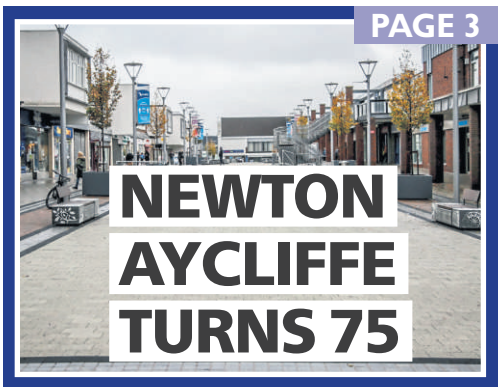


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STEVE'S 500-MILE WALK FOR ANN

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SPEAKMAN: SUNDERLAND ARE NOT A SELLING CLUB **SPORT**

Homeless are being sent to North East

EXCLUSIVE: Outrage as people from London are 'dumped' in Durham

VULNERABLE people are being shipped from London to parts of the North East and 'dumped' with no support and without council knowledge, an investigation by The Northern Echo can reveal.

The act has been branded as "despicable" as the North East struggles in the grip of a housing crisis with 75,000 families stuck for months waiting for social housing, more than 300 homeless children, and the cost of living making it impossi-

By Tom Burgess

ble for young families to buy a first home.

The Northern Echo previously revealed how some families felt 'physically sick' by temporary accommodation they were given after long waits, but now we can reveal some of the most vulnerable people, including those struggling with substance abuse, are being given housing be-

fore families in the region who have been waiting almost a year.

Last night the process of moving people from London up to County Durham was slammed as "disgusting" by the CEO of a charity supporting vulnerable people in the area.

In the last year, two households were moved up to County Durham every month by London Borough Councils.

FULL STORY: PAGE 8









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NEWS

‘They will fall through the cracks’

KEY figures in County Durham have hit out at the “disgusting” practice of London councils sending vulnerable people up to the region without the knowledge of local councils.

The Northern Echo can exclusively reveal that in the last year, two households a month were shipped up to County Durham by London Borough Councils.

Meanwhile, thousands of families in the region are currently on waiting lists for temporary accommodation and there are hundreds of homeless children in the North East.

Politicians and charity leaders have branded the act as “deplorable” and “disgusting” as those shipped up here are being left without help or support.

However, Durham County Council say that decanting does not relate to temporary accommodation or their ability to source or supply temporary accommodation.

Grahame Morris, Labour MP for Easington, called the lack of communication between London Borough Councils and local authorities “difficult” as it hinders the ability to “effectively plan”.

He said: “There is a national issue with London Boroughs discharging their homelessness duties by relocating households out of area. I am advised these placements are through a small number of managing agents.

“It is difficult to obtain numbers, as despite statutory obligations, London Boroughs are failing to notify local authorities when a household is relocated.

“This lack of communication hinders our ability to effectively plan, and places greater strain on already over-stretched council budgets and public services. We must ensure all authorities are complying with their statutory obligations.”

Mary Kelly Foy, Labour MP for Durham City, committed to writing to the Home Secretary about the situation and the lack of support families which are being moved are receiving.

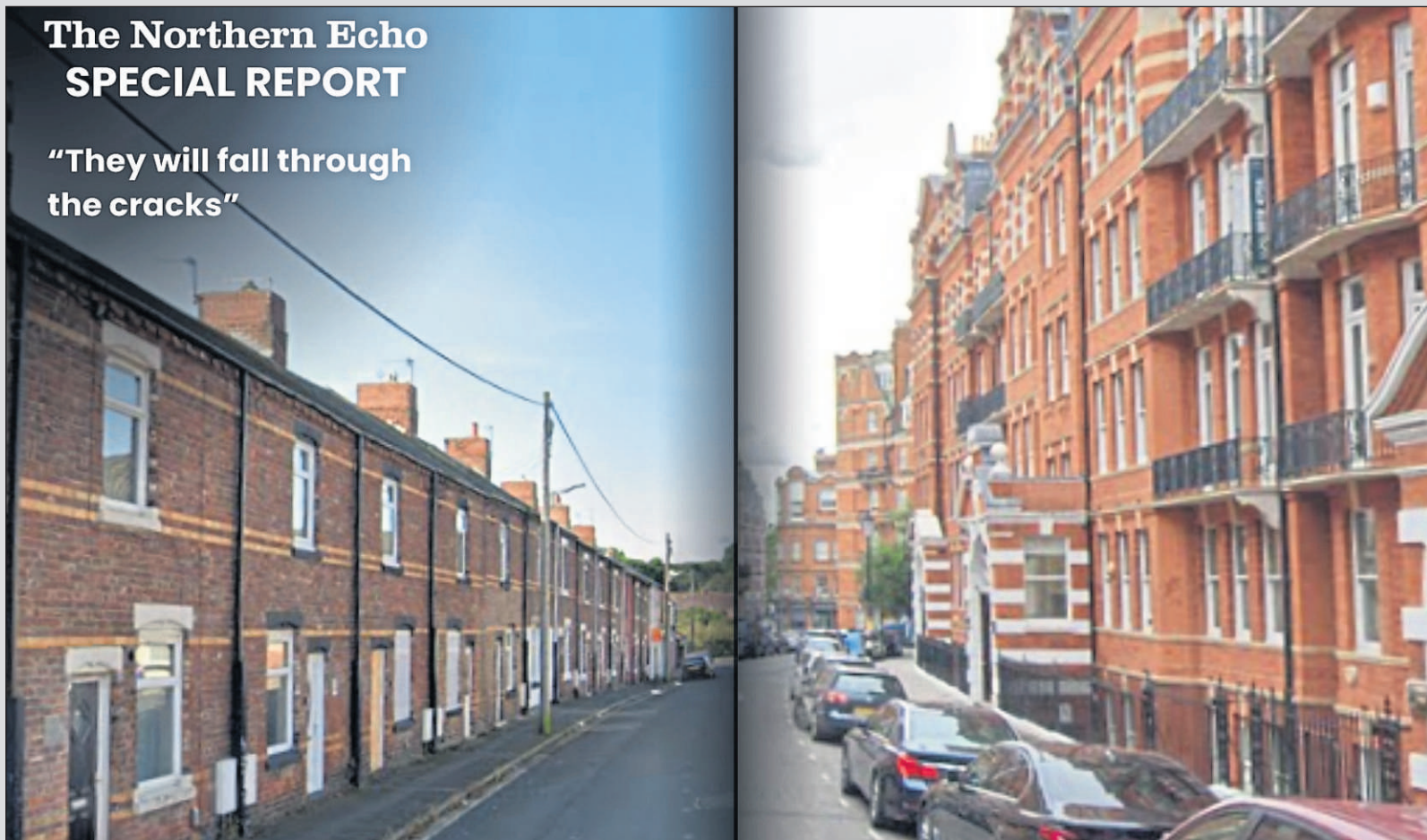
She said: “It is simply unacceptable that London Borough Councils, through a number of managing agents, are discharging their homelessness duties by relocating people out of their areas without properly informing the local authorities into which these families are being placed.

“This lack of information sharing not only makes it nigh on impossible for local authorities and other services to plan for their arrival, it is desperately unfair on families that are being dropped in areas with no ongoing support in place.

“In many cases, these households are being moved to unfamiliar parts of the country and simply being left to fend for themselves. There is a real danger that they will simply fall through the cracks.”

The Northern Echo SPECIAL REPORT

“They will fall through the cracks”



Horden left, Kensington right

Image: Google

Vulnerable people sent from London to region

VULNERABLE people are being shipped from London to parts of the North East and ‘dumped’ with no support and without council knowledge, an investigation by The Northern Echo can reveal.

The act has been branded as “despicable” as the North East struggles in the grip of a housing crisis with 75,000 families stuck for months waiting for social housing, more than 300 homeless children, and the cost of living making it impossible for young families to buy a first home.

The Northern Echo previously revealed how some families felt ‘physically sick’ by temporary accommodation they were given after long waits, but now we can reveal some of the most vulnerable people, including those struggling with substance abuse, are being given housing before families in the region who have been waiting almost a year.

However, Durham County Council say that decanting does not relate to temporary accommodation or their ability to source or supply temporary accommodation.

Last night the process of moving people from London up to County Durham was slammed as “disgusting” by the CEO of a charity sup-

porting vulnerable people in the area.

In the last year, two households were moved up to County Durham every month by London Borough Councils.

London Councils say that they know the scale of London’s homelessness crisis is impacting communities outside of the capital as boroughs look for accommodation options.

The East Durham Trust charity said that many are single-person households who are very vulnerable and struggling with substance abuse.

Graham Easterlow, CEO of the East Durham Trust, described the practice as “contemptible”.

Grahame Morris, Labour MP for Easington, highlighted how difficult it is to gain clarity on how many people are being relocated up to County Durham from London.

Mary Kelly Foy, Labour MP for Durham City, has slammed it as “simply unacceptable” because of the risk of the people being moved falling through the cracks.

London Borough Councils put 23 households into placements in County Durham from 2023-24.

There were no placements to Northumberland, Tyne

and Wear, or the Tees Valley at this time.

Mr Easterlow said: “For some time we have been supporting people in East Durham who have been moved here from the South East of England.

“These ‘households’ are often single people moved up here with no local links and no support networks.

“Some are simply placed on a train with a key and an address. It is a deplorable act.

“Moving vulnerable people into already embattled communities who facing high levels of deprivation and generational poverty is a contemptible act.

“How can someone simply pop a human being on a train, send them on their way and then think ‘not my problem anymore’.”

He explained that the lack of information about these resettlements and the lack of support for those being moved made it a “damaging practice”.

He said: “Especially when they have vulnerabilities such as mental ill health and homelessness. These are unmanaged resettlements.

“We are not informed as a local support charity. This places huge pressure on already stretched council and voluntary sector resources.

“We need to shine a light on

this poor policy and damaging practice.”

Mr Easterlow has met one man who was decanted from London up to Horden and he received no support when he arrived.

The data from London Councils does not include statistics on the number of properties bought in the region by councils and any people moved directly into those homes.

Grahame Morris, Labour MP for Easington, highlighted the strain these extra households would have on the public services in the area.

He said: “There is a national issue with London Boroughs discharging their homelessness duties by relocating households out of area. I am advised these placements are through a small number of managing agents.

“It is difficult to obtain numbers, as, despite statutory obligations, London Boroughs are failing to notify local authorities when a household is relocated.”

Mary Kelly Foy, Labour MP for Durham City, said: “It is simply unacceptable that London Borough Councils, through a number of managing agents, are discharging their homelessness duties by relocating people out of their

areas without properly informing the local authorities into which these families are being placed.

“This lack of information sharing not only makes it nigh on impossible for local authorities and other services to plan for their arrival, it is desperately unfair on families that are being dropped in areas with no ongoing support in place.

“In many cases, these households are being moved to unfamiliar parts of the country and simply being left to fend for themselves. There is a real danger that they will simply fall through the cracks.”

Michael Kelleher, Durham County Council’s head of planning and housing, said: “We are concerned that some London councils are discharging their housing duty by offering their residents private tenancies in other parts of the country, including in the North East.

“These arrangements are made directly between the councils in question and private sector landlords, and while we have no involvement in this process and there is no legal restriction preventing it, it is of course concerning that people are being relocated hundreds of miles away from home in this way.”