



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](#)

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This edition provides you with the latest news on housing, including our June edition of Housing Matters, a new factsheet looking at housing options upon release from prison, as well as news on rent deposit ideas and retaliatory evictions.

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### Following the election

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid MP, has been re-appointed and Alok Sharma MP was appointed the new Housing and Planning Minister, replacing Gavin Barwell, who was not re-elected to the House of Commons

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### NHAS service update

The DCLG have decided to end the existing NHAS training contract at the end of September 2017, although they have said that it could be extended to the end of December 2017. The DCLG have also confirmed that they intend to replace the NHAS training contract with another training contract, although at this stage we don't know who will be delivering it. For further details on arrangements for course bookings, please [log in to the members pages](#) of the NHAS website.

**Please note: the changes to the training contract do not impact on the other elements of the NHAS grant. It is business as usual for the Consultancy Line, the Housing Debt Casework Team and information provision.**

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### Other updates from NHAS

#### Publications

#### [Housing Matters: Issue 118 June 2017](#)



In this edition we have articles on LGBT+ housing and advice services and Estate regeneration, features on London Councils' STAR partnership and Housing First Manchester. Our factsheet for this edition is Prisoners: housing on release.

Other useful items include a brief summary of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, information about East London Womens Project - for survivors of domestic abuse who cannot live in a mainstream refuge because of their support needs.

### **Factsheet: Help with mortgage interest** (amended June 2017)

The rate used to calculate support for mortgage interest and the housing costs element for owner-occupiers is reducing from 18 June 2017.

### **Housing consultancy line and anonymity of cases**

**What we do:** All Consultancy Line cases will be kept anonymous and will not contain details of your client (apart from a date of birth and a postcode, purely for case identification purposes should you need to call us back.).

**What you need to do:** To maintain anonymity of the case, it is important that you redact (blank out) any client identifying details such as name, address etc. from any documents that you send to us.

We will not be able to action documents that have not been redacted and will return them to you requesting that they are redacted and re-submitted.

Similarly, please do not share any identifying client details with us in any emails or other correspondence.

We apologise if this causes any inconvenience, but it is important to follow these procedures to maintain anonymous cases and to comply with Data Protection legislation.

### **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](http://www.nhas.org.uk) and clicking on the 'live chat' button

**Coming soon: Housing debt 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier Advice via webchat**

### **Homelessness Reduction Act training**

We're developing a new course in preparation for the Homelessness Reduction Act, in the meantime you can get up to speed with the latest via our webinar - Introduction to the Homelessness Reduction Act. [Log in](#) to see the available dates.

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### **Stats/Updates**

- Check the [NHAS Homelessness Reduction Act](#) page on our website for the latest news
  - [Homelet May Rental Index](#): reports average UK rents have fallen (by 0.3%) for the first time since December 2009. This contrasts with their findings in the [Landlord Survey 2017](#) (conducted in January 2017 and published in March 2017) which revealed that more than half of private landlords were intending to increase the rents on their properties within the next 6 to 12 months. [Go to the Homelet summary.](#)
  - [Tackling fire risk in high rise blocks](#) The House of Commons Library has set up a page following the fire at Grenfell House, providing an overview of the legal framework under which fire risks in tower blocks are managed in England. It covers the building regulations, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System.
  - [FCA issue The fair treatment of mortgage customers in payment shortfall: impact of capitalisation](#) - **finalised guidance** for firms who may have automatically included shortfall payment balances when calculating their customer's CMI. [More on the review period/customers in scope.](#)
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## Recently published

- [24housing.co.uk: withheld deposits](#) - a survey conducted by Hillarys reveals the main reasons that tenants lose their security deposits, 29% of participants surveyed had their deposit (an average of £825) withheld at the end of their tenancy.
- [Deposit free renting](#): The Guardian has reported on the emergence of new schemes which claim to offer deposit free renting.
- [Partnership: the key to transforming lives](#) - **Christians Against Poverty (CAP)** launch their latest Client Report providing an overview of CAP services, demographics and research - highlighting the transformation in people's lives and circumstances through collaboration between CAP and other organisations.

## Parliament.uk

- [Housing costs in Universal Credit](#): briefing paper explains the key differences between assistance with housing costs under the Housing Benefit regime and under UC, and considers evidence of the impact of claiming housing costs under UC to date and the 2015 Government's response.
- [Armed Forces Housing](#) House of Commons Library briefing paper looks at current issues with Service accommodation including reports of poor maintenance, increased rents and uncertainty over future accommodation plans
- [Retaliatory eviction in the private rented sector](#): This House of Commons Library briefing paper explains the law in relation to retaliatory eviction of private tenants and evidence around the extent to which it occurs, before going on to explain reforms to the law.

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## Case Law

[Recent homelessness and allocation cases](#), and cases from other areas of law which may have significance for homelessness decisions.

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## Housing Initiatives in West Somerset for people in housing need

Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council have appointed a Housing Initiatives Officer to lead on the development of several housing initiatives in West Somerset for people in housing need.

- [View the summary of the West Somerset Local Practice](#)
- [Log in and go to the local practice page](#) to see the summary, and initiatives

For more information contact Beccy Brown [bbrown@westsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:bbrown@westsomerset.gov.uk)

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## GOV.uk

### Help with court fees - online application available

It is now possible to make an online application for help with court or tribunal fees. More information about the process can be found in the EX160A Guide.

- [Help with Court Fees Online Application](#)
- [EX160A Guide](#)

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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](mailto:nhas@shelter.org.uk).

Regards,  
The NHAS Team  
[www.nhas.org.uk](http://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.