

Ministers ask businesses to help in drive to end rough sleeping

Business leaders are being urged to give jobs to former rough sleepers in a bid to help keep people off the streets for good.

At a meeting with top executives today (22 February 2022), ministers called on business and charity leaders to be more generous in offering employment opportunities to former homeless people, challenging the stigma around giving jobs to people who have been living on the streets.

The drive is part of a £2 billion package of funding to help eradicate rough sleeping by targeting the root causes of the problem and ending rough sleeping by the close of this Parliament.

Employment improves the accommodation prospects for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping both in the long and short term – an income means they have more choices and an employment contract will improve the negotiation position of any tenant.

At today's virtual round table, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Eddie Hughes, and Minister for Welfare Delivery David Rutley, stressed that finding jobs for people was key to helping to end homelessness and called on businesses to do more.

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Eddie Hughes MP said:

A job for someone who has been homeless or slept rough is a vital step towards helping them to rebuild their life and can be crucial to ending the cycle of homelessness.

There was a huge amount of support around the table today – and we heard first-hand just how much giving someone who was homeless a job benefits the individual and the business.

Now I'm calling on more businesses – big and small – to step up and do their bit to change lives – just by simply giving someone a chance.

Minister for Welfare Delivery David Rutley MP said:

We're determined to help vulnerable people as best we can, with wraparound support that is designed to get people back on their feet. One of the most important milestones on this journey is getting people back into work, and Universal Credit's individual tailored employment support, in addition to its financial element, is a vital resource to help people take that next step towards

rebuilding their lives.

I encourage any and all businesses to collaborate with our fantastic jobcentres to see how they can make a difference in vulnerable people's lives and explore the untapped potential of this group.

SCS JV Skills, Education and Employment Manager Frankie Jones said:

With 34,000 jobs forecast to construct HS2, there is an unprecedented opportunity to shape the workforce of tomorrow. Skanska Costain STRABAG Joint Venture (SCS JV) works in two boroughs that have the highest homeless rates in London and we are working to make a difference, alongside our supply chain, offering full time employment on HS2 to people who have experienced homelessness.

Matt Downie, Chief Executive of Crisis, said:

It is great to see the UK government encouraging businesses to do their bit to tackle rough sleeping. Through our services, we know that access to well-paid, secure work is vital to helping people end their homelessness.

No one should be denied reaching their full potential because they have no home. With the right support and the stability of a safe and secure home, people who have experienced homelessness make hugely positive contributions to businesses and society.

We look forward to working with employers and the UK government to ensure training and employment opportunities are available to help people leave homelessness behind for good.