



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

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To all Members of Parliament in England

13 August 2018

Dear colleague

## **ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY**

One of this Government's key priorities is making the housing market work. Parliament has been at the heart of shaping how we have started to address this.

This week we are putting forward a range of comprehensive measures on housing including publishing a cross-government strategy setting out the first steps towards achieving our commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. We have worked across government, with the homelessness sector and local areas to set out our ambitious long-term vision for how both local and central government will work together, based around three core pillars: **Prevent, Intervene** and **Recover**, with a focus on moving to a 'rapid rehousing' approach.

I know you agree it is completely unacceptable that there are more than 4,750 people sleeping rough on our streets on any given night in England. Nobody should be without a roof over their head. That is why local authorities will now do more to prevent people from becoming homeless through the Homelessness Reduction Act – the most ambitious homelessness legislation in decades – which came into force on April 3.

In March, my predecessor wrote to you outlining how we make an immediate difference for people sleeping rough and those at risk of sleeping rough ahead of next winter through a new Rough Sleeping Initiative committing £30 million this year for 83 local authorities with the highest levels of rough sleeping. Taking action now has meant committing new resources to have an immediate impact this year and to ensure our manifesto commitment remains attainable.

That is why my department has been working through the Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Reduction Taskforce, with sector experts and local government to develop a comprehensive and ambitious strategy to eradicate rough sleeping.

We have built on the work of the Rough Sleeping Initiative in the strategy and set out further action we will take to support those currently sleeping rough. We are committing to refresh this strategy on an annual basis, setting out the progress we have made and ensuring that our interventions remain relevant and targeted.

We will prevent rough sleeping by providing timely support to those at risk, for example:

- piloting suitable accommodation and tailored for those leaving prison so they don't end up on the streets;
- researching the nature and scale of LGBT homelessness to determine what measures need to be put in place to prevent this;
- ensuring that local authorities investigate rough sleeper deaths to understand and tackle the root causes; and
- implementing the duty to refer on certain public bodies as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act to ensure that more people get the help they need faster.

We will intervene to help people already on the street get swift, targeted support by, for example:

- rolling out a new initiative, Somewhere Safe to Stay, to help up to 6,000 people who are both new to the streets and vulnerable to rough sleeping, offering support to rapidly identify issues that led them to sleeping rough;
- introducing 'navigators' – specialists who will act as trusted confidantes – who will help people sleeping rough access the appropriate services and accommodation;
- providing up to £30 million for health services for people sleeping rough, informed by the findings of a health provision audit to be carried out this year; and
- providing training for frontline staff on how to best help people under the influence of Spice and those who are victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery, as well as how best to support homeless LGBT people.

We will help people recover, find a new home quickly and rebuild their lives by, for example:

- providing affordable accommodation for those leaving hostels and domestic abuse refuges, and to support them in managing this accommodation;
- investing money from dormant bank accounts into housing for those on the streets or at risk of rough sleeping;
- launching a new fund to help up to 5,000 former rough sleepers and those at risk to sustain their tenancies by working with them to boost financial independence and access training and employment opportunities; and
- launching a £50 million fund for homes outside London for people ready to move on from hostels or refuges but need additional support.

We recognise that this is a challenging commitment, but I am confident this strategy, backed by £100 million of funding, will pave the way towards achieving our 2027 vision. It will complement the work already underway to meet our manifesto commitment, for example, through piloting the internationally-proven Housing First approach in the UK for the first time. I am clear, however, that this is just the first step towards achieving that vision.



**RT HON JAMES BROKESHIRE MP**