



Preventing homelessness and improving housing through expert advice, training and support to those working at the frontline

Here to help local authorities and advice agencies on 0300 330 0517



[Consultancy Line](#)



[Housing Debt Casework](#)



[Training](#)

The NHAS [Ex-Service Personnel Guide](#) has been updated. Working in collaboration with Cobseo, the guide promotes positive steps to prevent homelessness among ex service personnel and their families, and improve access to housing. The updated edition includes a link to the Cobseo Directory of dedicated services for veterans.

We've also developed an **Introduction to the Homelessness Reduction Act** webinar. The new topic will be available from July 2017, providing an overview of key points in the Act. [Log in](#) for further details and dates in the quarter 2 webinar calendar.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#) received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017 and is likely to be implemented next year, key measures include:

- **An extension of the period during which an authority should treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days, and clarification of the action an authority should take when someone applies for assistance having been given a valid section 21 notice which is due to expire within 56 days.** These provisions represent a shift in focus to early intervention, and aim to encourage local housing authorities to act quickly and proactively, addressing some concerns that some previously only intervened at crisis point. See new/amended s.175(5) Housing Act 1996.
- A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need. This extends the help available to people not in priority need, with local housing authorities supporting them to either stay in their accommodation or help them find somewhere to live and should mean fewer households reach a crisis situation.
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need. This help could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice. Those who have a priority need will be provided with interim accommodation whilst the Local Housing Authority carries out the reasonable steps.
- A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. It is hoped that this measure will ensure that a person's housing situation is considered when they come into contact with wider public services, and encourage public services to build strong relationships based on local need and circumstances.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance will be reviewed and updated in view of this.

- [A bluffers guide to the Homeless Reduction Act 2017](#) – blog by Giles Peaker in Nearly Legal
- NHAS **Introduction to the Homelessness Reduction Act** webinar available from July. Email nhaswebinars@shelter.org.uk for more details, or [log in](#) and download the Q2 webinar calendar.
- [Homeless Link: Homelessness Reduction Act webinar](#) for Homeless Link members.

Stats/Updates

- [The latest Mortgage and landlord possession statistics: January to March 2017](#) . Mortgage possession claims and orders have risen compared to the same quarter last year, which is a continuation of the increase seen in October to December 2016.
- [Council of Mortgage Lenders](#): latest figures show that the number of mortgages in arrears fell slightly in the first quarter of 2017, reflecting a general downward trend since the highs of 2009
- [Support for mortgage interest reduced](#) from 3.12% to 2.61%: the Bank of England average mortgage rate for March published on 4 May triggered a reduction in the standard interest rate used to calculate SMI. The change will take effect from 18 June 2017.

Support for Mortgage Interest Loans

It was expected that the DWP would make an announcement this month regarding who has been appointed as 'Information Provider' in relation to Support for Mortgage Interest Loans. Due to purdah, this announcement has now been delayed until after the General Election. The Information Provider will be tasked with contacting SMI claimants to inform them of the change from a benefit to a loan, as claimants are required to 'opt in' if they wish to continue to receive SMI. We hope to have more to share in next month's bulletin.

- [HomeLet Rental Index](#): UK rents in April 2017 were 0.4% higher than a year ago. A regional breakdown is available through the [interactive infographic](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#): received royal assent on 27 April 2017 and, when implemented, will amend the Children Act 1989 with regard to duties to care leavers.

Recently published

- FCA non-handbook guidance: [the fair treatment of mortgage customers in payment shortfall](#).
- [Future of supported housing](#): Communities and Local Government Committee and Work and Pensions Committee publish a joint report on supported housing, making significant recommendations to the proposed funding model.
- [Poverty and child health - views from the frontline](#): CPAG and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health report on the impact of poverty on children's health as seen by doctors working at the frontline.
- DWP: [Benefit cap statistics](#) on the number of households capped between April 2013 and February 2017.
- DWP: [Welfare Reform Act 2012 regulations](#) – guidance: providing a list of regulations and statutory instruments relating to the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Case Law

- [Poshteh \(Appellant\) v Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea \(Respondent\) \[2017\] UKSC 36](#) On appeal from [2015] EWCA Civ 711
-

Consultations

- [House of Commons: Banning Letting Agent Fees Briefing](#)

The paper sets out the current law and initial responses to the consultation as well as containing information on current practice in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Closes on 2 June 2017

NHAS updates

NHAS training

[Log in](#) to view the latest webinar topics and dates including our new **Introduction to the Homelessness Reduction Act webinar**.



Webchat Facility

Access to housing consultancy via Webchat is a popular way for members to get free advice. Webchat is accessed by going to www.nhas.org.uk and clicking on the 'live chat' button.

If you'd like to be added to or removed from our distribution list, or have problems accessing any of the materials in the bulletin, please email nhas@shelter.org.uk.

Regards,
The NHAS Team
www.nhas.org.uk

NHAS is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. We support the prevention of homelessness by enabling frontline providers to deliver good quality housing and homelessness advice.