



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Eddie Hughes MP

Minister for Housing and Rough Sleeping

***Department for Levelling Up, Housing
and Communities***

Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

To: Council Leaders,
Cabinet members for
homelessness and rough sleeping

Email: eddie.hughes@communities.gov.uk

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Dear Councillor,

I hosted two “Local Partnerships to End Rough Sleeping” events, designed for local politicians, on 24 August and 7 September. I firstly wanted to thank all those who were able to attend and secondly would like to follow up on the asks from the events and our shared work to end rough sleeping.

The events on the 24 August and 7 September were an opportunity to bring together Council Leaders and Cabinet Members with the responsibility for homelessness and rough sleeping and set out the Government’s on-going ambition to end rough sleeping in this Parliament. At the start of the pandemic, the Government was clear that we must protect the most vulnerable in our society. Together we have delivered so much – a 37% reduction in the single night snapshot between autumn 2019 and autumn 2020 and by January of this year the Government had supported over 37,000 people as part of our Everyone In initiative, with over 26,000 already moved into longer-term accommodation. Reports have shown that hundreds of lives were saved through this work.

Looking forward, I understand the challenges facing local government in driving forward plans for ending rough sleeping. However, my hope is that the invaluable partnerships and the holistic approach to ending rough sleeping which local government has been at the heart of over the last 18 months will be a lasting legacy of the pandemic. It is critical that we don’t return to business as usual and continue this vital partnership work to make sure everything possible is done to support people who sleep rough or at risk of rough sleeping and to deliver long-lasting change to their lives.

The ask

This is why we are asking each elected member with responsibility for ending rough sleeping locally to work with their officials and partners to sponsor or champion the cases of at least 5 individual rough sleepers, focusing on those individuals with long term history of sleeping rough and who are still on the street or at risk of returning. We hope you will be able to follow and influence the progress of these challenging cases alongside your officials and service delivery networks. This will help support the development of strong user-led creative and innovative partnerships alongside creating new mechanisms for reporting challenges and delivering outcomes for

vulnerable individuals where needed, as well as providing a sharper focus on the most vulnerable and long-term rough sleepers in your area.

Furthermore, the ask takes into consideration the importance of ensuring that wider statutory services meet the needs of people who sleep rough. In practice, this means considering whether statutory housing functions such as allocations policy and floating support reflect the needs of those individuals and are delivered in such a way that contributes to the reduction of people sleeping rough in your area.

We recognise that this activity may already be happening in some areas and to confirm you do not need to report to MHCLG formally on this ask, but our RSI Advisers will be discussing progress with yours as part of their ongoing work to support your local authority to reduce rough sleeping and implement flagship funding such as the Rough Sleeping Initiative and plan for future work.

Follow-up on questions raised

Given the limited time at the events we did not manage to answer all the questions covered so, at Annex A, you will find some of these issues and our response to them.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my ongoing thanks for the unwavering efforts you and your teams have continued to make to protect some of the most vulnerable. I know this is hard work but it is also some of our most important. I look forward to continuing to work together to end rough sleeping for good in this Parliament.

Yours ever,



EDDIE HUGHES MP

Annex A:

1. Long-term funding certainty and the need to apply for funds

As you know there is an upcoming Spending Review process and we will ensure that your feedback regarding the importance of long-term funding certainty are fed into that process. The process for bidding for any funding agreed as part of that process will be communicated once agreed but we have largely worked on a co-production process with your officials for the delivery of the Rough Sleeping Initiative since its inception in 2018.

We have announced up to £433m to the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme over the lifetime of the parliament. This represents the largest ever investment in move on accommodation, with 6,000 new homes pledged by the end of this parliament. Alongside this, the Government has provided over £202m across England for the 2021/22 Rough Sleeping Initiative, this is more than an 80% increase from £112m provided last year and funding will provide up to 14,500 bed spaces and 2,700 support staff. The Government has committed over £750 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year, demonstrating the Government's commitment to end rough sleeping this Parliament and fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act.

The Government is clear that to end rough sleeping there is a need for further cross government action to address the underlying causes of rough sleeping. The Department will be working with partners across government and the sector to build on recent progress and consider what more needs to be done to end rough sleeping. We will carefully consider the role of health, justice, immigration and employment, alongside housing and how the department will build on the already significant success of Everyone In.

2. Exhausting all options for non-UK national rough sleepers

We recognise that one of the most complex areas that local authorities face is supporting non-UK nationals with restricted access to homelessness assistance.

Whilst this group is often referred to as those with 'no recourse to public funds', there are in fact several different statuses covered when this term is used generically and different options available to the different cohorts. I want to be clear that, as I said in June, the Government position is that you should exhaust all options within the law to provide a route off the streets for everyone in this group.

In practice, this might mean working closely with the voluntary and community sector to support people into employment and accommodation, where it is lawful to do so. Additionally, this means working with the Home Office to regularise the immigration status of individuals, including signposting individuals to advice and support through Home Office immigration surgeries, working with the Voluntary Returns Service, and encouraging all eligible EEA citizens to submit outstanding applications to the EU Settlement Scheme where there are reasonable grounds for missing the deadline.

In addition to this, due to the complexities associated with this group it is important that a full and proper assessment is undertaken of individual need and

circumstances, which should include detailed consideration of what discretionary powers can be used to support individuals and full exploration of these powers. If your officials are unsure about this area, MHCLG advisers have provided further information to your officials about the legal powers you have to support this cohort.

3. S21 notices

The Government is committed to bringing in a Better Deal for Renters to deliver a fairer and more effective rental market that works for both tenants and landlords. The Government has been focussed on introducing measures to comprehensively protect renters and support landlords during the Coronavirus pandemic, including banning evictions and introducing longer notice periods for the majority of renters. We want to build back better from the pandemic and improve security for tenants in the rental sector, learning lessons from the emergency measures we put in place to ensure our reforms deliver greater protection for tenants and support responsible landlords.

In the Queen's Speech 2021, the Government committed to publishing a White Paper detailing our plans for reform of the private rented sector, and we are working with stakeholders from across the sector to inform this.

The White Paper will provide further detail on repealing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, to improve security for tenants by putting an end to evictions where the landlord doesn't have to provide a reason. At the same time, we want to ensure landlords have the tools they need to gain possession of their property when they have a valid reason to do so.

We are also committed to introducing new lifetime deposits that ease the burden on tenants of moving tenancies and to bringing forward improvements in standards in rented accommodation. This will include by ensuring all tenants have a right to redress, and ensuring well targeted, effective enforcement that drives out criminal landlords, for example exploring the merits of a landlord register.

4. Mental health and substance misuse (considerations for sustainable recovery)

We know that many people experiencing rough sleeping have substance misuse needs and can struggle to access the support they need. This year, we are delivering £52 million for substance misuse treatment services for people sleeping rough, building on £23 million in 2020/21. This will fund evidence-based drug and alcohol treatment and wraparound support to improve access to treatment, including for those with co-occurring mental health needs. This funding will provide the specialist support these individuals need to rebuild their lives off the streets and move towards sustaining longer-term accommodation.

People sleeping rough are more likely to experience mental ill-health, but can struggle to access the support they need. Individuals experiencing rough sleeping can access NHS services available locally for mental health support. We are continuing to work with DHSC who are delivering £30m for specialist homelessness NHS mental health support for people who are sleeping rough, whilst also

introducing new integrated models of care for individuals living with a serious mental illness. This is part of the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to expand and transform mental health services and to invest an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24.

5. Afghan Support

On 13 September we wrote to all Council Leaders and Chief Executives in England, Scotland and Wales setting out new funding in place to welcome Afghan families to the UK. Supporting Afghan interpreters and other locally employed staff who risked their lives working alongside UK forces in Afghanistan, and their families, is a high priority for this Government. We have a moral obligation to support those who have worked with us in Afghanistan, as well as those assessed to be under serious threat to life or at risk of reprisals.

To support this work locally, Government is providing a funding package to resource local authorities who come forward with offers to resettle Afghan families being assisted through ARAP and ACRS, enabling delivery of integration support for families and further support on employment, welfare benefits, and access to health, education, and other local services. This is to the value of £20,520 to cover the local authority welcome, integration offer and provision of services, up to £4,500 per child to cover education provision, subject to their age (year one only), £850 to cover English language provision, for adults requiring this support (year one only), £2,600 to cover health provision (year one only).

We have also agreed a further £20m fund of flexible funding in the current financial year (2021/22) to support local authorities with higher cost bases with any additional costs in the provision of services.

This is in addition to a £17m Housing Costs fund to help meet the costs of housing to enable Local Authorities to come forward with offers of accommodation to larger families as soon as possible. For example, it can be used to provide a top up payment, where it is needed to meet the gap between market rent and the Local Housing Allowance, or to help meet shortfalls which impact on a family's ability to cover their rent.