

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.