

Prime Minister pledges new action to eliminate homelessness and rough sleeping

- Prime Minister puts tackling homelessness and rough sleeping firmly at the heart of the government's agenda
- He announces over £260 million for local homelessness services
- Over 300 councils across England will receive a share of the funding to support homeless people in their areas

Thousands of people will be prevented from falling into homelessness and sleeping rough on the streets thanks to millions of funding announced by the Prime Minister today (23 December 2019).

As part of his drive to tackle homelessness, over £260 million has been committed for local authorities to support people who are homeless or at risk of losing their homes.

The funding will empower councils across England to provide the best services for local needs, helping those experiencing homelessness in their area to improve their lives and get back on their feet.

Councils can use the funding to employ specialists to provide practical advice to vulnerable people to help ensure they are meeting their rent payments, as well as helping them to find long-term stable accommodation.

Visiting a rough sleeping shelter in London, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

It cannot be right in the 21st century that people are homeless or having to sleep on our streets, and this government will work tirelessly to bring this to an end.

This new funding is going to help councils provide better support to homeless people, and importantly, prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

But we have got to do even more, and we're committed to expanding rough sleeping and homelessness programmes, and ensuring more integrated working between our local health and housing services.

I salute the Standard for their campaign on homelessness in London, particularly their vital work in supporting vulnerable women across the capital.

The Prime Minister has also confirmed the Cold Weather Fund will receive an additional £3 million, taking the total to £13 million, to enhance support

available for rough sleepers during the winter period.

This new action forms part of a wider strategy to tackle all forms of homelessness. The government is already investing £1.2 billion to tackle homelessness, and last year introduced ambitious new legislation, the Homelessness Reduction Act to ensure people at risk of becoming homeless get help more quickly, with councils receiving funding to support them in these duties.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick MP said:

As Communities Secretary, it's one of my main priorities to ensure that we reduce all forms of homelessness and rough sleeping.

That's why we have announced an additional £260 million funding in homelessness funding – to ensure councils up and down the country provide crucial services tailored to their areas.

Last year the number of people sleeping rough fell for the first time in several years, and while the government's interventions are working, there is a great deal more work to do. We're committed to eliminating rough sleeping by the end of the Parliament.

Of the money announced today, the first £200 million comes from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, introduced in 2017, to lead to a radical change in the way councils were providing support to those at risk of homelessness.

The remaining funding, the £63 million Homelessness Reduction Grant, will go to councils to fulfil their duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act, which came into force last year, to help homeless households into accommodation.

The Act requires public bodies, such as hospitals, prisons and social services, to refer people who may be threatened with homelessness to a housing authority.

Case studies

A number of councils have already used funding from previous rounds of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant to launch innovative solutions for people with a housing need:

- Leeds City Council have invested heavily in upfront prevention to reduce the numbers of people becoming homeless in the city, with 5 times as much being spent on preventing homelessness than on temporary accommodation.
- Rushmoor District Council have invested in 2 support workers to work with families with complex needs to maintain their housing and ensure they do not become homeless.
- Basildon Council have invested in a 'Rent Start' scheme to assist all single homeless people with a housing need find somewhere secure to

live.

Last April the government introduced the [Homelessness Reduction Act](#), the most ambitious reform to homelessness legislation in decades.

Today [£263 million has been announced](#) for local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness in their areas through the Homelessness Reduction Act, including the £200 million Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and the new £63 million Homelessness Reduction Grant.

In August last year the government unveiled its [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) – backed by £100 million – which set out the next steps towards ending rough sleeping for good.

This forms part of a wider strategy to tackle all forms of homelessness, including:

- investing £1.2 billion to tackle homelessness
- providing £76 million for the Rough Sleeping Initiative to 246 local authorities – including the 83 areas with the highest number of rough sleepers
- this year councils are using the investment to create an estimated 2,600 more beds and 750 additional specialist support staff
- providing £28 million for Housing First pilots in Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and Liverpool to support vulnerable rough sleepers with complex needs
- introducing the Homelessness Reduction Act to ensure people at risk of becoming homeless get help more quickly

The Communities Secretary also announced £10 million – extended today by £3 million – for the Cold Weather Fund, which will boost life-saving support for rough sleepers during the cold winter weather.

This government has committed to ending rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament in 2024 – 3 years earlier than the previous commitment.