

Recent Prime Ministers have shown leadership on rough sleeping, but it's on the rise again.



John Major

1990:

Rough Sleepers Initiative, Homeless Mentally Ill Initiative



Tony Blair

1999:

Target to cut rough sleeping by two thirds by 2002
Rough Sleepers Unit



Gordon Brown

2008:

Target to end rough sleeping by 2012



David Cameron

2011:

No Second Night Out nationwide



Theresa May

2016:

???



Since 2011 rough sleeping in England has risen by **64%**.

4 in 10 people sleeping rough have a mental health problem.

It's time for Theresa May to stop the scandal and lead a new strategy to end rough sleeping.



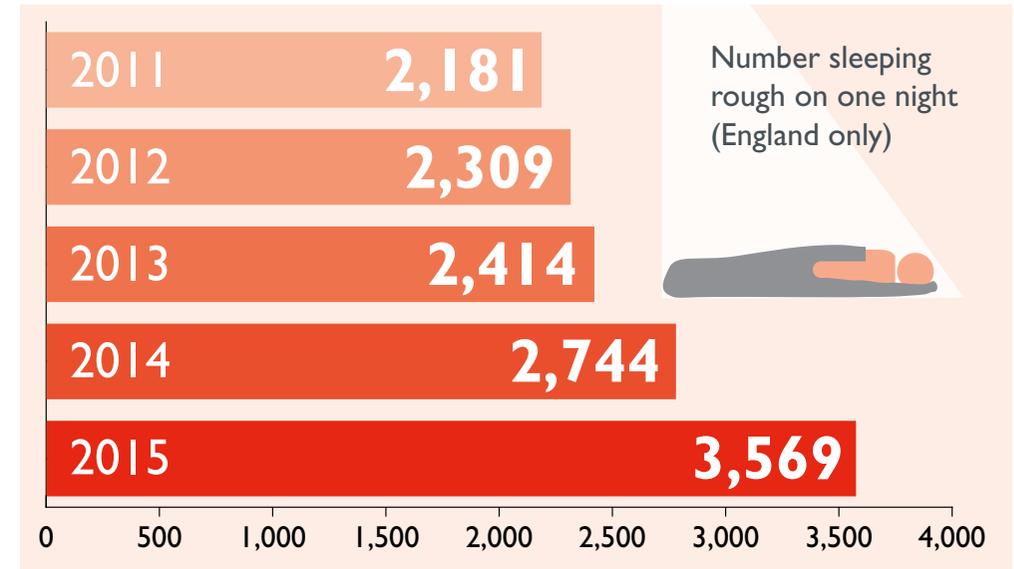
Rough sleeping is on the rise

The past three decades have seen ambitious targets and strategies for reducing rough sleeping each led by the Prime Minister at the time.

In 2011, the coalition government launched **Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night out nationwide**, backed by a £20 million Homeless Transition Fund (HTF). No Second Night Out services across the country have since succeeded in getting thousands of rough sleepers off the streets and into accommodation.

Despite these efforts, rough sleeping is on the rise, the HTF funds have ended and there are new challenges to address.

The time has come for renewed leadership from the Prime Minister and a new strategy to end rough sleeping.



Rough sleeping is harmful and dangerous



Every day St Mungo's works with hundreds of people who have suffered physical and psychological harm as a result of rough sleeping. Some people never recover, either dying on the street or being permanently affected by traumas experienced while sleeping rough. The average age of death of a rough sleeper is 47.¹

¹ St Mungo's (2014) *Homeless Health Matters: the case for change*
<http://www.mungos.org/documents/5390/5390.pdf>

A new strategy to end rough sleeping must include the following commitments:

- 1.) New legislation to prevent people sleeping rough in the first place
- 2.) New investment to stop the scandal of people with mental health problems stuck sleeping rough
- 3.) A new system for funding supported housing

1.) New legislation to prevent people sleeping rough in the first place

People who ask for help should not have to sleep on the streets, as is currently the case. Existing legislation means that people who do not fit into restrictive 'priority need' categories, or who are found to have made themselves 'intentionally' homeless, receive little, if any, meaningful help from local authorities to avoid sleeping rough. Although local authorities do often spend resources on services for people once they have started sleeping rough.

The Homelessness Reduction Bill has been introduced as a Private Members Bill by Bob Blackman MP and is supported by the cross-party Communities and Local Government Committee. The Bill is focused on steps councils can take to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Bill includes a new duty on local authorities to provide emergency interim accommodation for people with nowhere safe to stay. This would help people to avoid the dangers associated with rough sleeping while they looked for a longer term solution.

The new duty to people with nowhere safe to stay, together with other measures in the Bill, would put an end to the need for people to sleep rough in order to access effective homelessness support. The Bill is a genuine opportunity to turn the tide on the rough sleeping crisis and make a huge difference to society as well as individual lives.

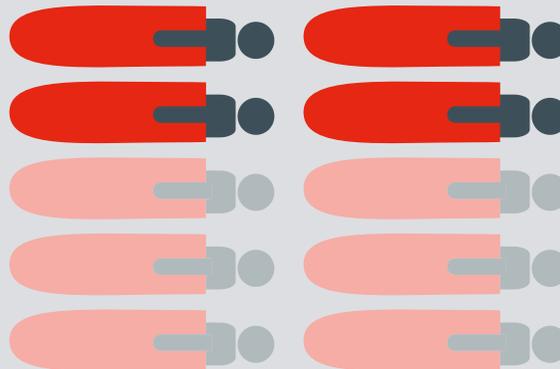
The government should support the Homelessness Reduction Bill and fund implementation of the new legislation.

2.) New investment to stop the scandal of people with mental health problems stuck sleeping rough

There is a clear case for investment in specialist homelessness mental health services. Many such services were established during the 1990s as part of the Homeless Mentally Ill Initiative, but have since been subject to major budget cuts or have been lost entirely. This is extremely concerning.

Four in ten people who sleep rough have mental health problems and these often develop while people are on the street. People with a mental health problem are around 50 per cent more likely to have spent over a year on the streets than others sleeping rough.²

4 in 10
people sleeping rough have
a mental health problem



Specialist teams can coordinate and carry out mental health assessments with people sleeping rough, on the street if necessary. They can also provide treatment, including medication and talking therapies, to people who are sleeping rough. These teams are desperately needed in areas with a high number of people sleeping rough. In areas where fewer people sleep rough, street outreach teams should be able to draw on support from mental health workers from within the NHS when they need to.

NHS England, clinical commissioning groups, local authorities and mental health trusts should work together to ensure that these specialist services and workers are available where they are needed. The government should make dedicated funding available to commission this specialist support.

² St Mungo's (2016) *Stop the Scandal: an investigation into mental health and rough sleeping* <http://www.mungos.org/documents/7021/7021.pdf>

3.) A new system for funding supported housing

Supported housing prevents rough sleeping by supporting vulnerable people who are at risk of homelessness and providing beds for people sleeping rough to move into. However, the future of this specialist housing, including hostels and refuges, is increasingly uncertain and there is already a significant shortfall in bed spaces.

There must be no attempts by government to reduce the funding available to supported housing services by reducing rents or capping housing benefit for supported housing tenants. Instead, the government should commit to a long-term, sustainable funding system.

The new funding system should:

- Continue to fund actual housing costs (rent and eligible service charges) through the benefits system with checks on who can receive this funding via a new approach to registration for providers
- Make adjustments to Universal Credit so that it can be used to meet the housing costs of people in supported housing
- Ensure support costs are fully funded from a central government budget in line with the outcomes expected, and that safeguards are built into the system to protect the funding when it is distributed at the local level.



St Mungo's vision is that everyone has a place to call home and can fulfil their hopes and ambitions. As a homelessness charity and housing association our clients are at the heart of what we do.

We provide a bed and support to more than 2,500 people a night who are either homeless or at risk, and work to prevent homelessness.

We support men and women through more than 250 projects including emergency, hostel and supportive housing projects, advice services and specialist physical health, mental health, skills and work services.

We work across London and the south of England, as well as managing major homelessness sector partnership projects such as StreetLink and the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN).

We influence and campaign nationally to help people to rebuild their lives.

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To join our Stop the Scandal campaign, please visit www.mungos.org/stopthescandal

Follow news about the campaign on Twitter [@StMungos](https://twitter.com/StMungos) and Facebook



St Mungo's
Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives