# Government pledges bold housing plans amid rising homelessness and questions over targets



Housing Secretary Steve Reed has pledged immediate action to reduce homelessness in England, describing the ongoing situation as "heartbreaking" and urging social housing providers to "go big, go bold and go build" to tackle the crisis. Reed expressed deep concern over the record number of 172,420 homeless children living in temporary accommodation, a figure that has steadily risen and reached its highest level in two decades. He admitted it would be a "personal failure" if these numbers increase by the end of the current Parliament in 2029 and vowed to work with social housing developers to accelerate the delivery of new homes.

Reed announced an additional £84 million funding boost aimed at getting rough sleepers off the streets ahead of the winter, promising that the public would see a tangible difference immediately. The government’s long-term strategy includes a £39 billion investment to build 300,000 new social and affordable homes over the next decade, with bidding for the programme expected to open in February. The government has already introduced reforms such as a new long-term settlement for social housing rents and adjustments to the Right to Buy scheme in an effort to ramp up housing delivery.

However, Reed suggested a potential reduction in the affordable housing requirements specifically for London, from 35% to 20%, to encourage more housebuilding in the capital. When questioned about these controversial leaked plans, Reed acknowledged the dilemma: “At the moment, we're getting no social housing because 35% of nothing is nothing.” He made clear his short-term priority is to get homes built first, emphasizing that without increasing the housing supply, promises to provide permanent homes to children in temporary accommodation or to people sleeping rough could not be fulfilled. An official announcement on these plans is expected imminently.

The housing crisis remains a significant challenge. Experts, such as Professor Paul Cheshire who advised previous governments on planning policy, have voiced scepticism about whether the government will meet its ambitious target of building 1.5 million homes by 2029, describing it as highly unlikely. The need to balance rapid construction with the provision of genuinely affordable social housing highlights the complexity of addressing homelessness and housing shortages.

Internationally, other approaches to homelessness reveal contrasting strategies. In the United States, President Donald Trump issued an executive order in July 2025 directing a national crackdown on homeless encampments, focusing on dismantling such camps and moving individuals into treatment facilities. This approach, prioritising enforcement over long-term housing solutions, has drawn criticism for potentially worsening the crisis and infringing civil rights.

Conversely, U.S. Senator Jack Reed (no relation to Steve Reed) has championed sustained funding efforts targeting homelessness in Rhode Island through federal grants. In recent years, he has announced millions in Continuum of Care grants to support local programmes providing comprehensive housing and support services, aiming to break the cycle of poverty. Initiatives include funding for affordable housing developments catering to vulnerable groups such as victims of domestic violence and homeless veterans, emphasizing the importance of combined rental assistance with supportive clinical services.

Together, these contrasting approaches underline the multifaceted nature of the homelessness crisis—calling for urgent, scalable housing construction plans alongside supportive services addressing the underlying factors contributing to homelessness.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/housing-secretary-makes-homelessness-promise-36109054), [[2]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/housing-secretary-makes-homelessness-promise-36109054) (Mirror)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/housing-secretary-makes-homelessness-promise-36109054), [[2]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/housing-secretary-makes-homelessness-promise-36109054) (Mirror)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/housing-secretary-makes-homelessness-promise-36109054), [[2]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/housing-secretary-makes-homelessness-promise-36109054) (Mirror)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/housing-secretary-makes-homelessness-promise-36109054) (Mirror)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-orders-crackdown-homeless-encampments-nationwide-2025-07-25/) (Reuters)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-announces-173-million-to-help-end-homelessness-in-ri), [[5]](https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-celebrates-7m-for-providence-affordable-housing-development), [[6]](https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-announces-157-million-to-help-end-homelessness-in-ri), [[7]](https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-delivers-576000-to-help-50-more-homeless-veterans-find-housing) (Reed Senate Releases)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/housing-secretary-makes-homelessness-promise-36109054> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/housing-secretary-makes-homelessness-promise-36109054> - Housing Secretary Steve Reed has pledged to reduce homelessness figures immediately, describing the current crisis as 'heartbreaking'. He has urged social housing providers to 'go big, go bold and go build', acknowledging the personal failure if the number of children in temporary accommodation continues to rise. Reed also announced an additional £84 million to assist rough sleepers ahead of winter. However, he suggested a potential reduction in affordable housing requirements in London to expedite housing construction, aiming to address the shortage of social housing.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-orders-crackdown-homeless-encampments-nationwide-2025-07-25/> - In July 2025, President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing a national crackdown on homeless encampments. The order urges cities and states to dismantle these camps and move individuals into treatment facilities, prioritising enforcement measures over long-term housing solutions. Attorney General Pam Bondi has been tasked with overturning legal barriers that currently limit the clearing of such encampments, despite uncertainty about her authority to reverse judicial precedents. Critics argue the policy will worsen the homelessness crisis and undermine civil rights.
4. <https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-announces-173-million-to-help-end-homelessness-in-ri> - In January 2025, U.S. Senator Jack Reed announced $17.3 million in federal Continuum of Care grants for Rhode Island to support homeless assistance programs. The funding aims to coordinate housing and supportive services for families and individuals experiencing homelessness across the state. Reed emphasised the importance of providing comprehensive services to help break the cycle of poverty and offer pathways to stable housing for vulnerable Rhode Islanders.
5. <https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-celebrates-7m-for-providence-affordable-housing-development> - In August 2025, Senator Jack Reed announced $7 million in federal funding for the Women's Development Corporation to advance affordable housing development in Providence. The funding will support the construction of 14 new homes for individuals escaping domestic violence and the preservation of 47 family units across 19 historic buildings. Reed highlighted the importance of increasing affordable housing supply and providing stable homes for Rhode Islanders experiencing homelessness.
6. <https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-announces-157-million-to-help-end-homelessness-in-ri> - In January 2024, Senator Jack Reed announced $15.7 million in federal Continuum of Care grants for Rhode Island to support homeless assistance programs. The funding aims to help local nonprofits and community partners deliver safe, affordable housing and supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Reed emphasised the need for comprehensive services to help break the cycle of poverty and offer pathways to stable housing for vulnerable Rhode Islanders.
7. <https://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/reed-delivers-576000-to-help-50-more-homeless-veterans-find-housing> - In January 2024, Senator Jack Reed announced an additional $575,829 in federal funding for RIHousing and the North Providence Housing Authority to help homeless veterans and their families find and retain permanent housing. The funding will make up to 50 new permanent housing vouchers available through the HUD-VASH program, which combines rental assistance with case management and clinical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs.