



**Media Release 4th March - for immediate release**

**As the Housing Crisis continues and the Cost of Living Crunch Hits - Homes for All calls a National Summit on March 12th 2022, 11am until 3pm**

Register for H4A Summit <https://bit.ly/3Gt2dxb>

We will livestream the online summit on multiple platforms

**The Homes for All Summit** aims to build strong networked national housing campaigns by bringing together local groups, Trade Unionists, MPs and supporters from around the UK to share information and create coordinated solidarities and strategies. The event will have speakers and workshops to generate ideas for how we can come together to fight for the secure, genuinely affordable and council homes that people need.

### **We are in a Housing and Cost of Living Crisis**

- Private Rentals in the UK are rising at the fastest rate on record; higher than before the pandemic in London and 9.9% higher than last year outside London. “Rental hotspot” areas, such as Ramsgate, Chatham and Folkestone on the Kent coast, have risen up to 20%. This means many more people pushed into expensive and insecure accommodation, often with poor conditions and weak rights to demand repairs.
- Meanwhile, social house building is at its lowest rate for decades and the lack of access to Council and Housing Association accommodation is forcing more households into the private rented sector.
- 145,000 affordable homes, with 90,000 of those for social rent, need to be built to meet need, according to research conducted by Heriot-Watt University for the National Housing Federation (NHF) and Crisis in 2017. This finding is endorsed by the government but not acted upon.
- The housing ombudsman has started looking at allegations of racism faced by social housing tenants when reporting poor quality repairs and maintenance.
- Home ownership is becoming even more unattainable as UK property prices rose

to a record average £348K in February 2022, up 9.5% from last year.

- Raging inflation will impact hardest on benefit claimants and those on low and middling incomes. Energy analysts are predicting record fuel costs with forecasts that the rise in the price cap will be at 46% by Summer 2022.
- Housing Associations are under the spotlight for the scale of street property sell-offs with property, even publicly funded property, increasingly treated as an asset not as shelter.
- Corporate landlordism is on the rise with at least 132,000 build-to-rent homes coming, forecast to attract £75bn of investment by 2025. The quest for profit has led to high and rising rents alongside a poor repairs service.
- There have been reports of poor quality maintenance and unsafe and unsanitary conditions in both private rented and housing association homes, with tenants complaining of damp, mould and vermin.
- Meanwhile disabled people are trapped in unsuitable unsafe homes, with the LSE reporting in 2017 that 1.8 million disabled people in England were struggling to find accessible housing. Whilst disabled people are one of the groups most impacted by austerity policies, often struggling to eat and access necessary support and supplies.
- There are nearly a quarter of a million empty homes in the UK and a similar number of second homes with no permanent resident.
- Yet council waiting lists continue to rise. In London some people wait over ten years for a home. The London Borough of Lambeth, for example, has 36,000 people on its register waiting for a home.
- Council estates that could be refurbished are left to decline and replaced by yet more unaffordable new build.
- All this means that people are increasingly being pushed into cheaper but unsuitable properties outside of where they live and work. Children are being taken out of schools, often moved from place to place, people lose jobs, families and communities are being broken up and there is unsurprisingly a severe impact on mental health. In 2016, 18,700 London households living in temporary accommodation were relocated outside of their borough.

### **Morag Gillie, Chair of Homes for All:**

“Everyone has a right to decent housing and to a home that is safe, secure and well maintained. We need rent caps on private rented accommodation and social housing set at the equivalent of council rents. Yet, 12 years on with 11 different housing ministers, it is clear that the Tories are neither interested nor capable of resolving the housing crisis. We urgently need a united housing movement - please join the

summit on 12th March"

### **Homes for All Summit speakers say:**

#### **Director of Action on Empty Homes, Will McMahon:**

"Everyone should be asking why are over half a million homes without permanent residents when we face a huge housing crisis? Truth is, the 100,000 families living in temporary accommodation could easily be housed, as could those fleeing war in Ukraine and sanctuary from Afghanistan, in homes standing long-term empty, if Government had developed a much-needed funded strategy for bringing these homes back into use."

#### **Suz Muna, Social Housing Action Campaign, SHAC:**

"Many organisations are doing sterling work challenging the different symptoms of the housing crisis such as the sale of social housing, the scandal of empty homes, monstrous bills for cladding remediation, service charge abuse, homelessness – the list goes on. These groups offer the start of tenant and resident self-organisation, and everyone concerned about housing should try to get involved, despite all the other calls on our time and energy."

#### **Jon Glackin, Streets Kitchen founder & coordinator:**

"As a group Streets Kitchen operates voluntarily on the streets providing life-saving services to those at the extreme end of the housing crisis with far too many people who are just left to call the pavements & doorways of this country their 'home'. This can never be right nor acceptable in any society and only by working together with the many people who will gather at this important summit can we ever combat the many years of Tory misrule. We encourage everyone who is able to join us at this event and demand housing justice now. How many more people must die on our cold streets through indifference before we see any real change. We must stand together now in solidarity and fight for homes fit for all and an end to anyone ever having to experience homelessness."

**List of Plenary Speakers:** Kevin Courtney, National Education Union, General Secretary; Bell Ribeiro-Addy, Labour MP; Matt Wrack Fire Brigade Union, general secretary; Emma Dent Coad, Councillor & former MP of RBKC; Ben Clay, Greater Manchester Tenants Union & Labour Campaign for Council Housing; Jennifer Shango, Housing Association Tenant; Jon Richards, Unison; Kwajo Tweneboa, Tenant Activist; Nikki Saunders, Psychotherapist; Gyekye Tanoh, Accra Ghana: Eco-

socialist and Economic Justice Campaigner; Joe Delaney, Lancaster West Estate & Grenfell Campaigner; Sian Berry, London Assembly; John McDonnell MP; Jeremy Corbyn MP.

**List of Workshop Speakers:** Will McMahon, Action on Empty Homes; Tony O'Brien, Chair of National Pensioners Convention Housing Committee; John Glackin, Street Kitchen, Sabine Mairey, Radical Housing Network; Roger Lewis DPAC; Joanna Janeczko, Action for Fire Safety Justice; Tanya Murat, Southwark Defend Council Housing; Michael Edwards, Just Space; Sarah Byrne, Morning Lane, Peoples Open Space; Jenny Kassman, Islington Homes for All; Suz Muna, Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC)

The online summit will feature a message of support from Ken Loach, Film Director and Dr D'Dada, housing activist Barcelona.

Films by Melissa Herman and Bunny Schendler with young people and parents from campaigning groups based at The Stowe Centre, W2 and the Cardinal Hume Children's Centre in Westminster. The films are supported by Save the Children and lobby for improved housing and housing services in the London borough of Westminster.

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