

Email Chain A

From: [redacted]

Sent: 25 February 2021 17:27

To: Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning <MinisterLGHP@gov.scot>

Cc: Campbell J (Jeanette) (Special Adviser) <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted] >; News Desk <Newsdesk@gov.scot>; [redacted] >; [redacted] >; [redacted] [redacted] >; [redacted] >; [redacted] [redacted] >; [redacted] >; [redacted] >; [redacted] >; [redacted] >; [redacted] >; [redacted] >

Subject: Ministerial clearance - Con NR - Homelessness deaths - Courier

Private Office,

Liz Smith has put out a release on the homelessness stats, tailoring it to Fife.

I've agreed a tweaked version of the line/background from Tuesday with SpAds and officials and would be grateful for clearance from Mr Stewart.

Housing Minister Kevin Stewart said:

"Each one of these deaths is a tragedy, representing some of the most vulnerable people in our society. While this report is based on experimental statistics, its findings will help us to further understand the many issues affecting the most vulnerable in our society as we redouble our efforts to eradicate homelessness.

"Ending homelessness once and for all is our priority – Scotland has some of the strongest rights in the world in this area, and everyone who is threatened with homelessness is entitled to help from their local authority to secure a stable home. While there are now only a dozen or so people sleeping rough, we must ensure everyone experiencing any form of homelessness is fully supported into settled accommodation. We're investing £32.5 million of our £50 million Ending Homelessness Together fund to help local authorities prioritise settled accommodation for all. Our Winter Plan for Social Protection fund, announced in November last year, added another £5 million to accelerate this work.

"The First Minister has declared a national mission to cut the number of drug-related deaths in Scotland, with additional funding of £250m over the next session of the parliament, and £5m made available immediately to ensure priority work gets underway as quickly as possible. Our new Minister for Drugs Policy, Angela Constance, is working urgently with our Drugs Deaths Taskforce to address this issue, including by helping to tackle homelessness and improving mental health services and their links into addiction services."

Background

- under Scottish homelessness legislation, local authorities have a duty to offer specific forms of assistance to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, including advice and assistance, temporary accommodation and settled or “permanent” rehousing
- temporary accommodation refers to any accommodation secured between the point that an individual makes a homelessness application to a local authority and the point at which the local authority discharges their duty to that applicant. Temporary accommodation may be run by the council, a private landlord, a housing association or a voluntary organisation and can include flats, houses, bedsits, house share, hostels and B&Bs
- the National Records of Scotland statistics published this week are experimental and there are limitations to what these data can tell us
- these statistics rely on information provided to registrars when a death is registered. The informant is usually a family member or a friend, but in some cases the informant may be a police officer, a social worker, a funeral director or other person. In these cases, the informant may not have all of the information needed to determine whether the person was homeless at the time of their death. A small percentage of people present to their local authority as homeless but never take up an offer of homeless accommodation. They may be able to stay with friends or relatives until permanent accommodation is found for them. They are unlikely to be identified in these statistics
- if a person dies while sleeping rough, they will only be picked up in these statistics if the informant provides this information to the registrar when registering the death
- The 15 estimated deaths in Fife 2019 are not in addition to the 12 identified deaths. We identified 12 deaths from the records and our statistical model estimates that the actual number was 15. The 12 is part of the 15, not in addition to the 15.

Liz Smith, MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife

MID SCOTLAND AND FIFE MSP CALLS ON SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TO TACKLE ‘SHOCKING’ HOMELESSNESS DEATHS SITUATION

Mid Scotland and Fife MSP Liz Smith is calling on the Scottish Government to address the “shocking” situation regarding homelessness deaths in Fife.

The Scottish Conservative politician was reacting to alarming figures released by the National Records of Scotland (NRS), which show that statistics for homelessness deaths in the region in 2019 were above the Scottish average.

The NRS figures go up to 2019 and reveal that Scotland had the highest rate of homeless deaths in the UK, with a rate of 52.2 per million population aged between 15-74, compared to 18.0 in England and 14.3 in Wales.

Commenting, Liz Smith MSP said: “The homelessness deaths for Fife in 2019 are quite shocking and demonstrate that action needs to be taken by the Scottish Government to address this issue. To increase from six estimated deaths and five identified deaths in 2018 to 15 estimated deaths and 12 identified deaths in 2019 gives me great cause for concern.

“These figures show that the homelessness rate for Fife in 2019 was 53.6 per million – above the 52.2 per million overall average in Scotland, which is alarming.”

She continued: “The Scottish Conservatives have committed to end rough sleeping by 2026 – the end of the next Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government have had 14 years to tackle this horrendous problem, but warm words aren’t enough – we need action.

“It is high time the Scottish Government stepped up to the plate to address homelessness. However, sadly we haven’t seen much sign of that as was exemplified in last month’s Budget when they committed to slashing the social housing budget by over £100 million – a move which was criticised by homeless charity, Shelter.”

The newly released NRS figures included people who were staying in temporary accommodation at the time of their deaths, as well as rough sleepers.

Email Chain B

From: Campbell J (Jeanette) (Special Adviser)

Sent: 25 February 2021 17:16

To: [redacted ; [redacted; [redacted; News Desk ; [redacted; [redacted ; [redacted; [redacted; [redacted; [redacted; [redacted; [redacted; [redacted; [redacted

Subject: RE: For allocation - Con NR - Homelessness deaths - Courier

Yes thanks

From: [redacted >

Sent: 25 February 2021 16:36

To: [redacted >; [redacted >; News Desk <Newsdesk@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted [redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted >; Campbell J (Jeanette) (Special Adviser) <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: For allocation - Con NR - Homelessness deaths - Courier

Jeanette,

Liz Smith has put out a release on the homelessness stats – we’ve agreed a tweaked version of the line/background from Tuesday – are you content for this to go up to the Minister?

Housing Minister Kevin Stewart said:

“Each one of these deaths is a tragedy, representing some of the most vulnerable people in our society. While this report is based on experimental statistics, its findings will help us to further understand the many issues affecting the most vulnerable in our society as we redouble our efforts to eradicate homelessness.

“Ending homelessness once and for all is our priority – Scotland has some of the strongest rights in the world in this area, and everyone who is threatened with homelessness is entitled to help from their local authority to secure a stable home. While there are now only a dozen or so people sleeping rough, we must ensure everyone experiencing any form of homelessness is fully supported into settled accommodation. We’re investing £32.5 million of our £50 million Ending Homelessness Together fund to help local authorities prioritise settled accommodation for all. Our Winter Plan for Social Protection fund, announced in November last year, added another £5 million to accelerate this work.

“The First Minister has declared a national mission to cut the number of drug-related deaths in Scotland, with additional funding of £250m over the next session of the parliament, and £5m made available immediately to ensure priority work gets underway as quickly as possible. Our new Minister for Drugs Policy, Angela Constance, is working urgently with our Drugs Deaths Taskforce to address this issue, including by helping to tackle homelessness and improving mental health services and their links into addiction services.”

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Email Chain C

From: [redacted]>

Sent: 25 February 2021 15:09

To: News Desk <Newsdesk@gov.scot>; [redacted >; [redacted] [redacted) <[redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted; [redacted >; [redacted] [redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted] [redacted >; [redacted >; [redacted] [redacted >; [redacted >

Subject: FW: For allocation - Con NR - Homelessness deaths - Courier

Colleagues,

Liz Smith has put out a release on homelessness stats, and tailored it to Fife – I've got the lines we issued on Tuesday, but I was just wondering if we've got any Fife specific data/lines I could add in?

“These figures show that the homelessness rate for Fife in 2019 was 53.6 per million – above the 52.2 per million overall average in Scotland, which is alarming.”

Housing Minister Kevin Stewart said:

“Each one of these deaths is a tragedy, representing some of the most vulnerable people in our society. While this report is based on experimental statistics, its findings will help us to further understand the many issues affecting the most vulnerable in our society as we redouble our efforts to eradicate homelessness.

“Ending homelessness once and for all is our priority – Scotland has some of the strongest rights in the world in this area, and everyone who is threatened with homelessness is entitled to help from their local authority to secure a stable home. While there are now only a dozen or so people sleeping rough, we must ensure everyone experiencing any form of homelessness is fully supported into settled accommodation. We're investing £32.5 million of our £50 million Ending Homelessness Together fund to help local authorities prioritise settled accommodation for all. Our Winter Plan for Social Protection fund, announced in November last year, added another £5 million to accelerate this work.

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Full query

I'm just looking for a response to this press release from Liz Smith MSP on homelessness deaths in Fife for Kingdom FM.

Could the Scottish Government provide a reply by 5.30pm tonight please?

Liz Smith, MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife

MID SCOTLAND AND FIFE MSP CALLS ON SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TO TACKLE 'SHOCKING' HOMELESSNESS DEATHS SITUATION

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Commenting, Liz Smith MSP said: “The homelessness deaths for Fife in 2019 are quite shocking and demonstrate that action needs to be taken by the Scottish Government to address this issue. To increase from six estimated deaths and five identified deaths in 2018 to 15 estimated deaths and 12 identified deaths in 2019 gives me great cause for concern.

“These figures show that the homelessness rate for Fife in 2019 was 53.6 per million – above the 52.2 per million overall average in Scotland, which is alarming.”

She continued: “The Scottish Conservatives have committed to end rough sleeping by 2026 – the end of the next Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government have had 14 years to tackle this horrendous problem, but warm words aren’t enough – we need action.

“It is high time the Scottish Government stepped up to the plate to address homelessness. However, sadly we haven’t seen much sign of that as was exemplified in last month’s Budget when they committed to slashing the social housing budget by over £100 million – a move which was criticised by homeless charity, Shelter.”

The newly released NRS figures included people who were staying in temporary accommodation at the time of their deaths, as well as rough sleepers.

Email Chain D

From: [redacted]>

Sent: 15 March 2021 10:05

To: [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>

Subject: Pre-election monitoring - Housing and Homelessness

Good morning all

We’re starting to see pre-election monitoring material so I am passing on the elements relevant to us. Will continue to do so, for awareness, as I see them.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted]Scottish Government

Mobile: [redacted]

Housing and homelessness

- The **Scottish Liberal Democrats** in their pre-manifesto says they will support a plan to build at least [37,100 new homes for social rent](#) in the next five years.
- The **Scottish Conservatives** say they would [end rough sleeping by 2026](#) by expanding Housing First, supporting people to access private sector tenancies, updating the law surrounding the prevention of homelessness and setting ambitious housebuilding targets in a 2020 policy paper.
- The Scottish Liberal Democrats say they would endorse a commitment to a [no eviction policy](#) for asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants whose rights are exhausted.

Welfare/Social Security

- The **Scottish Liberal Democrats** in their pre-manifesto say they will work with the UK Government to develop a [system of universal basic income](#), which they will seek to develop into a permanent feature (p.8).
- The **Scottish Liberal Democrats** say they will [maintain the new Scottish social security system](#) and make sure the new benefits get established in their pre-manifesto (p.8).
- The **Scottish Liberal Democrats** in their pre-manifesto say that to end fuel poverty, they will [establish catch-up zones for communities furthest behind](#) (p.9).

First Minister Question Briefing Extracts

The following are relevant extracts from First Minister Question briefings where the majority of the content was out of scope for the request.

Extract from First Minister Questions Briefing - 21 December 2020

Scottish Conservatives pledge to end rough sleeping by 2026.

- This is a commitment that this Government is already delivering, through our updated Ending Homelessness Together action plan and supported by the £50m Ending Homelessness Together fund.
- Since March, we provided over £1.5 million to third sector organisations in Edinburgh and Glasgow to enable them to acquire emergency hotel accommodation for people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness.
- Our quick and effective response has dramatically reduced the number of people sleeping rough and we are determined to learn from, and build on, this success.
- The pandemic has prompted a renewed focus on the practices and programmes we want to build on, such as continuing the transition to rapid rehousing and scaling up Housing First across Scotland.
- Our updated action plan, published jointly with COSLA in October, renews our commitment to ending homelessness once and for all, by placing greater emphasis on prevention of homelessness and by accelerating rapid rehousing to prioritise settled accommodation over temporary accommodation.
- Our new rapid rehousing welcome centres and are a first step to ending the use of night shelters altogether.
- Housing providers and the construction sector can plan more affordable homes thanks to an additional £200 million funding commitment recently announced by Communities Secretary Aileen Campbell.
- Ahead of the Scottish Budget in January, the interim funding available for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme in 2021-22 has been increased from £300 million to £500 million.

Extract from First Minister Questions Briefing 1st and 8th March 2021

MEDIA REPORTS (24 Feb) reaction from Shelter Scotland saying a shortage of social housing is undermining vital schemes such as Housing First and from Scottish Conservatives calling for an end to rough sleeping.