

[Press release: James Brokenshire launches £20m fund to help homeless into private rented homes](#)

- £20 million fund launched on World Homeless Day to help those people facing homelessness into safe and secure homes
- Funding aims to help up to 9,000 people secure their own home
- Prisons, Job centres and NHS Trusts must now refer those at risk of homelessness to councils under new duty

Thousands of vulnerable people facing homelessness are set to benefit from the launch of a £20 million scheme to help them secure a private rented home.

The [Private Rented Sector Access Fund](#), launching today on World Homeless Day (10 October 2018) by Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, is a dedicated fund designed to help up to 9,000 people who are or at risk of becoming homeless to secure their own home.

A key part of the government's expert-backed [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#), the fund will be used to either help set up locally-led schemes or expand those currently in use. These schemes will be tailored to match the needs of each local area's residents and landlords.

This could involve councils providing financial support to help those to access or maintain their tenancies, such as paying deposits for the tenancy or rent payments. Alternatively, some schemes may involve the council managing the property on the landlord's behalf.

Communities Secretary, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP:

It is vital we give people facing homelessness a route out of it and a chance to rebuild their lives. The private rented sector has an important role in this.

This £20 million fund will allow councils to put in place vital new schemes so that those at risk will have the support to secure their own tenancy.

It is just one part of the wide-ranging work we are doing to help tackle all forms of homelessness, including our Rough Sleeping Strategy as we ensure more homes are made available for those in need.

The fund is modelled on evidence provided from the successful programme run by leading homelessness charity Crisis which supported schemes to help homeless people into thousands of private rental tenancies.

The new fund's launch comes as patients, prisoners and jobseekers at risk of homelessness must now be referred to their local housing authority under key legislation. The [duty to refer](#), a core part of the Homelessness Reduction Act, came into force this month.

It places new responsibilities on key public bodies such as prisons, Job centres and NHS Trusts to ensure those at risk get the help they need.

The Rough Sleeping Strategy was launched in August this year and set out a number of schemes designed to support those sleeping on Britain's streets rapidly into accommodation.

The minimum tenancy or existing tenancy supported by the schemes will be a period of 12 months.

Bidding for the schemes is open to all local councils, who are permitted to submit separate bids.

The competition for bids runs for 6 weeks from 10 October.

Up to £5 million in funding is available for bids for the 2018 to 2019 financial year with £15 million available for the 2019 to 2020 financial year.

The Crisis Private Rented Sector Access Programme ran from 2010 until 2014, backed by £11 million in funding from the government. The programme supported over 153 schemes across the sector, creating 8,000 tenancies over 4 years. A total of 90% of these schemes created lasted beyond 6 months.

The duty to refer

The duty to refer came into place on 1 October 2018. It is an element of the Homelessness Reduction Act which became legislation in April 2018, placing new duties on councils to prevent and relieve homelessness.

See the [full list of public authorities covered under the duty to refer](#).

Referrals under the duty to refer cannot be made without the service user's consent which should be informed and made in writing or given orally.

[Press release: SSE/Npower merger receives final clearance after consultation](#)

The decision comes after a [provisional clearance](#) from the inquiry group of independent Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) panel members, who

investigated how the merger would affect householders. The group specifically examined competition concerns around how the deal would impact 'standard variable tariff' prices.

Following a period of consultation, the CMA has decided to clear the merger after finding that SSE and Npower are not close rivals for customers on these tariffs.

Anne Lambert, Chair of the Inquiry Group, said:

With many energy companies out there, people switching away from expensive standard variable tariffs will still have plenty of choice when they shop around after this merger.

But we know that the energy market still isn't working well for many people who don't switch, so we looked carefully at how the merger would affect SVT prices. Following a thorough investigation and consultation, we are confident that SSE and Npower are not close rivals for these customers and so the deal will not change how they set SVT prices.

The CMA found that the number of people switching energy provider is the highest in a decade and the proportion on SVTs has fallen, with customers usually switching to a cheaper, non-SVT, tariff.

However, as those who do not switch are usually on one of the large energy suppliers' already expensive SVTs, the CMA carefully examined whether the merger would change how larger suppliers set these prices.

It found that SVT prices are mainly driven by changing wholesale costs, but the large energy suppliers take account of each other's tariff changes when choosing the size and timing of their own. Bad publicity from being the first to increase charges or make bigger increases means more of their customers switch away. The CMA therefore carefully considered whether a reduction in the number of large suppliers would encourage larger or earlier tariff changes.

It found that in this case SSE and Npower do not pay special attention to each other, consistent with the evidence that they are not close rivals for SVT customers, who instead prefer to move to other suppliers. Therefore, the merger is not expected to have a significant impact on SVT pricing.

Looking ahead, Ofgem's price cap is also expected to protect people on standard variable tariffs.

As part of its assessment, the inquiry group examined evidence from the six large energy suppliers; smaller suppliers; customer groups; and regulators, before going on to consult on its provisional clearance. It received no evidence during the consultation that altered the provisional decision.

Further details are available on the investigation [case page](#).

Notes to editor

1. This merger investigation is into the proposed deal between SSE Retail and Npower. Any future energy mergers – if they qualify for CMA investigation – will be scrutinised in relation to the specifics of the case.
2. The proposed merger primarily relates to SSE Retail and Npower's energy supply activities to domestic customers in GB. SSE plc's other interests (for example in generation and distribution, and supply to business customers) are not included in the proposed merger.
3. The CMA investigated the energy market in 2014-2016 and found many consumers and microbusinesses were paying more than they needed to. The CMA made recommendations to modernise and reform the market. These recommendations are being taken forward by Ofgem and will support consumers' increasing engagement with the market.
4. The decision-maker on CMA Phase 2 inquiries like this one is the Inquiry Group. The appointed Inquiry Group is chosen from the CMA's independent panel members who come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy, business, and public/consumer policy. The membership of an inquiry group reflects a mix of expertise and experience.
5. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
6. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.

[News story: Scottish Secretary to Welcome 100-Plus Lockerbie Cyclists to Edinburgh Castle](#)

This Saturday [13 October 2018], Scottish Secretary David Mundell will welcome more than a hundred cyclists from the south of Scotland to Edinburgh

Castle as part of a nearly 700-mile cycle to mark the 30th anniversary of the Lockerbie bombing.

The cyclists will ride en masse from Lockerbie to Edinburgh, as the second stage of a 672 mile Lockerbie – Syracuse cycle which started with visits to local schools around Lockerbie. A group of five local cyclists will then travel on to the USA to complete the Arlington – Syracuse leg of the journey.

On 21 December 1988, 259 passengers on board Pan Am Flight 103 from London Heathrow were killed by a terrorist bomb which detonated in the skies above Lockerbie. The aircraft wreckage crashing on the town killed 11 residents on the ground.

Thirty years on, 'Cycle to Syracuse' aims to complete the journey on behalf of those who could not. It will remember the 270 lives lost in the air and on the ground, the work of the emergency services, and the response of the townspeople in the aftermath.

A core of five cyclists will represent Lockerbie Academy, Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Scottish Ambulance Service and the RAF Mountain Rescue Service. They all have strong links with the town and the bombing.

The core group of cyclists are:

- Colin Dorrance: On the night Colin was an 18-year-old off-duty police officer (three months into his career in the police service and at the time Scotland's youngest police officer). He saw the plane crash and was immediately recalled to duty. Colin was involved in the search and rescue and recovery operation for a month. He is also a former pupil of Lockerbie Academy.
- David Whalley: David led the RAF search and rescue team on the night.
- Paul Rae: Paul was an 18-year-old Lockerbie resident in 1988. On the night he volunteered to help search the hills.
- David Walpole: David is now a paramedic in the Lockerbie/Annan area. In 1988 he was a bank manager in Dumfries.
- Brian Asher: Brian is the head teacher at Lockerbie Academy and responsible for building the school's links with Syracuse.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

I was brought up in Lockerbie, and know how deeply the air disaster has impacted on the town. But I have also seen the very positive links which have grown between Lockerbie and Syracuse University over the years since. As we approach the 30th anniversary of the bombing, it is fitting that five local men are making the journey to Syracuse to remember those lost, and to raise money for a local youth mental health charity. I wish them good luck for their journey, and look forward to meeting them again in Syracuse for the University's 30th service of remembrance.

Colin Dorrance said:

Our journey to Syracuse started in the primary schools around Lockerbie. We have had the opportunity to tell the children about the bombing, but also about the wonderful opportunity that they may have to study at Syracuse in the future.

It has encouraged them to speak to their parents about the bombing, learning something of how it affected the older generation in 1988. We are all reminded of just how selfless and heroic so many people were, and how widely it is still talked about today. Of course, for some, the journey will never end.

My teammates and I are looking forward to being joined by our friends, neighbours and colleagues on the Lockerbie-Edinburgh leg this weekend. And then we focus on the 600 miles we will cycle in the USA to Syracuse University. The prospect is exciting, humbling and moving all in one.

As well as marking the anniversary, the cycle will celebrate the strong links between the town of Lockerbie and Syracuse University, where 35 of the victims were studying. Since 1990, a 'Syracuse Scholarship' has allowed young people from Lockerbie Academy to study in the USA. Fifty eight students have now studied at the University, forging strong bonds and friendships between families on both sides of the Atlantic.

The cycle group will also raise money for local youth mental health charity Soul Soup, to employ a dedicated worker within Lockerbie Academy.

On their journey the team will carry a specially-crafted Shepherd's Crook, sourced from wood in the Tundergarth area, and a book of commemoration. They will be presented to the Chancellor and President of Syracuse University as gifts from the town of Lockerbie.

Press release: New mental health campaign launched across the Midlands

Public Health England (PHE) is encouraging adults in the Midlands to look after their mental health as they do their physical health, through its new Every Mind Matters campaign.

The new campaign highlights that while we can all feel stressed, anxious, low or have trouble sleeping, there are simple actions we can take to manage these issues and prevent them from becoming more serious.

It encourages people to visit the [Every Mind Matters guide](#), a free NHS-approved online resource which provides expert advice, practical tips, and experiences from real people to help manage these issues and those of others.

Each year, around one in four people in England experience a mental health problem, and the proportion of diagnosable common mental health conditions has increased by 20% in 20 years.

A new survey of adults in the Midlands conducted for PHE also shows nearly three quarters (71%) of people in the Midlands report experiencing one or more of low mood, anxiety, stress and trouble sleeping, frequently or occasionally.

Stress is the most common response, with over half (53%) experiencing this frequently or occasionally, compared to 51% for sleeplessness, 46% for low mood and 40% for anxiety.

The survey also found that two thirds (66%) of adults in the Midlands say they look after their physical health on a weekly basis, but less than half (46%) look after their mental health as regularly.

These figures highlight the importance of helping people to better understand and take action on their own mental health.

Having good mental health can help us feel and function better, have more positive relationships with those around us, and deal with and manage difficult times now and into the future. Over time, having good mental health may also reduce our risk of physical health problems.

Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement at Public Health England, said:

With the pressures of modern life, it's normal to feel stressed, anxious, low or have trouble sleeping some of the time. But when these become overwhelming or frequent they can be signs of a more serious problem.

It's just as important to take action to look after your mental health, as your physical health. Our campaign helps you to protect and improve your own mental health, and help others do the same.

The [Every Mind Matters guide](#) also offers support for social anxiety, trauma, obsessions and compulsions or panic attacks and provides information for people wishing to help friends, family and colleagues experiencing mental health problems.

Every Mind Matters has been developed in conjunction with leading charities, academics and clinicians and is endorsed by leading experts in mental health.

It is being promoted to adults across the Midlands with new TV, radio and online adverts; and is being supported by a range of public sector, charity

and commercial partners.

To access expert-led videos and create your own action plan to help look after your mental health, visit the [Every Mind Matters guide](#).

Background

1. 'Adult psychiatric morbidity in England, 2007: results of a household survey' is available online from [NHS Digital](#).
2. Research on 'Trends in morbidity and risk factors' is published as part of the [Health Profile for England report 2018](#).

[Press release: PM pledges action on suicide to mark World Mental Health Day](#)

The Samaritans' helpline will remain free for the next four years with support from the government, Theresa May announced today as she marked World Mental Health Day.

New government funding – up to £1.8 million – will help ensure the charity can continue to provide immediate and lifesaving support to everyone who needs it, 24 hours a day.

The Prime Minister also announced today that health minister Jackie Doyle-Price will become the UK's first Minister for Suicide Prevention.

Around 4,500 people take their own lives each year in England and suicide remains the leading cause of death for men under 45. In her new role, the minister will lead government efforts to cut the number of suicides and overcome the stigma that stops people seeking help.

The Minister will lead a new national effort on suicide prevention, bringing together a ministerial taskforce and working with national and local government, experts in suicide and self-harm prevention, charities, clinicians and those personally affected by suicide.

She will also ensure every local area has an effective suicide prevention plan in place, and look at how the latest technology can be used to identify those most at risk.

Half of all mental illness begins by the age of 14. The Prime Minister has made a series of further announcements today on children and young people's mental health:

- Recruitment has now begun for new mental health support teams who will

work with schools to ensure young people with mental health issues get the help they need – trainees will begin studying in January and join schools across England next year

- Starting in 2019, the government will publish a ‘State of the Nation’ report every year on World Mental Health Day, highlighting the trends and issues in young people’s mental well-being – the first time children’s mental health will be reported in this way, alongside their physical health and academic attainment
- The government will provide tools to help schools measure their students’ health, including their mental wellbeing – building on the commitment to make education in mental health and resilience a compulsory part of the curriculum

Speaking at a Downing Street reception to mark World Mental Health Day this afternoon, Theresa May is expected to say:

When I first became Prime Minister, I stood on the steps of Downing Street and pledged to fight the burning injustices in our society.

There are few greater examples than the injustices facing those with mental health conditions. But together we can change that.

We can end the stigma that has forced too many to suffer in silence. We can prevent the tragedy of suicide taking too many lives. And we can give the mental wellbeing of our children the priority it so profoundly deserves.

...I have made parity of care a priority for our long-term plan for the NHS. As a result, our record investment in the NHS will mean record investment in mental health.

...We are not looking after our health if we are not looking after our mental health.

So we need true parity between physical and mental health – and not just in our health systems – but in our classrooms, workplaces and communities too.

The Prime Minister will also announce that the government’s new campaign to train a million people in mental health awareness – Every Mind Matters – launches today with a pilot in the West Midlands ahead of a national rollout next Spring.

This week the Health Secretary Matt Hancock is hosting the first ever Global Ministerial Mental Health Summit in London, attended by ministers and representatives from over 50 countries as well as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

In a landmark agreement, countries at the summit are expected to support a global declaration today to achieve equity for mental health – the first time national governments have come together on this scale to pledge to put mental

health on an equal footing with physical health.

Responding to Jackie Doyle-Price's appointment as ministerial lead for suicide prevention, Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We're already making progress when it comes to suicide prevention – the suicide rate is at its lowest for seven years.

But we need to do more to challenge the stigma that people with mental ill-health face and make sure they feel they can reach out for help.

I am delighted we are appointing Jackie Doyle-Price as our dedicated Minister for Suicide Prevention, and I know she will make a real difference.

Every suicide is a preventable death and we are determined to do everything we can to tackle the tragedy of suicide.

Jackie Doyle-Price, Minister for Mental Health, Inequalities and – now – Suicide Prevention, said:

I understand how tragic, devastating and long-lasting the effect of suicide can be on families and communities.

In my time as health minister I have met many people who have been bereaved by suicide and their stories of pain and loss will stay with me for a long time.

It's these people who need to be at the heart of what we do and I welcome this opportunity to work closely with them, as well as experts, to oversee a cross-government suicide prevention plan, making their sure their views are always heard.

Responding to the new government funding announced today, Samaritans CEO Ruth Sutherland said:

We welcome the government's announcement of funding towards Samaritans' helpline, which will meet around 10 per cent of the total helpline costs for the next four years and help us to continue to provide our service free of charge.

Samaritans' 20,000 volunteers are available at any time for anyone who is struggling to cope. We respond to more than five million requests for help a year.

This is an acknowledgement of the importance of our vital service.