

Rapid-build living modules to help government address homelessness

Rapid building of suitable affordable homes is essential if the Government's new £100m strategy to end rough sleeping and eradicate homelessness by 2027 is to succeed.

Volumetric engineered micro-living modules are set to play an important role in this, says Brian Maunder of Totally Modular Ltd.

The number of people sleeping rough in the UK has risen every year for the last seven years and now stands at over 4,500 each night, with many more individuals and families in hotel and B&B accommodation. The Government's announcement of a new plan to tackle homelessness has been welcomed, although not without criticism.

For instance, Howard Sinclair, the chief executive of homeless charity St Mungo's, said: *"Rough sleeping is harmful, dangerous and dehumanising. The new strategy is a really important first step towards meeting the 2027 target, but there is work to do especially when it comes to providing stable, safe and affordable housing."*

Jon Sparkes, the chief executive of Crisis, offers: *"Once people are off the streets, a commitment to a rapid rehousing model can ensure that they never find themselves in this position again. If we're to end rough sleeping, a bold, housing-led approach to tackling the problem is required."*

A solution to the need for suitable housing has been pioneered by innovative construction company Totally Modular. The company has developed a new method of construction in which complete homes, designed around a steel frame, are built in a factory then simply transported to site, craned into position and quickly connected up to water, waste and utility supplies. Houses can be created in a range of sizes and formats, from single occupancy units to large family homes. Houses can be detached, semi detached or terraced, while the units can also be used to form multi-storey blocks for multiple occupancy.

Totally Modular's single-person micro home is an ideal solution for both homelessness recovery projects and the lack of low cost housing in general. This is the smallest unit Totally Modular manufactures, built from the same high-quality materials as the larger houses, it has a range of roof and cladding options, allowing each one to be matched to its surroundings. Significantly, they can be delivered and installed using a lorry-mounted crane and can also be stacked to make apartment buildings.

Internally the Totally Modular micro home is light and airy. It has a double bedroom at one end, kitchenette/living room at the other and a fully fitted bathroom in the middle. Like all Totally Modular solutions, it is Eco Pack ready, meaning you can easily add electric eco heating, solar PV and battery, so can be heated and run for about £30 a year.

Brian Maunder explains that micro homes provide a comfortable place to live, but that is only the beginning of the process: "The benefits of giving someone their own front door can be astonishing. It allows them to feel safe and secure, offering the chance to build their own independence. This encourages personal confidence, which helps them to re-engage with society and take a positive role in it.

Totally Modular's range extends up to several larger houses, including two- and three-bedroom homes, which can provide comfortable living accommodation for families of five. All are designed to be light, airy and well laid out; they are robustly built, require little maintenance and have low energy requirements.

Micro homes in general are ideal for 'move-on programmes' that help homeless people transition from institutional hostels, hotels and B&Bs into independent living, where they take responsibility for cooking, cleaning, paying bills etc. With new skills, established routines and growing confidence, they can move on to permanent housing and employment.

Designed to help address the housing crisis via affordable housing, Totally Modular's Micro Living Module homes are fast to build and, because they do not require conventional foundations, they work well on brownfield sites. They can also be located on sloping sites, in back gardens, inner-city in-fill opportunities and other sites that would not be suitable for conventional construction. They are also suitable for use by on-site workers, in remote locations and even off-grid.

Brian Maunder of Totally Modular sums up his company's involvement with the project: *"We have developed a radically new way to create homes, be they large detached houses, semis, terraces or micro-living modules. We can work quickly without weather delays or security issues because they are built indoors. This means we can ensure a high-quality product, with minimum waste and reduced environmental impact.*

"They require relatively simple foundations and groundworks, and are designed for instant hook-up to services, so can be ready for occupancy within hours of delivery to site. This is a great benefit for any type of project and should help reduce the housing shortage as well as alleviate homelessness."

Photo Captions:

Photo 1: Rapid building of suitable affordable homes is essential if the Government's new £100m strategy to end rough sleeping and eradicate homelessness by 2027 is to succeed.

Photo 2: Totally Modular's single-person micro home is an ideal solution for both homelessness recovery projects and the lack of low cost housing in general.

About Totally Modular

Totally Modular is a leading manufacturer of steel frame, modular homes for social and affordable housing. As a turnkey provider, Totally Modular designs, manufactures and installs homes that are 97% complete when they arrive on site; including pre-installed kitchens, bathrooms and finishes. Ground works, services and landscaping can also be incorporated as part of any housing solution. With the inherent scope and manufacturing capacity to provide multiple housing structures to fully accredited standards with maximum convenience, Totally Modular offers a comprehensive solution to tackle the housing challenges of the future.

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