

# Jenrick launches £266 million housing fund for vulnerable people

- Funds to help ensure 15,000 people continue to have a safe place to stay and are helped into long term accommodation
- Jenrick praises 'remarkable national effort' to protect vulnerable during pandemic

The next step in the government's plans to help ensure some of the most vulnerable people in society continue to have a roof over their heads and are helped into long term accommodation was launched today by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick.

From today (18 July 2020), councils and their local partners can apply for funds from the government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme to cover property costs and support new tenancies for around 15,000 vulnerable people who were provided with emergency accommodation during the pandemic.

This programme now takes total government support for homelessness and rough sleepers to over half a billion pounds. This will help ensure as few people as possible helped off the streets and into accommodation during the pandemic return to sleeping rough and help to break the cycle of homelessness for good.

A total of £105 million is now available to ensure interim accommodation and support continues for those who need it and can be used to help people move into the private rented sector, extend or secure alternative interim accommodation or where possible help people to reconnect with friends or family.

In addition, first wave funding, totalling £161 million, is also available to provide 3,300 additional supported homes this year for those currently housed in emergency accommodation. This is part of a total of £433 million to provide 6,000 long term, safe homes for those in need.

This funding is part of the response coordinated by Dame Louise Casey, who has been leading the COVID-19 Rough Sleeping Taskforce. Expert advisers will also be available to support local partners develop their plans for accommodation and related support services.

Last week official statistics showed that the combined efforts of central and local government, the NHS, charities and other partners to get people off the street and into safe accommodation has helped protect the most vulnerable in society and save lives.

Secretary of State for Housing Robert Jenrick MP said:

The remarkable national effort to support rough sleepers and

vulnerable people during this crisis has protected many lives and I am hugely grateful to all those involved.

We now have a landmark opportunity to break the cycle of rough sleeping and ensure that people do not return to a life on the streets.

Today I am launching the funding to ensure that vulnerable people and rough sleepers continue to have a roof over their heads and are helped into longer term accommodation, enabling them to start to rebuild their lives.

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

There has been a colossal effort from our councils, charities and partners to provide a protective shield for the most vulnerable during this pandemic.

Their efforts must not be in vain and today's release of funding will make a huge difference by preventing thousands from returning to the streets with further support to allow them to rebuild their lives with a roof above their heads.

- Through the government's Everyone In programme approximately 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in hotels and other forms of emergency accommodation, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes people coming in directly from the streets, people previously housed in shared night shelters and people who have become vulnerable to rough sleeping during the pandemic.
- The Next Steps Accommodation Programme launched today makes available the resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to ensure that the current provision that has been set up to safeguard people who were taken safely from the streets is able to continue for an appropriate length of time. From today bids are invited for a share of £105 million to support this work. Organisations wishing to bid for the £105 million must clearly demonstrate in their proposal how the funding will be used to rapidly support those in COVID-19 emergency accommodation. The funding is for use during 2020/21 only.
- The Next Steps Accommodation Programme also makes funding available for additional long term accommodation. In May, the Secretary of State announced £161 million for 2020/21 (as part of an overall £433 million for the lifetime of this parliament) to deliver 3,300 units of longer-term, move-on accommodation. Organisations wishing to bid for the £161 million must clearly demonstrate in their proposal how the funding will

be used to bring forward long-term, move-on accommodation.

- The Fund is open to bids from local authorities. The deadline for submitting bids is Thursday 20 August at 11:59pm.
  - Full details of the bidding process for the fund is available at [Next Steps Accommodation Programme: guidance and proposal templates](#).
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## [Marine and coastal areas linked with better health and well-being](#)

[A new study](#) suggests that exposure to coastal environments can play a significant role in boosting human health and well-being, due to the 'therapeutic effects' marine and coastal landscapes have.

In England, 271 million recreational visits are made to coastal environments annually and more than 22 million people live within 5 miles of the coast. The Defra and [UK Research and Innovation](#)-led review in collaboration with [Plymouth Marine Laboratory](#) and [Exeter University](#), showed that Brits spending time by the sea reported increased happiness, better general health and were more physically active during their visit, compared to visits to other types of environment.

The report highlights the important role of marine conservation work as visits to marine and coastal areas with designated or protected status and those with higher levels of biodiversity were associated with higher levels of calmness, relaxation and revitalisation, compared to locations without this status.

The government has taken steps to expand its 'Blue Belt' of marine protection for Britain's overseas territories and its own coast, [last year designating a further 41 Marine Protection Zones](#), protecting species and habitats such as the rare stalked jellyfish and blue mussel beds.

Domestic Marine Minister, Rebecca Pow, said:

Whether it is to enjoy a sport, take a walk, watch the wildlife or to simply admire the landscape, for many of us spending time by the sea is not only hugely enjoyable, but it has a welcome impact on our well-being too.

This realisation makes it all the more important that we take care of our environment, and our ever-expanding national 'Blue Belt', protecting more than 40% of English waters, is helping to safeguard these precious habitats for future generations.

Professor Nicola Beaumont, Head of Science for Sea and Society at Plymouth Marine Laboratory, said:

Our research demonstrates that marine and coastal areas play an important role in supporting people's well-being. However, we have also shown that these benefits are threatened by marine pollution, coastal development, climate change and exposure to extreme weather.

With millions of us visiting the coast every year, it is our collective responsibility to ensure that we have the right measures in place to allow our marine environment to thrive. Getting these measures right is not easy and requires transformative, multidisciplinary research, with an aim to support sustainable and responsible ocean stewardship for the conservation of the environment and to ultimately improve lives.

Professor Lora Fleming, Director of the Exeter University European Centre for Environment and Human Health, said:

This project has shown that our coast helps to cater for a variety of human needs, from keeping healthy, to connecting with others.

There are, however, a number of evidence gaps which we wish to further explore, such as the effects of marine environments on obesity prevalence in children and Vitamin D in adults, or the life stage at which nature-based interventions are most effective, and how they may vary among economic, social and cultural groups in the population.

The report also warns that in the coming decades, climate change and extreme weather has the potential to jeopardise sensitive marine habitats, demonstrating the importance of the UK's network of Marine Protected Areas.

Through the implementation of the [25 Year Environment Plan](#), the UK continues to consider the need for further domestic protection, and is putting in place new management measures for Marine Protected Areas, including seeking new powers through the Fisheries Bill, which is currently before Parliament.

The government is also considering the recommendations of a [recent review](#) led by former Fisheries Minister, Richard Benyon, which found that there is a case for higher protections in some marine areas, with a total ban on all human activity to allow wildlife to flourish.

Internationally the UK continues to push for greater protection of marine habitats on the world stage with 20 countries joining the UK-led Global Ocean

Alliance, which aims to secure protection for at least 30% of the world's oceans by 2030.

## **Methodology:**

This research (Evidence Statement) was drawn from 46 peer-reviewed papers. Additional cited references were provided by members of the steering group. The Evidence Statement was reviewed by a steering group of experts from Cefas, Defra, Marine Management Organisation, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, University of Aberdeen, University of Exeter, and University of Hull. The work was completed between 9 April 2019 and 23 August 2019.

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## **Boost to passengers as government bolsters ATOL scheme**

- greater protection for passengers through government backing the ATOL protection scheme
- the step will ensure passengers who choose refund credit notes are covered for cancellations as a result of COVID-19, even if their travel provider collapses
- proposals designed to boost consumer trust in the aviation and travel sector

ATOL-protected holidaymakers will be able to book with confidence following a government move to protect refund credit notes offered if packages are cancelled as a result of COVID-19.

The change, which will apply to package holidays including a flight, will mean passengers who accept refund credit notes for cancelled holidays as a result of COVID-19 will be protected by the ATOL scheme if necessary, even if the company they have booked with later collapses.

By providing confidence to holidaymakers that their refund credit notes are protected if they choose them over refunds, today's move will mean customers are able to support the travel sector's recovery from the pandemic by accepting a refund credit note.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

We want to send a clear message to passengers that they can book their summer holidays with confidence, which is why we're stepping in to protect refund credit notes issued as a result of COVID-19 cancellations.

This is not only good news for anyone looking to get away for a break in the sun, but also for the aviation and travel sector which has been hit hard by the pandemic.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

This new protection will give consumers the confidence they need to book some time in the sun, safe in the knowledge that their hard-earned money is protected no matter what.

For those ATOL-protected holidaymakers whose trips have already been cancelled, today's reforms will give them the freedom to choose between a refund, or a fully-protected refund credit note for use at a later date.

Martin Lewis, founder of MoneySavingExpert.com, says:

This is a key travel intervention we've been calling for. It's far from a cure-all, but ATOL is a statutory scheme and the fact the government will now effectively underwrite its credit refund notes gives a solid bedrock of security for customers willing to take them.

And I'd encourage those who it's right for to do so. The pandemic has been devastating for the travel industry and travellers. Taking an ATOL credit refund note if you're likely to rebook shows welcome forbearance and flexibility, and the fact that, if you don't use it, it can be exchanged for cash gives peace of mind.

Of course it's not right for everyone, many desperately need a refund. My hope is this more solid halfway house for some will enable firms to more swiftly pay out full refunds for others.

ABTA Chief Executive Mark Tanzer said:

ABTA welcomes the government's action to back refund credit notes through the ATOL scheme. This gives reassurance to consumers and supports the travel industry at an especially difficult time.

This development verifies that the ATOL scheme provides protection for cancelled holidays when a refund remains outstanding in the event of a travel organiser's failure. This is the same for non-flight based package travel with ABTA bonding under the Package Travel Regulations. This assurance enables consumers to hold and rely on refund credit notes with confidence, before rebooking a much needed holiday.

The ATOL fund is run by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), and requires travel operators to pay a fee of £2.50 to protect each passenger booking in cases of insolvency. The money, which is held in a fund managed by the Air Travel Trust, is used to refund, repatriate or reimburse travellers for the cost of repaying for the affected parts of their trip.

Today's action follows on from a separate series of measures introduced to support the aviation sector, including a comprehensive package of financial support incorporating loans and guarantees, tax deferrals and covering the cost of statutory sick pay.

Customers are still entitled to a refund and will be able to receive one if they request it, but today's move will mean customers are able to support the travel sector by accepting a refund voucher in the knowledge that it will be protected, even if the travel operator goes insolvent.

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## Government invests £85m to double coronavirus charity fundraising

- Up to £85 million for charities with government doubling the efforts of funders and philanthropists
- Cash to support coordination of the voluntary sector's coronavirus response

The Government will boost the fundraising efforts of funders and philanthropists by doubling the money going to charities in England, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden announced today (18 July).

From 18 July to 31 August, funds raised through selected coronavirus charity campaigns will be matched pound-for-pound through the new 'Community Match Challenge'.

Funders, foundations, and philanthropists – whose coronavirus campaigns have raised millions for the most vulnerable since the pandemic struck – are invited to apply for a share of £85 million to match their donations to good causes.

Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, said:

Since Covid hit, the British people, businesses and philanthropists have stepped up and fundraised hundreds of millions of pounds to support the most vulnerable in our communities.

We're now launching a Community Match Challenge as part of our multi-billion-pound package of support for our brilliant charity sector. The Government will match pound for pound what is raised by

others to double the generosity of others.

The Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership – a group that comes together to improve national and local coordination before, during and after emergencies – will receive £4.8 million to help strengthen the voluntary sector's response to coronavirus and future emergencies.

This will fund regional hubs to join up distribution of local volunteers and resources such as food supplies, a national network to coordinate demand for volunteers across the country and a new digital tool to help identify where help is needed most at a local and national level.

Mike Adamson, Chief Executive of British Red Cross and Chair of the VCSEP said:

We are delighted to have secured government funding for the Emergencies Partnership. The grant from DCMS will help our partnership to strengthen its support to the voluntary and community sector, government and statutory agencies as we respond to the next phase of Covid-19 and future emergencies.

Over the coming months we will be setting up systems to improve coordination across our sector, capture unmet needs as a result of emergencies, and match and coordinate volunteer demand and supply. The money we have secured will go a long way in helping us to achieve our ambitions and establish a legacy for responding to future emergencies.

This funding is part of the [£750 million pot announced by the Chancellor](#) for frontline charities across the UK during the coronavirus outbreak.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has led the allocation of funding to support charities providing key services to help vulnerable people during the crisis. Funding awarded includes £200 million for hospices and £76 million to charities that support vulnerable children and people who have suffered from domestic abuse, sexual abuse and modern slavery.

The Government also matched public donations to the BBC's "Big Night In" charity appeal, with over £70 million being distributed by Comic Relief, Children In Need and the National Emergencies Trust to charities on the frontline. This is on top of the £150 million released from dormant accounts to help social enterprises get affordable credit to people who are financially vulnerable and support charities tackling youth unemployment.

Charities have also had access to wider measures to support the economy, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

In line with government guidance, charity shops have been able to open from 15 June in England, and will benefit from the new enhanced retail rate relief



at 100 per cent.

## Notes to Editors

- More information regarding eligibility and how to apply for the Community Match Challenge can be found [here](#).
- The Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership is a collection of voluntary and community sector organisations co-chaired by the British Red Cross and National Council for Voluntary Organisations. Other members include: Business in the Community, St John Ambulance, National Association for Voluntary and Community Action, National Emergencies Trust, National Police Chiefs Council, Muslim Charities Forum, Salvation Army, UK Community Foundations, Victim Support, Association of Greater Manchester Authorities.
- You can find out more about the work of the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership and request support [here](#).

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# [Explained: The Draft Building Safety Bill](#)

## Background

The government is bringing forward fundamental changes in the Draft Building Safety Bill that will improve building and fire safety, so that people will be, and will feel, safer in their homes.

The Grenfell Tower fire in West London on June 14, 2017 claimed 72 lives. The tragedy exposed serious failings across the whole system of building and managing high-rise homes.

We took immediate steps to make residents safer, and asked Dame Judith Hackitt to carry out an independent review of building regulations and fire safety to understand the causes of the fire. The review concluded that the whole system needed major reform and that residents' safety needed to be a greater priority through the entire life cycle of a building – from design and construction, through to when people are living in their homes.

The government accepted the review's recommendations and this draft Bill, which, alongside the existing Fire Safety Bill and fire safety consultation will set out how we are bringing forward those proposals to provide the biggest improvements to building safety in nearly 40 years.

## **What is a draft Bill?**

A draft Bill is published to enable consultation and scrutiny before the Bill is introduced to Parliament. The Draft Building Safety Bill will be examined by a Parliamentary committee who will report with feedback and recommendations before the Bill is finalised. We will also work with stakeholders on areas that need refinement or further consultation to finalise measures.

The Bill will then be introduced formally in the House of Commons or the House of Lords. If it progresses through all stages in Parliament, the Bill will then be presented to the Queen for her formal agreement where it then becomes an Act and the powers come into force.

## **What does it mean for residents?**

We are putting measures in place to make people safer in their homes. The Draft Bill will ensure that there will always be someone responsible for keeping residents safe in high rise buildings – those 18 metres and above. They will also have to listen and respond to residents' concerns and ensure their voices are heard – they will be called the 'Accountable Person'.

Residents and leaseholders will have access to vital safety information about their building and new complaints handling requirements will be introduced to make sure effective action is taken where concerns are raised.

To oversee all this and make sure that Accountable Persons are carrying out their duties properly, there will also be a new national regulator for building safety, within the Health and Safety Executive. It will ensure that high rise buildings and the people who live in them are being kept safe and will have new powers to raise and enforce higher standards of safety and performance across all buildings. The regulator will appoint a panel of residents who will have a voice in the development of its work.

We are committed to making sure that leaseholders won't pay unaffordable costs for historic repairs to their buildings. We will continue to engage with stakeholders, including leaseholders, on this issue while the draft Bill is being scrutinised. A new 'building safety charge' will make it easy for leaseholders to see and know what they are being charged for when it comes to keeping their building safe. But, to make sure that these costs are affordable, we have deliberately included powers to limit the costs that can be re-charged to leaseholders.

For the first time, new build homebuyers will have their right to complain to a New Homes Ombudsman, protected in legislation, and developers will be required to be a member of the scheme. The New Homes Ombudsman will raise hold developers to account, including the ability to require developers to pay compensation.

Together, measures in the draft Building Safety Bill, Fire Safety Bill, and

Fire Safety Order Consultation will improve safety standards for residents of all blocks of flats of all heights, with even more stringent approaches and oversight for buildings in scope.

## **What does it mean for the industry?**

The draft Bill will make sure that those responsible for the safety of residents are accountable for any mistakes and must put them right. It will fully establish the regulator that will enforce new rules and take strong actions against those who break them.

The regulator will have three main functions: to oversee the safety and standard of all buildings, directly assure the safety of higher-risk buildings; and improve the competence of people responsible for managing and overseeing building work.

It will operate a new, more stringent set of rules for high-rise residential buildings. The new set of rules, contained in the draft Bill, will apply when buildings are designed, constructed and then later occupied. At each of these three stages, it will be clear who is responsible for managing the potential risks and what is required to move to the next stage enabling a 'golden thread' of vital information about the building to be gathered over its lifetime.

When residents move into a building that falls under the new set of rules, it will need to be registered with the Building Safety Regulator and apply for a Building Assurance Certificate. The Accountable Person will then need to conduct and maintain a safety case risk assessment for the building and appoint a Building Safety Manager to oversee it day to day.

Building inspectors who are responsible for signing buildings off as safe for people to live in will also have to follow the new rules and must register with the regulator.

The draft Bill will also give the government new powers to better regulate construction materials and products and ensure they are safe to use.

## **What else has the government done?**

The government is doing its part in bringing forward the legislation but the industry, which has fed into these reforms from the start, must now lead the way.

However, we have not stood still and the work we are doing so far is already improving the safety of buildings so people are safer in their homes.

We have banned the use of combustible materials on the external walls of high-rise buildings, published clearer guidance on existing regulations that buildings owners must follow, and we are making it mandatory for sprinklers to be fitted in all new blocks of flats over 11m high.

We identified buildings with unsafe Aluminium Composite Material

(ACM) cladding and are providing £600 million to remove and replace it in both private and social-sector homes over 18 metres high. We are also providing £1 billion to remove and replace non-ACM cladding materials from high-rise residential blocks.

As part of our response to the report from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, we have introduced the Fire Safety Bill to Parliament. This gives local fire and rescue services the power to make sure building owners deal with potential fire risks in their building.

## **Next steps**

The draft Bill will be published on Monday 20 July as the government is keen for it to receive further views from parliamentarians, residents and industry via the Parliamentary process of pre-legislative scrutiny, before the Bill is then introduced to Parliament.