

BOOK REVIEW

HOUSING ALLOCATION AND HOMELESSNESS

Law and Practice

4th edition

By Jan Luba QC, Liz Davies and Connor Johnston

ISBN: 978 1 78473 030 7

JORDAN PUBLISHING LIMITED

Also available as an eBook

Accompanied by a CD

www.jordanpublishing.co.uk

NEW LEGISLATION ON HOMELESSNESS:
EXPERTLY DISCUSSED IN THIS PRACTICAL GUIDE,
NOW IN A NEW FOURTH EDITION

An appreciation by Phillip Taylor MBE and Elizabeth Taylor
of Richmond Green Chambers

By what means can a lawyer or other adviser assist someone who is homeless to apply for a home? Obviously there are multiple answers to this question, none of them straightforward, which is why for those dealing with the difficult problem of homelessness will, for the most part, have come to appreciate the practical guidance provided in this well-known title from Jordan Publishing.

For those who don't already know, 'Housing Allocation and Homelessness' is a long-established legal text – and the news is, that it is now available in a new and updated fourth edition.

As the three co-authors admit -- and all are experts in this field -- the legal and political environment regarding homelessness and the allocation of social housing 'is even more depressing in early 2016 than it was four years ago' when the previous edition of this book was published.

There has been a steep rise in the numbers of people experiencing homelessness, caused by a number of factors, which the authors discuss in detail, from cuts in benefits to low pay and high rents, particularly in London. Britain, as the authors affirm, is in the grip of a housing crisis especially in England.

The situation in Wales, which is described as more encouraging, assumes special significance as one of the main reasons why practitioners, housing officers and other advisers on homelessness would do well to acquire this book.

The new material it contains includes a comprehensive account of the new housing legislation in Wales, namely the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 Part 2.

Naturally all those dealing with homelessness and the homeless in Wales will need to familiarize themselves with the new law – and the same should also be said of anyone dealing with homelessness in England. The new Welsh legislation requires local authorities to provide better prevention help, the ideal being -- in the authors' words -- 'to prevent homelessness altogether'.

If this sounds utopian perhaps that is a good thing. It now remains to be seen as to whether this legislation will work.

Other new material in this edition (to summarise) includes a review of recent Supreme Court decisions on priority need, intentional homelessness and out of borough placements -- and there is a detailed discussion of the effects of the Location Act 2011.

Within its more than 1,600 pages the book offers an impressive array of resources including extensive tables of cases, statutes, statutory instruments and also of European legislation. With its extensive footnoting, numbered paragraphs throughout and detailed table of contents and index, the book is reassuringly navigable.

Further, there are two appendices that provide the Codes of Guidance on respectively, allocation and homelessness in England. The Welsh Code of Guidance is also to be found on the accompanying CD ROM.

Practitioners or indeed anyone advising professionally on homelessness, housing options and allocations of social housing and lettings will appreciate the refreshing clarity with which this book illuminates a complex and sensitive subject.

The law discussed is that in England and Wales and is up to date as at 18 April 2016.