

# Blog

## The Housing Quality Network

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### **Don't let rough sleeping be the enduring image of 2021**

*By Rachael Orr, Director, PlaceShapers*

I went into central London a couple of weeks ago. In the eerily quiet streets, I saw a man huddled in a sleeping bag in the doorway of a now vacant shop. I really, really hope it isn't, but I fear this could be the enduring housing image of 2021.

700,000 households are already in rent arrears and around 2.5 million households across the UK are worried about paying their rent over the winter according to recent research by the JRF.

After the amazing success of the initial Everyone In scheme, the great partnership work it inspired, it is incumbent on all of us to ensure soaring homelessness is not the next casualty of the Covid pandemic.

Then there's the impacts of Brexit and the recession, rising poverty and inequality, building safety, trying to work out how we meet our net zero carbon target, influencing the White Paper and the Planning reform as they start their parliamentary journeys – not to mention building new homes and supporting staff and residents.

Buckle up, because we may look back on 2020 and see that the challenges we've faced this year weren't half as tricky as those to come.

But we should also look ahead with optimism. 2020 has forced us to think and work differently.

New partnerships have emerged, staff and residents across our sector have worked together to respond to the needs of their communities. I think an increasing place-based thinking and approach might further emerge in 2021.

This should mean plenty of opportunities for housing associations to show that they are real anchors in their communities and be a central part of our social and economic recovery. Let's get to it.