

END FURNITURE POVERTY

Best Practice Guide to Furniture and Appliance Provision for Local Authorities

WHAT IS FURNITURE POVERTY?

Furniture poverty is the inability to afford or access essential household items required for a socially acceptable standard of living. This includes beds, sofas, tables and chairs, cookers, fridges/freezers, washing machines, wardrobes, and floor coverings.

- **6 million people** in the UK are living in furniture poverty
- **1 million** are in deep furniture poverty (missing 3+ essential items)
- **8.1 million essential items** are missing nationwide

For people on the lowest incomes, furniture and appliances are often unaffordable and can lead to debt, poor health, and recurrent crisis.

WHY FURNITURE PROVISION MATTERS

Providing essential items through the CRF meets both crisis and resilience objectives:

- Addresses immediate crisis (empty homes, unsafe living conditions)
- Builds resilience, helping people sustain tenancies and move forward
- Improves physical and mental health especially for families, domestic abuse survivors and people leaving homelessness
- Reduces pressure on council services, including homelessness, temporary accommodation, social care and public health

Cost benefit analyses show **£9.70–£12.90** returned for every £1 invested in local welfare assistance and furniture provision.

WHAT BEST PRACTICE LOOKS LIKE

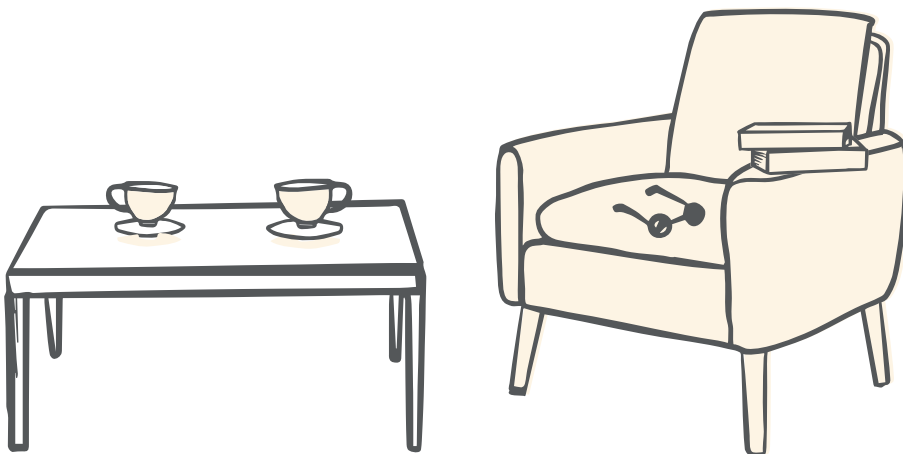
- **Provide items in-kind, not cash**, to ensure essentials are secured and to achieve economies of scale
- **Allocate at least 20% of CRF funding** to furniture and appliance provision
- **Offer the full range of essential items**, including flooring where possible
- **Ensure access for all housing tenures** (social renters, private renters, homeowners)
- **Enable direct applications** alongside referrals from trusted partners
- **Use procurement frameworks** to secure reliable suppliers, delivery, installation and warranties
- **Wrap furniture provision with support**, including benefits maximisation, budgeting advice and warm referrals
- **Maintain a standalone Local Welfare Assistance scheme** – the CRF should strengthen, not replace, it

THE ROLE OF FURNISHED TENANCIES

Furnished tenancies are one of the most effective long-term solutions to furniture poverty:

- Minimal or no capital outlay for landlords
- Costs covered through the service charge element of Universal Credit
- Proven to reduce repeat crisis presentations and CRF demand
- Particularly effective for vulnerable tenants

Local authorities - both with and without housing stock - should actively encourage and support social landlords to introduce furnished tenancy schemes. For End Furniture Poverty's assistance with this email: info@endfurniturepoverty.org



www.EndFurniturePoverty.org