

UK Lawmakers Say Homelessness in England "A National Crisis"



London, December 26 (RHC)-- Homelessness in England is a "national crisis," with more than 120,000 homeless children living in emergency accommodation, such as hostels, a UK parliamentary committee has warned. More than 9,000 people sleep on England's streets, a figure that has doubled since 2011, and some 78,000 families are homeless, the Public Accounts Committee reports. The homeless children miss far more schooling than their peers, the committee said, criticizing the British government's response as "unacceptably complacent."

"As we approach Christmas there are thousands of children in temporary accommodation — a salutary reminder of the human cost of policy failure," Meg Hillier, a Member of Parliament (MP) from the opposition Labour Party, said in a statement. The government in reaction said it will address the issue by investing more than 1 billion pounds (\$1.34 billion) by 2020 and implementing the "most ambitious legislative reform in decades."

"Tackling homelessness is a complex issue with no single solution, but we are determined to help the most vulnerable in society," a government spokesman said in a statement. The number of homeless children in the UK who will spend Christmas in temporary accommodation stands at more than 124,000,

government figures have revealed.

The price for renting a home in England has risen three times faster than wages since 2010, according to a public spending watchdog. "A chronic lack of genuinely affordable homes combined with soaring rents and cuts to welfare mean more and more people are becoming homeless," Polly Neate, who heads the homelessness charity Shelter, said in a statement. "The government must now take heed of this important report and tackle the causes of the crisis by building many more homes which are genuinely affordable for ordinary people to rent," Neate added.

There has been a "shocking" rise in the number of homeless children living in temporary accommodation across Britain, according to government figures released last year. Homelessness is at its highest rates in central London, with as many as one in 25 without a home in Westminster and one in 27 with nowhere to live in Newham, according to a recent analysis by Shelter.

Britain has been pushing painful austerity measures since 2010 to cap its budget deficit, targeting key benefits helping the homeless.

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