

# THE ESSENTIAL ITEMS:

## *Executive Summary*

- Furniture Poverty is the inability to access the basic furniture and appliances that provide a household with a decent quality of life and allow it to participate in the norms of society.
- End Furniture Poverty launched a consultation in November 2016 with the main objective of assessing how essential different furniture items are, with a view to using this list to help define who is in Furniture Poverty according to whether they own or can access this furniture. The consultation also asked respondents about items that are particularly difficult to access, and which barriers exist to helping those in Furniture Poverty.
- There were 101 respondents to the survey. Most respondents worked in the housing sector, but other respondents included those working in the charity sector, universities and for local authorities.
- The list of items deemed to be essential is as follows:
  - Bed, bedding and mattress
  - Table and chairs
  - Sofa and/or easy chairs
  - Wardrobe/drawers
  - Carpets in living rooms and bedrooms
  - Curtains or blinds
  - Washing machine
  - Refrigerator and freezer
  - Cooker/oven
  - TV
- The main barriers cited as preventing people in Furniture Poverty from getting the items they needed were:
  - **Low income** – people simply not earning enough or getting enough through their benefits to be able to afford the items they needed
  - **Funding eligibility** – existing sources of financial help having too narrow criteria, meaning that people who needed help were not eligible to apply for it.
  - **Amount of funding** – pots of funding and money, including Local Welfare Provision schemes, are not big enough to help everyone that needs it
- Respondents did not feel that the list of basic furniture and appliances would change much over the next five years.
- People who responded tended to support the use of the term Furniture Poverty as they felt it was clear, concise and would help to raise awareness of the issue.
- The list of Essential Furniture will go on to influence the work that End Furniture Poverty will be doing moving forward. It is hoped that the list will also inform the work of people working in the housing and poverty sectors, serving as a definitive, unifying list.
- The consultation will be repeated in 2 years' time to ensure it is maintained as up to date as possible.