

## TECHNOLOGY IS KEY TO REDUCING HOMELESSNESS

SAYS BEN ROCHELLE

Homelessness is on the rise in the UK. Last year the number of homeless applications to local authorities was nearly 30,000, an increase of over 10 per cent since 2010. How does the government address this problem? Building more affordable housing is vital. But the government needs to look beyond simply bricks and mortar to improve the life chances and 'throughput' of those people already in the homeless system.

Homelessness charity Caritas Anchor House has developed the Global Noticeboard – an online application that enables individuals to identify opportunities for employment, mentoring and accommodation, tailoring each search to the user's specific interests and needs.

The Global Noticeboard will boost the UK's employment rate by providing opportunities for those who are unemployed to find work, limit demands on social housing and other local government services, reduce benefit claims and free capacity within the third sector to help other vulnerable individuals.

As the government prepares to launch its Life Chances strategy, it must ensure that it moves away from the antiquated view of reducing homelessness simply by building more homes, and instead focus on how technology such as the Global Noticeboard can cut the length of time people have to stay in emergency accommodation. This will give

them the core life skills they need to live independent, fulfilling lives.

Ben Rochelle is political consultant with the Whitehouse Consultancy

● Tell us about a campaign or issue you care about and the change you want. @bigissue; editorial@bigissue.com

