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[Vulnerable children and families better supported through new data sharing projects](#)

- £7.9 million to improve how local areas use data to better support vulnerable families
- Funding will support 10 data sharing projects across England
- Projects will improve joined-up working between councils, NHS trusts and police

Vulnerable children and families across England will receive earlier and better support from local services, through a new fund to improve how data is shared between local partners, Rough Sleeping and Housing Minister Eddie Hughes MP announced today (3 September 2021).

The £7.9 million [Data Accelerator Fund](#), will see 10 councils work more closely with police forces, local NHS services and schools to share data to ensure children and families receive the right help at the right time.

By sharing information across schools, health, housing, police and social care, frontline workers can get a full picture of an individual family's needs and the often interconnected challenges they face, such as mental health issues, employment, and substance misuse.

Having the complete information means tailored, wraparound support can be put in place as early as possible.

Today's announcement builds on previous work as part of the government's Supporting Families programme where data sharing was used to identify children at risk of exploitation.

One of the 10 projects is based on the pioneering Born in Bradford study, where data was used to improve the health and wellbeing of communities, ensuring schools and health services are equipped to deal with the needs of the population.

Eddie Hughes MP, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, said:

By local services sharing data, expertise and knowledge we can build a more complete picture of what is going on in a family's life and use this to put in place tailored, wraparound support at an early stage.

This fund will give local areas the tools to identify and support vulnerable children and families as early as possible and help them to live more positive, fulfilling lives.

The 10 areas in England supported by the fund are: Nottingham, Leicestershire and Doncaster; Avon and Somerset; Reading, Portsmouth, Wokingham and West Berkshire; Sunderland; Leeds and Bradford; Doncaster and Wakefield; London; East Sussex; Greater Manchester; and Hertfordshire, Essex and Suffolk.

Examples of the projects being funded by the Data Accelerator Fund include:

- data modelling to identify families that require early help and support from services, with a focus on financial problems and homelessness (Nottingham and Leicestershire)
- using data from London boroughs, the Metropolitan Police and NHS North West London to plan and manage child social care placements (London)
- a local birth cohort study tracking the health of children born in Doncaster and Wakefield, based on a previous pioneering study in Bradford (Doncaster and Wakefield)

Funding for the data projects will run up until 2023 and is divided over two years.

The Data Accelerator Fund is part of the government's wider approach to supporting vulnerable people and is alongside the £165 million latest phase of the [Supporting Families Programme](#) – helping families to build brighter futures.

This forms part of the Data Improvement Across Government programme – funded by the £200 million [Shared Outcomes Fund](#) to deliver projects across government.

The full funding breakdown for each area is as follows:

- Nottingham, Leicestershire and Doncaster: £525,500
- Avon and Somerset: £997,022
- Berkshire: £915,886
- Sunderland: £453,029
- Leeds and Bradford: £991,816
- Doncaster and Wakefield: £810,363
- London: £996,082
- East Sussex: £280,000
- Greater Manchester: £950,500
- Hertfordshire, Essex and Suffolk: £679,802

Home Secretary seeks expert advice on 'laughing gas'

The Home Secretary has asked the independent Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to review the harm caused by nitrous oxide, known as laughing gas, after over half a million young people reported taking the drug in 2019-20.

Now the second most used drug by 16-24 year olds in the UK, the ACMD's assessment could include more education for young people on its harms or tougher punishment for those who supply the drug to children.

Nitrous oxide, which is usually sold in small silver canisters and inhaled, can cause serious long-term effects such as vitamin B12 deficiency and anaemia. It is also commonly used at anti-social gatherings and leads to widespread littering in public places, bringing misery to communities.

As part of the review, the ACMD has also been asked to consider whether unlawful possession of nitrous oxide should be made an offence.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Misusing drugs can have a devastating impact on lives and communities – we are determined to do all we can to address this issue and protect the futures of our children and young people.

Should the expert Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs recommend further restrictions on this drug, we stand ready to take tough action.

The sale of nitrous oxide for its psychoactive effects was made illegal after the Psychoactive Substances Act in 2016, but it is not currently a crime to be caught in possession of the drug. The government has concerns that this could be a significant factor resulting in the increasing consumption of the substance.

The ACMD previously provided advice on nitrous oxide in 2015 and concluded that it did not seem to warrant control under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. However, given the increase in use among young people and concern over potential long-term effects, the Home Secretary has requested an updated assessment.

In 2019-20, 8.7% of 16 to 24-year-olds reported using nitrous oxide in the last 12 months, equivalent to around 549,000 people, according to the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

The government is taking a whole-system approach to tackling drugs – actively disrupting criminal supply chains which fuel illegal markets, supporting people through treatment and recovery, and ridding communities of the harm drug misuse causes.

Dame Carol Black was recently appointed as an independent advisor to drive forward progress in tackling drug misuse across society. Immediate actions to deal with the problem include expanding Project ADDER, which combines targeted law enforcement against drugs gangs with improved treatment and recovery services, to eight new local authorities with £31m in new funding for the next two years.

This follows [a £148m package](#) of new investment, announced in January, aimed at protecting people across the UK from the scourge of illegal drugs. The package included:

- £40m of new money to tackle county lines, bringing the total to £65m since November 2019. So far, this investment has seen more than 1,000 drug lines closed, over 5,800 arrests, over £2.9m in cash seized, and more than 1,500 vulnerable people safeguarded
- £28m to set up pilots of Project ADDER in five areas with some of the highest rates of drug misuse – Blackpool, Hastings, Middlesbrough, Norwich, and Swansea Bay
- an extra £80m to invest in drug treatment services across England to provide support to offenders with drug addictions

[RSH Quarterly survey published for Q1 April to June 2021](#)

Press release

Social housing sector in good position to recover from impact of pandemic



The Regulator of Social Housing has today (3 September) published the results of its latest Quarterly survey of registered providers' financial health.

The report covers the period from 1 April to 30 June 2021. It shows that the sector is well placed to continue its recovery from the pandemic, with strong liquidity and high levels of investment in both new and existing homes.

Investment in housing supply during the quarter was £3.1 billion – an increase of 11% on the previous quarter. Twelve-month development and major repairs spend forecasts increased again and both exceed pre-pandemic levels. Capitalised repairs spend was £459 million in the quarter, which is the highest quarter one figure ever recorded

The number of unsold properties reduced in the quarter and providers' total asset sales were £1.7 billion. The sales recorded were above forecast, reflecting the effects of the stamp duty holiday on the housing market.

Interest cover and income collection indicators remain robust with interest cover excluding sales for the 12 months to June 2021 at 138%, while interest cover excluding sales for the quarter was 102%. While arrears and rent collection rates are slightly lower than in the previous quarter; this is consistent with seasonal trends.

Overall, aggregate liquidity remains strong and is sufficient to fund the sector's interest cost, loan repayments and capital investment commitments for over 12 months. Agreed total debt and undrawn facilities increased in the quarter, with new finance agreed of £2.4 billion.

Will Perry, Director of Strategy at RSH, said:

The social housing sector is in a good position to recover from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Providers will need to remain alert and ready to respond to further changes in the operating and economic environment. They will need to closely monitor and update their forecasts as the economy re-opens and be flexible so that they can effectively manage any increasing risks.

The [Quarterly surveys](#) are available on the RSH website

Notes to editors

1. The Quarterly survey provides a regular source of information regarding the financial health of private registered providers, in particular with regard to their liquidity position.
2. The Quarterly survey returns summarised in the report cover the period from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021 and the latest report is based on regulatory returns from 209 PRPs and PRP groups who own or manage more than 1,000 homes. The survey Data about income collection, including rent collection, was first collected in 2013.
3. For press office contact details, see our [Media enquiries page](#). For general queries, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.
4. The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.

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[Research: Investigation of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern: technical briefings](#)

Technical briefing documents on novel SARS-CoV-2 variants.