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# Ending Street Homelessness: What Works and Why We Don't Do It

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**Abstract\_**Vast human and financial resources have been spent in efforts to understand and address street homelessness. Yet, the problem persists. This think piece summarises the findings of a major review exploring the international evidence base on what works to end street homelessness (Mackie et al., 2017). It also reflects on the question: 'if we know what works, why don't we do it?' Informed by more than 500 literature sources and interviews with 11 international experts, it identifies the key principles which appear to improve the likelihood of interventions ending street homelessness. These include: be agencies and across sectors. The article also identifies seven reasons why

## Introduction

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The ongoing need for people to sleep rough is indicative of an unacceptable societal failure and it is a problem that persists globally. However, society has not

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Interventions such as No Second Night Out have highlighted the effectiveness of **swift action** in order to prevent or quickly end street homelessness. Currently operating in England only, No Second Night Out aims to assist those new to street



‘professionalisation’, and seasonal availability. A substantial literature documenting homeless peoples’ experiences in and perceptions of hostels and shelters exists, but there is a major dearth of research evaluating their effectiveness as an intervention. The most comprehensive evidence on outcomes derives from Randomised Control Trials undertaken in North America which compare ‘treatment as usual’ provisions (which typically involve some form of hostel or shelter) with Housing First. These indicate that a significantly greater proportion of Housing First tenants remains stably housed than those in Treatment as Usual provision (Aubry et al., 2015). Evidence indicates consistently that many (and perhaps the majority of) homeless people find hostels and shelters intimidating or unpleasant environments

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1. **Lack of settled accommodation.** One of the recurring barriers across all interventions is the lack of affordable and suitable settled accommodation for rough sleepers to move on to.
2. **Funding.** Three potential barriers exist: 1] Increased investment is required in the short-term – Effective interventions such as Housing First and Personalised Budgets are not low-cost options but they do create potential for savings in the long term. 2] Cross-sector funding – Given that savings are often accrued outside of housing, effective intervention may require funds to be released from health, criminal justice, and other sectors. 3] Long-term/secure funding – Time-limited funding has been a key barrier to sustained implementation of many interventions.
3. **Effective collaboration and commissioning.** Effective approaches are often







## **Conclusion**

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