

GENERAL PUBLIC SECTOR MINISTERIAL IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

UPDATE ON ROUGH SLEEPING

13:00-14:00, WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL

SUMMARY

This paper provides an update on:

- i. **The work to date, led by Dame Louise Casey, on phase one of our emergency response for rough sleepers during the pandemic** which has led to over 90% of rough sleepers and those in the most unsafe of shared sleeping arrangements such as shelters at the beginning of this crisis being offered accommodation.
- ii. **Information about Phase two of this endeavour**, which will focus on ensuring the sustainability of rough sleeping accommodation, including ensuring accommodation is safe and secure and meets the needs of this cohort. Crucially, it will also include initiating work to prepare for Phase 3, move on.
- iii. **Phase three, planning for and implementing the next steps**, and how we support people to move out of hotels and into more sustainable accommodation with appropriate support, in line with Government's wider ambitions on rough sleeping, and to ensure as few people as possible are discharged to the street.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Rough sleeping is most often an issue which impacts towns and cities. London has 27% of all rough sleepers, with 47% of rough sleepers coming from London and the South East. However, there are also significant concentrations of rough sleepers in other parts of the country, including in Manchester, Birmingham, Brighton and Bristol. Any work in this space will therefore need to reflect those geographic impacts, taking a targeted approach and recognising that areas will require different levels of support.
2. Rough sleepers often have complex needs that have to be met in order to create a sustained pathway out of rough sleeping. For instance, MHCLG's latest data suggests that among all rough sleepers 61% are misusing drugs and/or alcohol, and over half have a mental health need. Furthermore, while rough sleepers are unlikely to meet shielding criteria as a result of advanced age (the average age of death of a rough sleeper is 47 years old) they are more likely to have health conditions which mean they may require shielding. For instance, a comparison of ONS data and our survey data on rough sleepers suggests that 5% of the general population in England rate their health as bad or very bad, compared to 34% of those who slept rough in the last year.
3. Over a quarter (26%) of rough sleepers in England are non-UK nationals. The majority of those individuals (52%) are in London. This group requires specific interventions, as their access to welfare and statutory homelessness assistance is predicated on their immigration status – many will not have the same level of access as British citizens.

PHASE ONE OF EMERGENCY ROUGH SLEEPING RESPONSE

4. In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, Dame Louise Casey was asked to spearhead MHCLG's response for rough sleepers, a group that due to their poor health is particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Taking action was vital to protect this vulnerable group, but also to protect the general public and stop wider transmission.

5. This resulted in MHCLG working with the GLA, London boroughs and Local Authorities (LAs) around the country, particularly those with high numbers of rough sleepers, to ensure they had arrangements in place to support rough sleepers, with daily calls and support from our specialist adviser teams. Specifically, they were asked to ensure they brought forward offers of accommodation for those rough sleeping, and those in the most unsafe of shared sleeping arrangements, such as communal night shelters, to reduce transmission. In many places the accommodation procured are hotels and local authorities were encouraged to follow a triaging approach, as recommended by colleagues in Health. Given the complexity of many rough sleepers this accommodation has also required a certain level of support staff to make sure they can be run safely, often repurposed staff from existing rough sleeping work.
6. This work has led, in just over a month, to some significant achievements. **Over 90% of the people who LAs identified as sleeping rough or in shelters at the beginning of the crisis have now had offers of accommodation, with over 5,400 units of accommodation being procured to support this cohort.** There have also been considerable local successes, for instance, in Birmingham all rough sleepers have had an offer of help and a new emergency housing options team has been put in place to support this work. Alternatively, at Heathrow airport, a collaboration between Hillingdon Council, Heathrow security services, aviation police and local transport services has significantly reduced rough sleeping at the airport – a well-known hub for rough sleeping. Health has also played a vital role in this work, supporting specialist COVID CARE (for symptomatic) and COVID PROTECT (for asymptomatic but vulnerable to the virus) sites being set up in London, and working more broadly with Local Authorities around the country to offer advice and support.
7. This work has also been backed up by recent announcements on funding to local areas. At the beginning of this crisis we moved quickly and announced targeted funding of £3.2 million for safeguarding symptomatic rough sleepers based on the guidance at that time. We have now also announced an additional £3.2 billion of wider local government funding to respond to COVID-19 and have been clear this includes funding for their work on rough sleeping. There is some variation in the spend on local authorities and we are working with them to drive better value for money where we have identified concerns.
8. While there may still be challenges with additional people coming onto the streets and requiring support as the pandemic continues, we are now considering what we need to do to ensure the continued success of this work. Firstly, we need to focus on ensuring the accommodation provided is safe and secondly, we need to ensure we are gathering intelligence and putting in place processes to prepare the individuals housed in this accommodation for move-on. This work represents an important opportunity to make significant progress against the ambitious target of ending rough sleeping.
9. Finally, we recognise we cannot house people in hotels indefinitely, not least because once lockdown measures start to be lifted hotels might re-open to customers and also because of the sizeable impact this has on local authority capacity. Therefore, it is vital we start to prepare for and to communicate the next phases of this work.

PHASE TWO: CARE AND PROTECT

10. Given the considerable numbers of people housed in this accommodation it is important we ensure processes are in place to ensure this accommodation is safe for both the rough sleepers and the staff who are supporting the accommodation. **Key to this will**

be to ensure that DHSC provide access to testing (for staff and rough sleepers) and PPE in these facilities. We have been working with the Department for Health to highlight these concerns, particularly given the new guidance on PPE for those working closely with rough sleepers, but we know from the sector that general shortages are still a cause of considerable concern and have been contacted by various members of the sector, e.g. YMCA, St Mungo's. We will need testing in order to move people back into the community.

11. Next, inevitably, given the complex nature of this cohort there will be a group of individuals who either will refuse and offer of help, or whose needs will lead to them being evicted from this accommodation. In these cases, local areas will have to work with a range of local partners to provide solutions which may, where appropriate involve the police. It is important for local areas to understand their levers here, and to this end **the Home Office is working with MHCLG to ensure the NPCC (National Police Chiefs' Council) provide guidance and clarity for frontline officers working with rough sleepers, making sure that appropriate action is taken which will include linking in with local support services.**
12. However, once people are safely in this accommodation, it is important to ensure there is a consistent offer of support and health provision in order to manage arrangements when people become symptomatic but also to tackle any underlying needs they have to give the individuals the best possible chance of move on. It is therefore vital that the **Department for Health, PHE and NHS England work with us to ensure not only arrangements are in place in local areas to support symptomatic people in this accommodation but also that their basic health needs are met, e.g. they are registered with their GPs, have underlying health conditions assessed, and undergo social care, substance misuse and mental health assessments where appropriate. We need an update from DHSC on how this work with NHSE is progressing.**
13. Lastly, it is vital at this point that we use this period to build our intelligence and data to inform next steps. MHCLG will be leading analysis of the needs of people in this provision. This has started in London, with the GLA and leading providers such as St Mungo's and Thames Reach we are leading work to understand what data people are collecting and how we can use this to inform the delivery of move on. We will look to replicate this work outside of London working with some key areas such as Bristol. This work will seek to understand what processes local areas have in place to understand the profiles and needs of the individuals in their accommodation and help them to put in place new processes where necessary, building on good work in London and elsewhere. We will be starting this work imminently. However, it is important to note that there are likely to be capacity and system constraints outside of London we will need to understand, for instance London has much more mature data systems in place through its use of the CHAIN database and also there is a much stronger network of support providers such as St Mungo's in London who have significant experience of developing processes to support this cohort.

PHASE THREE: NEXT STEPS BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS

14. The key aims of our work beyond the crisis are:
 - Move individuals into alternative accommodation once the lockdown begin to be lifted and reduce returns to the street.

- To use this opportunity of widespread engagement to maximise the group who are moved into supported, move-on accommodation as quickly as possible, or, where appropriate, offered returns home (to other countries).
15. With over 90% of rough sleepers now indoors from the start of the crisis, we have an unprecedented level of engagement and awareness of who the cohort is and their needs. This presents an opportunity to develop pathways out of rough sleeping for the vast majority of rough sleepers through Personal Housing Plans (PHPs).
 16. We recognise that it will not be possible to bring forward the necessary supply of move-on accommodation in the timeframe outlined above, and that many of these people will require some ongoing support. Even before the crisis there was a huge challenge to end rough sleeping and capacity issues in the system. This will require significant input from providers, housing associations and others a degree of innovation to deliver a step change in how we support people off the streets. The impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on the capacity of LAs, the construction industry, property agents, and registered housing providers means that this is likely to be even more challenging and that we need to consider interim accommodation options which could be used to house individuals until settled move-on accommodation is available. We therefore have a two-stage approach, looking at options in the short-medium term for interim accommodation, and a more strategic view of bringing forward move-on accommodation which is accompanied by some support, and particularly accelerating delivery of the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP).
 17. We are currently developing plans to fund this approach. Some of the funding for this project will be provided through the re-appropriation of the recently announced £381m secured at budget (£43m in 2020-21) for the RSAP. We also expect local areas to use other funding streams and services (e.g. their Rough Sleeping Initiative funding) judiciously to support this work. For example, though there is still likely to be some ongoing local need for street-based services, it may be that the scale of these services can be reduced or the delivery re-purposed. However, there are likely to be funding needs beyond this that we are currently seeking to quantify alongside a bottom-up review of existing work on homelessness and rough sleeping.

Move-on accommodation

18. The primary option we are developing is to bring forward as much sustainable, move-on accommodation as possible. This would be delivered through a combination of registered provider/local authority acquisitions, refurbishments or leases; use of the remaining Move-On Fund resource and accelerating the deployment of the £381m rough sleeping accommodation funding secured at budget. With all of these options we will keep a strong focus on value for money, ensuring that we are drawing on existing resources wherever possible.
19. Conversations with housing associations, and our assessment of existing programmes (e.g. the Move On Fund) prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, suggested that 900 units of accommodation would be a reasonable target in year 1 of the delivery of the move on accommodation funding secured at budget, taking account of the renewed ambition to end rough sleeping by the end of the parliament and the pace of work needed to achieve this. However, the position in the social housing sector may have changed, and we will

check this with them, but, in any case, 900 units is well short of the 6,000 units required for those stepping down from hotel provision.

Interim accommodation

As a first step we are also looking into safely re-opening night shelters (subject to Covid-19 risk assessment) to accommodate asymptomatic, less-vulnerable individuals. Where areas have high numbers we are investigating whether hostels and universities have capacity to accommodate individuals from hotels. We are exploring the possibility of putting in place large numbers of modular housing units, using modern methods of construction (MMC), to accommodate individuals on a temporary basis. HMG intervention would be targeted at supporting this work where capacity is significantly short of demand.

20. The individuals in hotels are a mix of both UK and non-UK nationals. Some of the latter will have a no recourse to public funds condition (or be otherwise ineligible for HMG support) and we will have to consider options for this cohort, including voluntary returns to other countries or through our work to support areas covered by the suspension of the derogation of Article 24(2) of the EU Free Movement directive. The GLA estimate that 30-40% of the individuals they have accommodated in London may be ineligible for government funding and support, though this is a rough estimate which they are looking to refine urgently. It is likely that even those who take an option of a voluntary return will need some form of interim accommodation prior to leaving the UK. **We would require the support of the Home Office and the Foreign Office in developing a strategic and co-ordinated approach to a voluntary reconnection offer for this group.**
21. We will deliver our step-down plan by working closely with a number of local authorities through our adviser teams, prioritising those have the greatest number of people in emergency accommodation and / or those with the fewest move-on options currently available. As with the approach adopted through the Rough Sleeping Initiative, advisers will work in partnership with authorities to develop plans that ensure that no individuals leave emergency accommodation without an offer of support. This approach will allow us to support those LAs we are most concerned about to deliver impact and value for money and to ensure that they are making the best use of the funds that are already available to them.
22. This work is now one a key area of focus and we expect to have better data and intelligence on achievability and worked up options by early May. We suggest returning to report on progress at that stage.

From: (Redacted) (HOUSING)
Sent: 23 April 2020 18:56
To: Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
Cc: (Redacted) Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government; (Redacted); Campbell J (Jeanette) (Special Adviser); CLG Coordination Unit; Communications Covid-19; Director for Housing and Social Justice; Homelessness Team; (redacted)

Subject: Homelessness Update - 23 April

Hi (Redacted)

Here is today's ministerial update for the Minister.

I can also confirm that we took part in a call with Justice Colleagues, SPS, Community Justice Scotland, Social Work Scotland, COSLA, ALACHO and others this afternoon and will prepare a note for the Minister to send to Mr Yousaf about prisoner release, as agreed this morning. A draft will be with you tomorrow for the Minister to consider.

Thanks

(Redacted)

Redacted Section out of Scope

Hotel to PRS proposal

- We have been approached by Crisis, Cyrenians and Simon Community asking for support towards a six month project.
- The programme would facilitate settled accommodation in the PRS for 10-15 individuals who are currently living in hotels in Edinburgh, having previously been rough sleeping or using the care shelter.
- It will use the uplift in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, which means 30% of property within Edinburgh's PRS is now affordable to households claiming benefits.
- The details are still being worked on so advice will follow once officials have mapped it out further but initial estimates are they will require around £65,000.

(Redacted) | Temporary Accommodation and Programme Strategy Team Leader | Better Homes Division | Scottish Government

From: (Redacted) On Behalf Of Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

Sent: 28 April 2020 15:57

To: Public Engagement Unit

Subject: FW: Subject: Eradicating Homelessness in Scotland

Importance: High

Hi

For MiCase fast track – for allocation (Redacted).

(Redacted)

Private Secretary to Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

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From: (Redacted)
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 1:41:04 PM
To: Stewart K (Kevin), MSP <Kevin.Stewart.msp@parliament.scot>
Subject: Subject: Eradicating Homelessness in Scotland

Email: Kevin.Stewart.msp@parliament.scot
To: Kevin Stewart SNP MSP for Aberdeen Central

Date 28th April 2020

Dear Kevin,

Subject: Eradicating Homelessness in Scotland

We wrote to the First Minister just one week ago calling on her Government to end homelessness in Scotland once and for all. We have all our homeless people in temporary accommodation due to the Covid 19 Pandemic so we have a moral duty not to put any of our homeless brothers and sisters back on the streets.

In addition with Covid 19 we are only at the beginning of this war against this Pandemic as medical experts have predicted that there could be future full or partial lockdowns following this one therefore for public health reasons it is only common sense to ensure all of our homeless people are offered permanent homes through an expansion of Rapid Re-Housing Transition and Housing First with wrap around support.

The First Minister in an article she wrote in the Herald on Sunday stated that we in Scotland can work better together to create a new society that is fairer and greener. That is good but has to move beyond platitudes and polemic to mean something tangible and real to people's everyday lives, therefore a good start towards that better society in Scotland would be for the Scottish Government to give extra resources now to all Local Authorities to offers permanent homes to all homeless people in Scotland.

We call on you to support the above and to speak or write to the First Minister calling for an end to homelessness in Scotland this year.

Yours sincerely,
(Redacted)
Campaign Coordinator
Scottish Tenants Organisation

MEETING BETWEEN CABINET SECRETARY FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOMELESSNESS STAKEHOLDERS

<p>TIMING</p>	<p>Roundtable phone call to be held on Tuesday 5 May 2020</p> <p>Time: 12.00 to 13.00</p>
<p>ATTENDEES</p>	<p><u>Attendees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (redacted) – Simon Community Scotland • (redacted) – Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers • (redacted) – Homeless Network Scotland • (redacted) – Shelter Scotland • (redacted) - ALACHO • Cllr Whitham - COSLA • (redacted) – Scottish Woman’s Aid • (redacted) - SOLACE • (redacted) - Crisis • (redacted) – Scottish Refugee Council <p><u>Official Support</u></p> <p>Graham Thomson – Homelessness Team Leader – 07760 990 895 Melanie Goodfellow – Briefing official</p>
<p>AGENDA</p>	<p>This stakeholder call will allow the Cabinet Secretary to discuss the actions and work needed to ensure a safe and effective move in to the recovery phase of the Covid-19 outbreak for those who are homeless and sleeping rough with our key partners.</p> <p>This will also be an opportunity to discuss paper published by the First Minister, which outlines the decision making process for transitioning out of the current agreed lockdown measures. The paper can be found here: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making/.</p> <p><u>Agenda</u></p> <p>Item 1 – Summary of key work and successes over the past two months Item 2 – Protecting people as we exit transition out of lockdown</p>

<p>YOUR MAIN OBJECTIVE</p>	<p><u>Objective</u></p> <p>This call will allow the Cabinet Secretary to discuss the recovery phase of the Covid-19 outbreak with a range of partners from the homelessness sector and understand how we can support them to build on the progress and good work that has been done since the outbreak and what challenges lie ahead.</p> <p><u>Key messages</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not too early to prepare for transition and recovery. • I do not want any backwards movement in efforts to tackle homelessness in the aftermath of this crisis. • This Government intends to capitalise on the powerful response from all parties, protect the progress made and work with local authorities and third sector partners to secure long term, systemic change. • Transitioning and planning for recovery will be the focus of the next Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group meeting on 9 June 2020.
<p>PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS</p>	<p>This call was requested by the Cabinet Secretary.</p> <p>An up to date FMQ brief is provided in Annex A (page 9).</p>

ITEM 1	Summary of key work and successes
ISSUE/ BACKGROUND	<p>The importance of our stakeholder network and the strong links officials from the Homelessness Policy Team has at all levels with stakeholders has been extremely important in supporting what we have been doing in the current crisis. Strong collaboration between partners has also been reported at a local level and ensured a good response to protect rough sleepers and other vulnerable homeless people.</p> <p><u>Funding</u></p> <p>We know that those who are homeless or sleeping rough are especially exposed during the pandemic and we are working closely with all 32 local authorities and frontline partners across Scotland to deliver a co-ordinated response and protect those most in need. That is why the £350 million Supporting Communities funding package was announced on 18 March. Part of this funding, the £50 million Wellbeing Fund will help third sector organisations across Scotland, including frontline homelessness services, to cope with the effects of the virus. An additional £45 million will also be added to the existing Scottish Welfare Fund so that local authorities can make community care grants and crisis grants available to those in immediate need.</p> <p>Key examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over £500,000 has been provided to third sector organisations in major cities, enabling them to requisition hotel accommodation for rough sleepers and people with no recourse to public funds. As a result, outreach teams report that there are now fewer than 30 people sleeping rough in Scotland. • We provided funding of nearly £30,000 to SAY Women to provide support to young women who are homeless and have experienced sexual assault. • Portaloos and showers have been delivered to a number of locations where Gypsy/Travellers were living with limited or no sanitation facilities. • Boosted by a £500,000 grant from SG, Social Bite is delivering up to 4,000 emergency food packs to those in need in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee each weekday. <p><u>Accommodation</u></p> <p>We have introduced emergency legislation to protect renters by increasing the eviction notice period, depending on the grounds used, for up to six months for private and social tenants. We have also written to landlords in the private and social rented sectors asking them to urge tenants to approach them if in financial difficulties and that in due time repayments plans can be put in place.</p>

<p>KEY MESSAGE(S)</p>	<p>All landlords should signpost tenants to information about the Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments. People who are unable to pay their rent may be eligible for Universal Credit, which includes support for housing costs. We have published guidance for the housing sector encouraging landlords to bring empty homes back into use to meet emergency need.</p> <p><u>Redacted out with Scope</u></p>
<p>WHAT THE STAKEHOLDER MAY SAY/ASK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What funding and support can SG provide to maintain this level of support for those who are homeless or sleeping rough? (May be raised by Simon Community and Glasgow Night Shelter who are looking for funding extensions) • How can we ensure we do not undo all of the progress we have made so far? • We want to build on what we have done and this Government intends to capitalise on this progress. • Planning a safe and effective transition will help us to ensure we do not lose this. •

SUGGESTED QUESTION(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can we do to sustain collaborative working going forward? • What challenges are we facing right now? • What can we do to support the most vulnerable groups, such as those who suffer from domestic abuse, following a change to lockdown restrictions?
CONTACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What more can we do to ensure those who were sleeping rough are supported in to a permanent settled home? • What can we do beyond Covid-19 to prevent people becoming homeless?
POINT	(redacted)

ITEM 2	Exit strategy
ISSUE/ BACKGROUND	<p><u>Working together</u></p> <p>Collaboration with our stakeholders and the building of trusted relationships is absolutely key in managing the challenges we may face when implementing an exit strategy. Listening to what people need and what works for them is essential. A joined up approach across the housing and homelessness sector has helped to drive forward this progress and this must continue.</p> <p>Housing as a sector is going to need continued support to recover from the impacts of Covid-19. Opportunities to improve outcomes for marginalised groups can usefully be rooted in ensuring positive housing outcomes, including housing support, but it is essential that we find ways linking with wider supports where needed. Appetite for new ways of working and challenging the previous default are important to build on and not lose: let's build back better.</p> <p>This crisis has shown us just how important our frontline workers are and we need to consider how we can truly recognise this and how we can better support them as we develop and implement our exit strategy.</p> <p><u>Rapid Rehousing and Housing First</u></p> <p>As well as working to improve outcomes during the course of the pandemic, we see this as an opportunity to capitalise on the powerful response from all parties and work with partners in local government and the third sector and those with lived experience to secure long term, systemic change for people who are homeless and sleeping rough. This means, for example, that no-one should return to unsuitable temporary accommodation or rough sleeping, or see the medical or social care they have accessed during this period withdrawn once the crisis ends.</p> <p>We want to put Rapid Rehousing and Housing First at the centre of our Covid-19 exit strategy. It is now more important than ever to provide the wraparound support that the most vulnerable need to find and sustain a settled home. By learning from what's working well now, we can build on what has been achieved over the last few weeks.</p> <p><u>Redacted out with scope</u></p> <hr/>

Redacted out with scope

Welfare reform

Another focus of the exit strategy will be on homelessness prevention as a result of the economic downturn, potentially putting people at risk of eviction. This can be supported by an assessment of the role of welfare benefits in preventing homelessness including:

- an assessment of the recent changes to UK welfare benefits and the potential impacts they will have on supporting tenants to sustain tenancies
- working with DWP on any further temporary improvements
- understanding the interactions between the support we are able to provide for example through discretionary housing payments and UK entitlements
- planning for any future changes to benefits including to Local Housing Allowance rates.

There has already been some impact as a result of the raising of the Local Housing Allowance rates, which has meant that the use of the Private Rented Sector is a more viable option as temporary or settled accommodation.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
WHAT THE STAKEHOLDER MAY SAY/ASK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing funding or any other support will be dangerous, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. • Local authorities will not be able to support the change to the UAO – how are local authorities expected to move everyone out of B&B by October when we have deliberately put people into hotel and B&B as a response to Covid-19? • We need to allocate more funding to support the rolling out of the UAO and Housing First work across Scotland.
KEY MESSAGE(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joined up national approach will be key in ensuring a safe and effective transition out of the current lockdown measures. • We can use this opportunity to make real and lasting change.
SUGGESTED QUESTION(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What challenges do you think you will face when it is safe for some of the lockdown measures to be relaxed? • How can we prepare an exit strategy that will support you to overcome these challenges? • Who else do we need to join us in the development of our plan? • How do we capitalise on the efforts of our key workers and improve their role? • How will we ensure those most at risk, such as those with NRPF, are supported before the lockdown restrictions are changed or relaxed?
CONTACT POINT	(redacted) -

From:

Sent: 06 May 2020 10:05

To: Scottish Ministers

Subject: (Case Ref: AD6016)

Good morning Minister

I am Senior Caseworker to Ash Denham MSP and contact you today on behalf of one of our constituents, Andrew Fournet. Andrew is also a very active Community Councillors within Edinburgh Eastern.

Andrew has been very pleased to see the huge efforts made by the Scottish government, the City of Edinburgh Council and other stakeholders to provide safe shelter and temporary accommodation for the city's rough sleepers. He is fearful, however, that with a return to a new normal on the horizon, this provision will disappear and Edinburgh shall see the return of those souls to the pavements of the capital.

Andrew would, therefore, like to ask, in light of the positive impacts made by local authorities across the country to be able to house rough sleepers and homeless people, how will the Scottish government support and incentivise local authorities to adhere to a housing-first policy in regards to rough sleepers and homeless people?

Any advice or information you may be able to provide would be greatly appreciated. As is, your time and consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely

(Redacted)

Senior Caseworker to

Ash Denham MSP

Edinburgh Eastern Constituency

{redacted}

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We are required to bring your attention to our updated Privacy Statement which explains how your information will be used and stored by our office. You can read the full Privacy Statement here: <https://ashdenham.scot/privacy-notice/>



Our ref: 20200035596
May 2020

Dear Ms Denham,

Thank you for your letter of 6 May 2020 on behalf of your constituent, Andrew Fournet, who has raised concerns about our plans to ensure we continue to support those who were previously homeless or sleeping rough, once we are able to begin to remove some of the current restrictions that are in place to tackle the coronavirus outbreak.

I would like to begin by highlighting that Scotland already has some of the strongest rights in the world for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping, and everyone who is threatened with homelessness is entitled to help from their local authority to secure a stable home.

I have made it clear that I do not want to see any backwards movement in efforts to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the aftermath of this crisis. In order to do this, we intend to capitalise on the powerful response from all parties, protect the progress made and work with local authorities and third sector partners to secure long term, systemic change. This means, for example, that no-one should return to unsuitable temporary accommodation or rough sleeping, or see the medical or social care they have accessed during this period withdrawn once the crisis ends.

We want to put Rapid Rehousing and Housing First at the centre of our recovery plan and it is now more important than ever to provide the wraparound support that the most vulnerable need to find and sustain a settled home. By learning from what's working well now, we are building on what has been achieved over the last few weeks.

The Housing First Pathfinder programme continues to find long-term accommodation for people even with challenges posed by the coronavirus crisis. Scotland launched the Housing First pathfinder programme in August 2018 in five cities, recognising that those with more complex needs require a settled home with wraparound support to prevent repeat homelessness. The latest figures show that more than 250 people have started the

programme with a tenancy sustainment rate of 92%. You may also be interested to know that Housing First Scotland have published their first [Annual check-up on Scotland's Housing First Pathfinder](#) providing analysis of the programme to date. Innovative approaches like Housing First are vital if we want to keep rough sleepers off the streets after the crisis.

We know there are people, who were previously homeless or rough sleeping, in the process of being assessed for Housing First just now and it will be useful to see how local authorities can move them into settled accommodation. I see this as an opportunity for local authorities and partners to work together to identify more people who will benefit from a Housing First tenancy. I do not want to see the numbers of rough sleepers increase again once we begin to lift restrictions and we are developing a recovery plan to ensure this does not happen.

I would again like to thank you for bringing your constituents concerns to my attention and hope that the information I have provided is sufficient enough to take back to Mr Fournet.