

Action to tackle homelessness

The Minister is expected to say:

“Talking to those I meet, I often hear distressing accounts of family breakdown, domestic violence, mental health problems, financial problems, substance misuse and bereavement.

“These issues can lead to some people losing their homes and create a vicious cycle leading to rough sleeping.

“The recent increase seen in the National Rough Sleeper Count is disappointing in the face of our efforts and investment but I believe it largely reflects the increasing effects of continued austerity, increasing in-work poverty and welfare reforms”.

As well as new funding to their revenue settlements, councils in Wales will receive grant funding of £2.8m in 2018/19 to embed homelessness prevention best practice models which will help to reduce rough sleeping, prevent youth homelessness, improve access to the private rented sector and strengthen services for people with mental health and substance misuse problems.

Rebecca Evans AM will also say:

“Today I’m publishing a policy document which outlines how Housing First will be taken forward across Wales. There is strong evidence that Housing First works best where its core principles are followed – housing with no strings attached, ready and available support services and access to funds to help meet individuals’ needs.

“I’m also launching our Action Plan to reduce rough sleeping. Developed with organisations including Shelter Cymru, and members of Rough Sleepers Cymru, it covers a range of activity, supporting people to engage with services and get off the streets as quickly as possible. It also addresses wider issues such as a review of priority need and our guidance on cold weather plans.

“Rough sleeping is one aspect of homelessness. We can only truly address the issue if we have a system that offers secure housing for all. Building homes and expanding social housing stock can only go so far and I will work with the private rented sector to find innovative ways to harness their supply and meet demand. I will also be looking at how we continue to reduce the number of homes lying empty.

“The Welsh Government has a good track record of delivery on homelessness prevention and we will continue to provide the

leadership to ensure we can end the need for people to sleep rough in Wales.”