

# Government funding for St Basils' youth homelessness programme

- Funding will support successful Youth Voice Programme working with young homeless people
- The experience of young people in West Midlands rehoused under 'Everyone In' to inform new policy and next steps
- Builds on ongoing work to support vulnerable people, including rough sleepers, with more than 15,000 helped during pandemic

Youth homelessness charity St Basils will benefit from £90,000 to enable it to continue its vital work supporting young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, Luke Hall has announced today (26 August 2020).

The funding will enable the charity to continue its Youth Voice Programme where selected young homeless people from across the country feed their experience into government and other public sector organisations, ensuring their voices are heard.

St Basils will also undertake a detailed review into the experiences, needs and issues facing young people in the West Midlands who were housed as part of the government's 'Everyone In' scheme during the COVID-19 response.

The insights, recommendations and learnings from St Basils' study will be shared, to build on the government's ongoing evidence base on what works to prevent future homelessness amongst young people.

The government is funding St Basils' work to support young homeless people as part of its landmark commitment – backed by over half a billion pounds to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over 2020/21 – to break the cycle of homelessness and end rough sleeping for good.

Measures also include the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, which funds local authorities and their partners to prevent people from returning to the streets, and the fast-tracking 6,000 additional homes for former rough sleepers across the country.

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, Luke Hall MP said:

We have taken unprecedented action to support the most vulnerable people in our society during the pandemic. I'm delighted we're able to continue to support St Basils this year with £90,000 to continue their well-established and successful Youth Voice Programme. This will enable them to continue their hugely valuable work to ensure the voices of young homeless people are heard by the government and wider public sector.

Nationally, we have put in place bespoke support for councils through our Homelessness Advice and Support Team, which includes dedicated youth homelessness advisers. The Youth Advisers are working closely with councils on the particular challenges that young people and care leavers are facing during COVID-19.

Nearly 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in emergency accommodation since the beginning of the pandemic and we are funding longer-term accommodation – 3,300 homes this year alone – and tailored support so as few people as possible return to life on the streets.

Jean Templeton, CEO of St Basils, welcomed the funding, and said:

We are really pleased to secure this funding and continue to enable young people from across the country to have their experiences and voices heard.

It is particularly important at this time that young people can influence policy and investment decisions. Ensuring young people have truly affordable accommodation and support which underpins their ability to live, work, earn and learn is critical if we are to prevent an increase in youth homelessness. Their lived experience makes an invaluable contribution to the development of policy priorities and resource allocation.

The more young people can be engaged in making decisions about their own lives the more likely they are to successfully move into independence. This funding will provide valuable insight into the experiences of young people during the COVID-19 pandemic and highlight the challenges they face.

Over the course of the pandemic, the government has prioritised protecting the most vulnerable people by housing 15,000 people, including rough sleepers, in emergency accommodation. This includes a number of young people aged 18-25 years old.

St Basils' review will bring together anonymous data on the profile of young people in the West Midlands housed under the scheme as well as information on accommodation options and support levels and types offered under it and plans for move-on accommodation.

The government has planned effective responses to support young people in taking advantage of opportunities for move on, recovery and building a pathway to a more sustainable and independent future.

The review will also allow government to further tailor plans to prevent future homelessness amongst young people at risk of being made homeless as a result of immediate Covid-related pressures or longer-term economic pressures and job losses resulting from the pandemic.

The government has made clear that no one should be without a roof over their head, which is why we have committed to end rough sleeping within this Parliament. The work of the Rough Sleeping Taskforce further demonstrates our commitment to supporting the most vulnerable in society.

We have provided £4.3 billion to help councils to manage the impacts of COVID-19, which includes their work to support homeless people, including £3.7 billion which is not ringfenced, and £600 million to support social care.

Also, we have accelerated plans – backed by £433 million over the next 4 years – which will deliver 6,000 additional homes for former rough sleepers across the country.

On 18 July, we launched the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). This makes available the financial resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to prevent these people from returning to the streets. The NSAP is made up of 2 sources of funding: £161 million to deliver 3,300 units of longer term move-on accommodation within the next 12 months (part of the £433 million total); and £105 million of additional funding to pay for immediate support to ensure that people do not return to the streets.

We are supporting these efforts as part of our landmark commitment – backed by over half a billion pounds this year – to break the cycle of homelessness and end rough sleeping for good.

St Basils has been funded by MHCLG since 2012 to develop a network of young people with lived experience of homelessness across England. There will be currently 32 trained members of Youth Voice this year, with member in all nine regions of England.

This government implemented the Homelessness Reduction Act, the most ambitious reform to homelessness legislation in decades, which placed new duties on local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to try to prevent and relieve a person's homelessness. These new duties apply irrespective of whether a person has 'priority need' or may be regarded as being 'intentionally homeless'. This means that many more young people who may not previously have been eligible for support, are now being helped to prevent homelessness before it even occurs.

The Act also places a duty on public bodies, including Children's Services, Youth Offending Institutions and Youth Offending Teams ensuring better partnership working between public bodies and local authorities to prevent youth homelessness.

We have put in place bespoke support for local authorities through our Homelessness Advice and Support Team, which includes dedicated youth homelessness advisers who have a commitment to work with local authorities to proactively promote positive joint working across housing authorities and children's services, offering training, advice and support to all local authorities.