban the routine sale of new leasehold houses
- End exploitative ground rents and unfair terms for existing leaseholders
- Make it easier and cheaper for leaseholders to buy the freehold to their home
- Make commonhold the default tenure for all new flats and apartments
- Introduce regulation of managing agents to protect leaseholders.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to call for implementation of the above actions
- Write to local MPs to ask for their support to in pressing the Government to act.

## Model campaign tweets

Suggested hashtags (use flexibly)

#Endthedecadeoffailure #localelections2020 #LE2020 #ToryHousingCrisis  
#HomeownershipCrisis #HomesfortheMany #VoteLabour2020 #10yearsoffailure  
#HousingfortheMany #LabourBuilds #Endroughsleeping

- Under the @Conservatives, the number of new social rented homes has fallen by over 80%, so we are now building 30,000 fewer socially rented homes each year compared to when Labour left office
- Ten years of the @Conservatives = rough sleeping more than doubled
- The number of new homes for affordable home-ownership has halved since 2010 under the @Conservatives
- Under the @Conservatives, only one council house is being built for every three sold off through the right-to-buy. The shortage of affordable homes is a Tory made crisis
- Under the @Conservatives, the number of under-45s owning a home has fallen by 800,000 since 2010
- Under the @Conservatives, there are now 127,000 children homeless in temporary accommodation, increased by over three-quarters since 2010
- @UKLabour has a vision for genuinely affordable housing linked to local earnings #HousingfortheMany
- @UKLabour is campaigning for a Charters of Rights for Renters. #VoteLabour and vote for a secure, affordable, and decent home for all renters
- Under the last @UKLabour Government the number of new home owners rose by over a million



## Useful resources

### Policy

Labour's Housing Manifesto, General election 2019 [https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/13218\\_19-Housing-Manifesto-v4.pdf](https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/13218_19-Housing-Manifesto-v4.pdf)

The Best of Labour In Power: Housing Innovations from Labour Councils 2019 <http://www.johnhealeyp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-Best-of-Labour-in-Power.-Housing-Innovations-from-Labour-Councils-2019.pdf>

Ending the Scandal: Labour's New Deal for Leaseholders <http://www.johnhealeyp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Labours-New-Deal-for-Leaseholders-document.pdf>

Housing for the Many, Labour's green paper on affordable housing, 2018: <https://labour.org.uk/issues/housing-for-the-many/>

### Recent press releases

The Conservatives have slashed funding for housing benefit and new low-cost homes <https://labour.org.uk/press/the-conservatives-have-slashed-funding-for-housing-benefit-and-new-low-cost-homes-john-healey/>

The effects of Tory cuts on homelessness services exposed by the LGA <https://labour.org.uk/press/healey-responds-to-lgas-research-on-the-effects-of-tory-cuts-on-homelessness-services/>

The number of households aged under-45 who own their own home has fallen by 802,000 since 2009/10 <https://labour.org.uk/press/john-healey-responds-to-the-english-housing-survey/>

National Audit Office investigation into Conservatives' 'starter homes' programme <https://labour.org.uk/press/john-healey-comment-on-national-audit-office-investigation-into-conservatives-starter-homes-programme/>

The country needs a new plan to fix the housing crisis – John Healey <https://labour.org.uk/press/country-needs-new-plan-fix-housing-crisis-john-healey/>

Conservative Government can't even get homes built on the land that it owns – John Healey <https://labour.org.uk/press/conservative-government-cant-even-get-homes-built-land-owns-john-healey/>

Deep cuts are stopping us building the homes the country needs <https://labour.org.uk/press/deep-cuts-stopping-us-building-homes-country-needs-john-healey/>

## Model press releases

### **Labour [Council/Group] backs national campaign to put bad landlords out of business with new charter of renters' rights and 'property MOT'**

[Local area] Labour has backed a national campaign to put power in the hands of tenants with a new 'charter of renters' rights'. The charter, launched by Shadow Housing Secretary John Healey would deal with the problem of squalid private renting through a new national 'property MOT'.

The MOT would introduce a legal requirement for landlords to complete an independent annual inspection to ensure homes are up to scratch, with tough fines and forced repayment of rent to tenants if landlords let out sub-standard properties or flout the rules.

Research by Labour has revealed that tenants collectively pay over £10bn a year in rent to landlords letting out sub-standard homes. Nationally, one in four private rented homes are classed as 'non-decent', meaning they are damp, cold, in disrepair or unsafe to live in.

Labour's private renters' charter will be based on three key rights:

- The right to an affordable rented home: with rents capped at inflation nationally, powers for further controls for areas facing run-away rents and local housing allowance increased to cover the cost of renting
- The right to a secure rented home: with new open-ended tenancies, protecting tenants from unfair eviction
- The right to a decent rented home: with new minimum standards, backed by a new annual property MOT and fresh local enforcement powers.

Since 2010, the private rented sector has grown by over 1 million households. One in four families with children now rent privately and 1.7 million private renters pay more than a third of their income in rents. However, the Conservatives have refused to take on vested interests in the property industry and make the market fairer for tenants: refusing to introduce rent controls, failing to legislate for greater security and cutting council capacity to go after rogue landlords.

#### **John Healey, Labour's Shadow Housing Secretary, said:**

"This 7 May voters will have to the chance to put power back in the hands of tenants. The power imbalance in the private rental market is at the heart of our housing crisis, with rents eating up too much of people's pay, tenants afraid of eviction if they report problems, and families with children forced to uproot their lives at short notice.

"Many landlords provide decent homes that tenants are happy with, but the Conservatives have gifted rogue landlords the freedom to flourish. Labour will put bad landlords out of business.

"Labour will campaign for a new charter of renters' rights, with open-ended tenancies, new minimum standards and rent controls to make renting more affordable. We want to make private renting a better option for all."

Leader of the Labour Group said

“[Quote]”

End

## Notes to Editors

- Labour’s plans would be enforced by national law, fresh local enforcement powers for councils and funding for renters’ unions to allow tenants to organise and defend their rights
- Labour analysis of English Housing Survey data shows that there are 1.175m ‘non-decent’ private rented homes, and that tenants in these homes pay an average of £759 a month. In aggregate, this means tenants pay £10.7bn a year to rent sub-standard homes. The decent homes standard was set out by Labour in Government:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7812/138355.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7812/138355.pdf)
- The three pillars of Labour’s new charter of renters’ rights are: the right to an affordable rented home, the right to a secure rented home, and the right to a decent rented home.

### The right to an affordable rented home

- Labour would legislate for a new national inflation cap on rent rises to stop excessive rent hikes and give tenants the security that they won’t be forced out by rising rents. Local areas facing high rents will have the opportunity to make the case for further rent controls to improve rental affordability. In London, Sadiq Khan has already set out an outline of plans to reduce rents in the capital:  
<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-demands-powers-to-bring-rents-down>.
- Rent controls are widespread in many countries across the world and are popular in the UK too, with 60% of people backing them according to a recent report: <https://fabians.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Fabians-Beyond-Affordability-Report-WEB.pdf>.
- After years of damaging Conservative cuts, recent research found that in a third of areas across Britain, fewer than ten per cent of homes are affordable to families needing housing benefit, including those in work:  
<https://www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/9-in-10-homes-unaffordable-to-families-relying-on-housing-benefit/>
- Labour would raise housing benefit for private tenants - local housing allowance - to cover the cheapest 30% of properties in local housing markets and maintain it at that level. Local housing allowance is available to tenants in and

out of work: <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Real-Change-Labour-Manifesto-2019.pdf>.

#### *The right to a secure rented home*

- At present, renters who've paid their rent and kept their tenancy terms can be evicted with no reason and for no fault. Labour would legislate for new open-ended or indefinite tenancies on a model similar to that found in Germany. Tenants themselves will still be able to choose to leave the property after a period of notice but will only be able to be evicted on tightly defined grounds, for example if they don't pay the rent or commit criminal behaviour in the property, or the landlord is going to move back into the property themselves. In England, according to a survey of landlords conducted by the Government, landlords or their agents make the decision to end almost one in five tenancies (18%):  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/775002/EPLS\\_main\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/775002/EPLS_main_report.pdf).

#### *The right to a decent rented home*

- Labour would introduce a new 'property MOT', which would require landlords to complete an annual inspection designed to ensure their properties are up to scratch. Possession of valid 'MOT' would be a statutory requirement for landlords to let out a home, with failure meaning new fines of up to £100,000 for an individual offence, and the potential for the landlord to be liable to repay rent to the tenant
- This would combine existing standards such as on gas and electrical safety with a new national minimum standard to ensure homes are safe and free from serious disrepair, damp or discomfort. The 'MOT' would have to be independently inspected and would be overseen by local councils, as enforcement authorities. Such a scheme has been previously recommended by independent academics at the University of York:  
<http://www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Private-Rented-Sector-report.pdf>.

## **Labour [Council/Group] pledges 'moral mission' to save lives in winter and end rough sleeping**

[Area] Labour has backed a new 'moral mission' to end rough sleeping and save lives at Winter. The group will call for Government to adopt a major new plan to provide accommodation for every person sleeping rough in [Borough] when extreme cold weather hits.

Nationally, rough sleeping has more than doubled since 2010, and the number of people dying homeless has risen by 50 per cent in the last five years, totalling 726 people last year. In [Region] alone the number of people sleeping rough has gone up [Regional percentage figure in Appendix] per cent since 2010.

John Healey, Labour's Shadow Housing Secretary, has criticised the Conservatives for being "directly responsible" for people living and dying on the country's streets, and pledged a national "moral mission" to save lives during cold weather and end rough sleeping.

As part of major new plans to end rough sleeping within five years, Labour has proposed:

- A £600m Modern Hostels Fund for good quality homeless accommodation with 5,000 additional bed spaces to take people off the streets and help them rebuild their lives
- £200m Hostels Transformation Fund to turn existing hostels into places where homeless people can turn their lives around
- A new £100m a year scheme for emergency winter shelter and support to save lives, starting this winter, and get people off the streets in the cold weather
- 4,000 additional 'Housing First' homes – a pioneering scheme to get some rough sleepers straight off the streets and into permanent housing, and 4,000 new permanent 'move-on' homes, ring-fenced for rough sleepers moving out of hostel accommodation.

This package would be backed up with an additional £1 billion a year earmarked from council budgets to pay for staffing and support, and funding to re-link local housing allowance with local rents. Together, Labour's plans would add up to the biggest package of help for the homeless in at least 20 years.

Today [Local area] Labour has called on the Conservative Government to sign up to this moral mission.

Since 2010, the Conservatives have cut £1bn out of local homelessness services so there are almost 9,000 fewer hostel beds, slashed funding for social housing so the number of Government-funded homes for social rent has fallen by 90 per cent and dramatically reduced housing benefit entitlements, which the National Audit Office says has directly led to higher homelessness.

At least 127,000 children were homeless and living in temporary accommodation across England at Christmas.

**John Healey, Labour's Shadow Housing Secretary,** said:

“Rising homelessness shames us all in a country as well-off as ours. This 7 May, voters can show the Government they want to see the back of rough sleeping, and back Labour’s plans.

“It shames the Conservative Party most of all because it is Conservative decisions to slash funding for hostels, housing benefit, homelessness services and new homes that are directly responsible for this increase in people living and dying on our streets.

“With Labour’s proposal this will change. We need a new moral mission to save lives this winter and end rough sleeping within five years.”

Labour group leader said:

“[Quote]”

Ends

### **Notes to editors**

- Rough sleeping has more than doubled since 2010:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781567/Rough\\_Sleeping\\_Statistics\\_2018\\_release.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781567/Rough_Sleeping_Statistics_2018_release.pdf)
- 726 people died homeless in England and Wales last year. The number of homeless deaths has risen by 51% over the last five years:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsofhomelesspeopleinenglandandwales/2018>
- Data from the body representing homelessness organisations, Homeless Link, reveals that there were 34,900 hostel beds in England last year, down from 43,655 in 2010. Three-quarters of homeless services have turned people away because they were full. <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Annual%20Review2018.pdf>
- The National Audit Office found that cuts to local housing allowance were responsible for higher homelessness, saying “Changes to Local Housing Allowance... are an element of the increase in homelessness”:  
<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Homelessness.pdf>
- The number of Government-funded homes for social rent has fallen to fewer than 1,000 – a fall of over 90% since 2010:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/809387/Live\\_Table\\_1012.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/809387/Live_Table_1012.xlsx)

## **[Local area] Labour backs call to scrap developer 'get-out clause' which has led to the loss of over 13,500 affordable homes**

To end the scourge of slum housing, the [Area] Labour [Council/Group] is backing plans to scrap 'permitted development' rules for new homes, ending a get-out clause which allows developers to dodge social housing obligations and build slum housing.

Permitted development rights introduced since 2013 allow developers to bypass the normal planning process by converting commercial spaces into housing without the consent of the council and local community. This gives developers a get-out from requirements to provide affordable housing and meet basic quality rules such as space standards creating 'rabbit hutch' flats.

Labour in the [town hall/civic hall/city hall] is backing plans announced by the Shadow Secretary of State for Housing John Healey MP to scrap the 'get-out clause' and to build homes that are fit to live in.

These Conservative changes were introduced to boost house-building numbers, but the measures mean housing units just a few feet wide in former office blocks are now counted in official statistics as 'new homes'. There are 42,000 new housing units that have been converted from offices since 2015.

Research by the Local Government Association has estimated that over 13,500 affordable homes have been lost as a result of permitted development in the last three years alone.

Research for the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors found that permitted development has "allowed extremely poor-quality housing to be developed", with only 30% of homes built through permitted development meeting national space standards.

**John Healey MP, Labour's Shadow Housing Secretary,** said:

"Conservative permitted development rules have created a get-out clause for developers to dodge affordable homes requirements and build slum housing.

"To fix the housing crisis, we need more genuinely affordable, high-quality homes. This Conservative housing free-for-all gives developers a free hand to build what they want but ignore what local communities need.

"On 7 May voters have a chance to back Labour's campaign to scrap the clause and give local people control over the housing that gets built in their area and ensure developers build the low-cost, high-quality homes that the country needs."

Labour group leader said:

"[Quote]"

Ends

## Notes to editors

- Labour is campaigning to end the ability of developers to convert non-residential buildings such as offices, storage units and industrial buildings into homes without receiving proper planning permission. Labour will also reverse, if brought in before the next election, further permitted development proposals, including to convert fast food shops into housing and to demolish commercial buildings and rebuild them as new housing
- All of these types of development will be possible with a Labour Government, and many will be encouraged, but developers will need to get planning permission in the usual way
- Permitted development rules are not new, but previously applied only in limited circumstances, such as adding a modest conservatory to an existing home. Conservative changes since 2013 have radically expanded these rules, notably including to let developers turn offices into housing without any planning consent. There have been over 42,000 new homes created through this process in the last three years
- Here are examples of developers converting office space into flats smaller than budget hotel rooms: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/mar/27/dog-kennel-flats-barnet-house-smaller-than-travelodge-room> and <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2019/mar/02/will-these-be-the-worst-new-rabbit-hutch-flats-in-britain>
- The Local Government Association research showing that more than 13,500 affordable homes have been lost in the last three years as a result of permitted development rights is here: <https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-over-13500-affordable-homes-lost-through-office-conversions>
- Separate research by the housing charity Shelter, has corroborated this figure: <https://blog.shelter.org.uk/2018/12/revealed-the-true-scale-of-affordable-housing-lost-to-permitted-development-rights/>
- The research for the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) showing the poor quality of housing built through permitted development is here: <https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/knowledge/research/research-reports/assessing-the-impacts-of-extending-permitted-development-rights-to-office-to-residential-change-of-use-in-england-rics.pdf>. The RICS report also remarks: "Overall, office-to-residential PD [permitted development] has been a fiscal giveaway from the state to private real estate interests, whilst leaving a legacy of a higher quantum of poor-quality housing than is seen with schemes governed through full planning



permission.

- The Conservative MP for Harlow, Robert Halfon has challenged the Government on this issue, saying “the policy has not worked... It has allowed landlords to build ghettos”: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2019-04-08/debates/A10E1242-0E56-4E8C-A1C2-13462A8B850E/TopicalQuestions#contribution-B6B4B143-4123-4E02-A927-9C9C87A93D8A>.
- London Councils have collected some case studies of permitted development here, including housing units as small as 13.4m<sup>2</sup> : <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/housing-and-planning/permitted-development-rights-offices/case-studies>

## Appendix – regional and local data

### Social rent homes built by region 2010-11 vs 2018-19

	<b>Completed homes 2010-11</b>	<b>Completed homes 2018-19</b>	<b>Difference</b>
England	39562	6287	-33275
North East	1692	64	-1628
North West	3474	484	-2990
Yorkshire and the Humber	2742	581	-2161
East Midlands	3290	385	-2905
West Midlands	3767	1661	-2106
East of England	4609	530	-4079
London	9500	534	-8966
South East	5639	1085	-4554
South West	4849	963	-3886

Source: MHCLG Live tables on affordable housing supply; Tables 1006 to 1009: additional affordable homes provided by type of scheme and local authority, England.

**For data by local authority see:**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/847220/Live\\_Tables\\_1006-1009.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/847220/Live_Tables_1006-1009.xlsx)

### Households and number of children in temporary accommodation by region 2010 vs 2019

	<b>Households in TA 2010 Q2</b>	<b>Children in TA 2010 Q2</b>	<b>Households in TA 2019 Q2</b>	<b>Children in TA 2019 Q2</b>
England	50318	70,657	86,130	127,370
North East	180	184	260	180
North West	858	913	3,750	4,410
Yorkshire and the Humber	931	811	1,070	980
East Midlands	694	842	1,700	2,330
West Midlands	1,517	2,167	4,500	7,460
East	2,613	2,930	6,100	8,100
London	37,909	56,653	56,950	89,130
South East	3,503	3,877	9,060	11,660
South West	2,113	2,280	2,750	3,130

Sources (including local authority level data):

**Detailed local authority level tables: April to June 2019**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/852922/DetailedLA\\_201906.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/852922/DetailedLA_201906.xlsx).

**Detailed local authority level homelessness figures: 2009 to 2016**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/692748/Detailed local authority level homelessness figures 2009 to 2016.zip](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692748/Detailed_local_authority_level_homelessness_figures_2009_to_2016.zip)

Number of people sleeping rough by region 2010 vs 2018

	<b>Rough Sleepers 2010</b>	<b>Rough Sleepers 2018</b>	<b>Percentage change</b>
England	1,768	4,677	165%
London	415	1,283	209%
North East	49	66	35%
North West	100	428	328%
Yorkshire and the Humber	115	246	114%
East Midlands	121	358	196%
West Midlands	182	420	131%
East	206	484	135%
South East	310	934	201%
South West	270	458	70%

Source: Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 'Rough sleeping 2018, England'

**For data by local authority see:**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/682006/Tables 1 and 2a 2b 2c - revised.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682006/Tables_1_and_2a_2b_2c_-_revised.xlsx)

The number of households renting from a private landlord by region

	<b>Households renting privately 2009-10</b>	<b>Households renting privately 2018-19</b>	<b>Percentage change</b>
England (inc. London)	3,355,000	4,552,000	35.68%
London	697,000	964,000	38.31%
North East	135,000	202,000	49.63%
North West	398,000	571,000	43.47%
Yorkshire and the Humber	313,000	427,000	36.42%
East Midlands	269,000	359,000	33.46%
West Midlands	323,000	405,000	25.39%
East	305,000	437,000	43.28%
South East	550,000	713,000	29.64%
South West	364,000	474,000	30.22%

Source: Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 'English Housing Survey 2018-19'

Average house prices 2018, Average house price increase 2010-18, and Average wage increases 2010-19

	<b>Average house price 2018 (median)</b>	<b>Average house price increase 2010-18</b>	<b>Percentage change in Average full-time pay (median)</b>
England	239000	24.69%	14.43%
North East	139950	10.72%	16.51%
North West	160000	17.50%	15.26%
Yorkshire and the Humber	160000	15.63%	14.32%
East Midlands	185000	24.32%	14.18%
West Midlands	188000	21.54%	14.81%
East of England	283000	33.22%	14.27%
London	467500	40.11%	13.27%
South East	320000	30.31%	13.87%
South West	249000	24.90%	16.46%

Sources: ONS median house prices (Q3 2018 vs Q3 2010), Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings gross annual employee pay (2010 vs 2019).

**For data by local authority see:**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian> (house prices)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/placeofresidencebylocalauthorityasetable8> (pay)

