



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

Highlights from November's E-bulletin include:

- Find out more about the government's new website aimed at helping people buy their own homes.
- Information on the latest Universal Credit roll out and how the NHAS Housing Debt Casework team offers advice on welfare benefits that affect housing.
- Recently published documents from GOV.UK and The Association of Directors of Children's Services

Have you visited the new-look NHAS website?



We have been working with our developers to improve both the public areas of the site and the resources and materials you can access after login. The new website will also host the Improving Outcomes for Young People site, which has previously been accessed on Shelter's website. IOYP helps frontline advisers, local authorities and their partners work together to prevent and tackle youth homelessness. You will still be able to access all our services through the new website including Bitesize e-learning and training calendars, local practice examples, housing factsheets and more.

[Visit the brand new NHAS website.](#)

NHAS bitesize e-learning



Need to update your housing knowledge but don't have the time to attend one of our face-to-face courses? NHAS bitesize training only takes around half an hour and there are modules available on all aspects of housing and homelessness from disrepair through to making a homeless application and applying to suspend a warrant.

[Log in to the NHAS website to view our bitesize learning](#)

New website to help people buy their own homes

The government launched its 'ownyourhome.gov.uk' website on 15 October 2015. The website provides a very useful on-line tool to assist potential home buyers to find an appropriate home ownership scheme in England, including Right to Buy and Help to Buy. The website provides links to sources of information for potential home owners in other parts of the UK.

[Visit ownyourhome.gov.uk](#)

Sharing in Social Housing: Crisis Toolkit Launch



To launch their new toolkit for Housing Associations and Local Authorities, Crisis are holding events in London and Manchester. The event will share best practice from registered providers facilitating sharing in their stock through a Q&A session and explore upcoming welfare changes, including the loss of automatic entitlement to support for housing costs for 18-21 year olds.

[Read more about Crisis' Sharing in Social Housing Toolkit launch](#)

Need help finding clients housing in the private rented sector?

Crisis' online database that helps clients, partners, service providers, local authorities and other interested parties find accommodation in the private rental sector is currently in the process of being updated. Crisis are contacting local private rental schemes for the most up-to-date information but also need help from local authority housing officers to update the database.

[More information on Crisis' Find a Scheme database](#)

Thank you!

A big thank you to our members from local authorities and voluntary agencies who completed our annual survey. We will publish a summary of findings before the end of the year.

Vulnerability and priority need: advising clients

We are very pleased to launch a new guide for use by any frontline worker advising or supporting a client to access local authority homelessness services, following the Supreme Court decision in May 2015 (Hotak, Kanu and Johnson)

The guide has been developed so that you can help vulnerable single people access the help and support they need, via local authority housing and homelessness services.

[Read the NHAS Vulnerability and priority need: advising clients guide](#)

Citizens Advice – Housing Support and Training needs survey

Citizens Advice ran a survey in July 2015 to all Local Citizens Advice services and received over 300 responses. Following this a response has been produced detailing what the respondents said and advising what support & resources are available.

[Read Citizens Advice response by logging into the members section of the NHAS website](#)

Pay to stay: high income social tenants consultation

The government has launched a new consultation to ask the public their views on the proposed plans for higher-earning tenants in social housing, to pay a fair level of rent to continue living there. Under the proposed plans, households in social housing with a total income of more than £40,000 in London and over £30,000 elsewhere, will pay a rent at market or near market levels.

[The consultation opened on the 9th October and will end on 20th November. More details on the consultation here](#)

Universal Credit now available in over 60% of jobcentres in Great Britain



Over 450 Job Centres in the UK have now rolled out Universal Credit.

Universal Credit will eventually replace 6 existing benefits including Jobseeker's Allowance and Child Tax credits. The government says the UC is designed to make sure those who are working are better off than those who aren't.

The [NHAS Housing Debt Casework](#) team offer welfare benefits advice to maximise income and support housing affordability. They give both 2nd tier advice and take referrals to work directly with clients.

[See which Job Centres are now using Universal Credit](#)

Right to Rent Updates

- The Home Office has published a report on the impact of phase one of the Right to Rent scheme: [Evaluation of the right to rent scheme](#)
- The Right to Rent scheme will come into force on 1st February 2016 and is part of the government's reform of the immigration system to make it harder to live illegally in the UK.

[Read more about the Right to Rent scheme here](#)

Keep an eye on the [NHAS webinar calendar](#) for our new session on the Right to Rent scheme.

100% satisfaction rate amongst Consultancy Line users



The NHAS Consultancy Line survey, which spoke to over 100 agencies, local authorities and CABx has found a 100% satisfaction rate amongst users, with 30% of caller's clients staying in their own home or securing accommodation after using the service.

The Consultancy Line is open 9am-8pm Monday-Friday and offers free specialist housing advice to all NHAS members.

[Read more about the Consultancy Line survey here.](#)

Rental Exchange helps social housing tenants to improve credit history

Social housing tenants with good payment records can build a stronger credit history thanks to a partnership between Experian and Big Issue Invest. The Rental Exchange gives landlords the chance to submit information about rent payment history on your behalf each month, giving tenants greater access to mainstream finance. Three-quarters (72%) of social housing tenants' credit scores increase when rental payment data is added to their credit report. Adding this data results in 84% of social housing tenants having a strong enough credit history to validate their identity online and potentially access more competitive online financial services.

[Visit the Experian website for more information on the Rental Exchange](#)

Strategy to tackle financial incapability in the UK



The Money Advice Service, in conjunction with the UK Financial Capability Board, has launched a ten-year Financial Capability Strategy to help tackle the problem of financial incapability amongst the UK's adults.

[Find out more about the Financial Capability Strategy on the NHAS website](#)

[Read the Money Advice Service's Barriers and Building Blocks report here](#)

Overcrowding and rogue landlords

Brandon Lewis has announced new measures to tackle rogue landlords and overcrowding in shared properties. The discussion paper sets out options for extending the scope of mandatory licensing of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO). It also sets out our proposals to streamline the HMO licensing process.

[More details on the overcrowding consultation here](#)

[Read the Research Briefing here](#)

Recently published

- **GOV.UK**
- [The Insolvency Service Guide to Bankruptcy](#)
- [Overpayments of HB G9/2015 circular](#)
- [Technical consultation on improvements to compulsory purchase processes](#)
- **The Association of Directors of Children's Services**
- [Guidance to assist social workers and their managers in undertaking age assessments in England](#)

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.