

6000 new supported homes as part of landmark commitment to end rough sleeping

- Thousands more homes to be made available for vulnerable rough sleepers
- Commitment is unprecedented and most ambitious of its kind with single biggest injection of specialist accommodation since the Rough Sleeping Initiative began;
- It will be backed by £433 million of government funding with 3,300 homes to be made available in next 12 months
- Dame Louise Casey highlights 'extraordinary opportunity' to end rough sleeping for good

Radical plans to provide thousands of long-term, safe homes for vulnerable rough sleepers taken off the streets during the pandemic have been unveiled today (24 May 2020) by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP.

This ambitious commitment – the biggest of its kind since the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative began – will be backed by £160 million this year and will support many of the thousands of rough sleepers currently housed in emergency accommodation to move on to more sustainable, long-term housing.

By accelerating plans for the £381 million announced for rough sleeping services at Budget – now extended to £433 million – the funding will ensure that 6,000 new housing units will be put into the system, with 3,300 of these becoming available in the next 12 months. In addition to accelerating this capital spend for investment in housing stock, the government is also increasing the revenue support of the total programme by 37% to make sure that the rough sleepers have the support they need to stay off the streets for good.

Once in their new home, rough sleepers will be supported by specialist staff to access the help they need, such as support for mental health or substance abuse problems, so they can rebuild their lives, move towards training and work, and remain off the streets for good.

Thanks to the efforts of charities, local government and other partners, in just over two months, more than 90% of rough sleepers known to councils at the beginning of the pandemic have now been offered accommodation where they

can remain safe and able to protect themselves during the crisis.

The plans are being pulled together by the Rough Sleeping Covid 19 Response Taskforce, led by Dame Louise Casey, bringing together local government, charities, faith groups, public sector partners and businesses in order to use the coronavirus crisis and current successful work so far in bringing 'everyone in' as a catalyst towards ending rough sleeping for good.

As part of this commitment, Homes England, in partnership with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has pledged to work hand-in-hand with leading housing associations and local authorities to fast-track thousands of units of longer-term accommodation for rough sleepers needed now.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP said:

We have offered accommodation to over 90% of known rough sleepers in order to help them stay safe during the pandemic. This has been possible because of an incredible effort by the government, councils and charities. Thousands of lives have been protected as a result of the shared commitment to protect the most vulnerable in our society throughout this national emergency and we continue to fund this vital project.

This government wants to end rough sleeping for good, and we now have a real opportunity to deliver on this moral mission. I'm backing this effort with £433 million to fast-track the longer-term and safe accommodation needed to ensure as few rough sleepers as possible return to the streets. This is an unprecedented commitment – the most ambitious of its kind and the single biggest injection of specialist accommodation since the rough sleepers initiative began.”

This will be completely transformative and changes the lives of thousands of rough sleepers for the better.

Dame Louise Casey said:

The goal is ambitious – together, we want to do everything possible to ensure that vulnerable people who were sleeping rough and have come inside during this pandemic – some for the first time in a very long time – do not go back to the streets.

The effort so far has been immense – councils, charities and health providers have all worked tirelessly to support some of the most vulnerable during these unprecedented times. I want to thank all of those who have already stepped up to support rough sleepers so far and those who are pledging accommodation and future support.

We know this safe harbour is just the start – we have here an

extraordinary opportunity to end rough sleeping for good.

Nick Walkley, CEO Homes England said:

The steps taken to reduce homelessness have been one of the few silver linings in recent months. The opportunity to work with Dame Louise Casey to build on these recent successes and work towards ending rough sleeping for good is something everyone at Homes England is supportive of. We look forward to working closely with MHCLG and our partners to support the Taskforce.

Over the coming weeks, government will work in partnership with councils, local leaders and the property sector to ensure this new generation of housing for some of the most vulnerable in society is delivered as quickly as possible and in the most cost-effective way. Interim accommodation is also being committed by the YHA, the YMCA and some universities. The taskforce will continue to work with partners on this so that nobody has to go back to the streets.

Ministers have also announced a further £6 million for frontline homeless charities to directly support their important, vital work. In addition, the Department for Education will be providing more than £700,000 for councils to support care leavers at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping.

Last month the Communities Secretary appointed Dame Louise Casey to spearhead a specialist taskforce to lead the next phase of the government's support for rough sleepers during the pandemic. The taskforce will work hand-in-hand with councils, charities, faith groups and other partners across the country on plans to ensure rough sleepers can move into safe accommodation once the immediate crisis is over. The taskforce will also ensure the thousands of rough sleepers now in accommodation continue to receive the physical and mental health support they need over the coming weeks and months.

The £160 million is part of the £381 million announced at Budget for accommodation for rough sleepers over a four year period. We have brought a substantial proportion of the funding forwards into this year to meet local need given the changed circumstances brought about by Covid-19 and the opportunity this presents. Support funding will still be profiled over 4 years to ensure people get the long term support they need. The means overall funding increases to £433 million as a result of accelerating the programme.

As a result of this announcement, the devolved administrations will receive up to £18 million of additional capital funding in 2020 to 2021 through the Barnett formula. This means up to £9.2 million for the Scottish Government, up to £5.6 million for the Welsh Government and up to £3.1 million for the Northern Ireland Executive.