

## Migration Advisory Committee Chair extends term



The chair of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) has agreed to extend his term.

Professor Alan Manning has held the position since October 2016, with his 3-year term extended to the end of February 2020.

It comes as the MAC report into a points-based system and salary thresholds for immigration is published today.

Professor Alan Manning, Chair of the Migration Advisory Committee, said:

I have agreed with the Home Secretary to extend my role as Chair of the MAC until the end of February 2020 to help respond to any questions in relation to the report.

Published 28 January 2020

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## Points-based system and salary thresholds for immigration: letter from the MAC

On 24 June 2019, the then Home Secretary commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to carry out a fully comprehensive review of the future system of salary thresholds for the proposed skilled worker route.

On 3 September 2019, the Home Secretary officially commissioned the MAC to

research and provide evidence-based recommendations on how a points-based system could work in the UK, in addition to the salary threshold commission.

Professor Manning writes to the Home Secretary to introduce the [committee's report](#).

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## Government pledges £500 million to bring back historic rail lines, improving connectivity for communities across the country

- Transport Secretary Grant Shapps visits Fleetwood to launch government fund aimed at kickstarting reversal of the Beeching cuts
- £500 million pot will help reconnect towns across the country, improving opportunities for people in previously neglected communities.
- £21.9 million of funding announced for 2 routes and New Stations Fund, and communities invited to pitch their restoration proposals direct to government.

Long-isolated communities across the country will benefit from better rail connections that will level-up regional economies and boost access to jobs and education, thanks to a £500 million fund to kickstart the restoration of lines closed more than 50 years ago.

Speaking on a visit to the Fleetwood and Poulton-le-Fylde line (28 January 2020), where the Prime Minister announced the policy in November (2019), Transport Secretary Grant Shapps launched the new investment that will drive forward the reversal of the controversial Beeching cuts. The Fleetwood line was closed in 1970.

The cuts, which were initially proposed by British Rail chief Dr Richard Beeching in 1963, ended passenger services on around a third of the rail network, closing more than 2,300 stations and up to 5,000 miles of track across the UK.

To launch the reversal scheme, the government is also giving funding to develop proposals for re-opening 2 lines in the near future: £1.5 million to the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne Line in Northumberland, and £100,000 to the Fleetwood line in Lancashire.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Many communities still live with the scars that came from the

closure of their local railway more than 5 decades ago. Today sees work begin to undo the damage of the Beeching cuts by restoring local railways and stations to their former glory.

Investing in transport links is essential to levelling up access to opportunities across the country, ensuring our regions are better connected, local economies flourish and more than half a century of isolation is undone.

Recognising that not all growing towns can re-open previously existing stations, and that some areas may never have been served by rail, the government is also announcing a fresh round of the New Stations Fund.

Two previous rounds of the scheme have already helped develop 10 brand new stations across England and Wales. The new round will be allocated £20 million.

The Transport Secretary has invited MPs, local authorities and community groups across England to come forward with proposals on how they could use funding to reinstate axed local services. £300,000 has been committed to an 'Ideas Fund' to kickstart the process to encourage innovative ideas that will then be considered for further funding in the future.

The £500 million fund will help develop these proposals, and accelerate the delivery of schemes that are already being considered for restoration, making possible the rapid reopening of certain stations and lines.

The thousands of miles of railway that were axed under the Beeching cuts are in various states of repair. Some still maintain freight services, some sit unused and overgrown whilst others have been built over or converted to cycle routes or pathways.

The government will also consult Network Rail and train operators which will be instrumental in delivering the benefits to communities.

Today (28 January 2020), Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris also visited Bedlington Station, where he announced £1.5 million of funding to drive forward the return of passenger services to the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne line.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said:

This is an exciting moment as we look to revitalise our railways, reconnect communities and reinvigorate our country.

Local MPs, councillors and community leaders are the greatest champions of their local lines, and we want to work closely together to ensure the projects with the greatest potential have the support they need.

There will also be opportunities for towns who have lost stations to receive a boost, as we launch another round of our New Stations

Fund.

The benefits of reversing the Beeching cuts have already been seen. In 2015, a short stretch of line called the 'Todmorden Curve' was restored, supported by £8.8 million of government funding, enabling direct services from Burnley and Accrington to Manchester.

Ilkeston Junction Station was also successfully reopened in 2017 – after 40 years of Ilkeston being the largest town in England without any train service.

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## [Boost to successful government rough sleeping programme](#)

- Councils to share £112 million Rough Sleeping Initiative funding to help get people off the streets and into accommodation
- Analysis shows numbers are 32% lower in funded areas than they would be without the Initiative
- Third year of the Rough Sleeping Initiative will fund up to 6,000 bed spaces and 2,500 support staff
- Government has committed to end rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament

More rough sleepers will be helped off the streets and into safe accommodation thanks to an extra £112 million funding for councils, Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP has announced today (28 January 2020).

This funding is a 30% increase this year and will be used by local authorities, charities and other organisations to fund up to 6,000 new bed spaces and 2,500 support staff across the country.

This will help vulnerable rough sleepers get the support they need to rebuild their lives. It could mean a roof over their head, access to specialist mental health or addiction services, or advice on how to secure a home in the long term.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP said:

No-one should have to face a night on the street and we have a moral duty to support those who need help the most. It is encouraging to see more people getting the support they need, but there is always more to do.

We are focusing relentlessly on this issue and our efforts have

already led to the first nationwide fall in rough sleeping in a decade – and the areas funded by our Rough Sleeping Initiative have seen rough sleeping numbers fall around a third more than they would be without this vital programme, but we need to go further. That is why we are providing this funding so vital work can continue as we set out to end rough sleeping once and for all.

Homelessness Minister Luke Hall said:

There are people all over the country working tirelessly to improve the lives of the most vulnerable in our society. Our Rough Sleeping Initiative is proving to be successful, and this funding will mean this vital work can be continued as we set out to end rough sleeping once and for all.

The Rough Sleeping Initiative was launched in 2018 to ensure local areas were given the boost they needed to provide these vital services for those living on the streets.

This will give people access to a roof over their head when they need it most – as well as the help they need to recover from a life on the streets.

We have seen the first nationwide fall in rough sleeping in a decade – and this comes as the government is facing a significant challenge following a large increase in the number of non-UK rough sleepers coming to the UK.

For example in Westminster it's estimated that 49% of those sleeping rough are non-UK nationals and work continues across government to support these individuals.

Government funding for rough sleeping has already helped thousands of people to improve their lives and get off the street. This is a coordinated effort across housing, addiction support, mental health services and policing.

We intend to continue to bring all parts of government together to end rough sleeping by the end of this parliament.

For example, Southwark Council is working in partnership with all NHS local agencies to help end rough sleeping in their area. The council has placed a housing navigator within the 3 local NHS hospitals to coordinate a joint health and housing response to ensure no patient is discharged to the streets.

The council, through Rough Sleeping Initiative funding, has also employed one nurse to work in partnership with the outreach team to ensure any person sleeping rough has access to health care. The rough sleeper will also automatically qualify for council housing following the referral from the nurse.

This partnership has ensured 41 people sleeping rough have been now been

rehoused with support into suitable accommodation.

The funding will be used by councils to:

- Create street-based services including outreach teams who will locate and support rough sleepers directly on the streets and offer them access to services
- Establish first stage accommodation such as hostels, Somewhere Safe to Stay hubs and emergency access beds which provide warm and dry shelter, rapid assessment, and support to people who are already – or at risk of – sleeping rough
- Set up housing support providing stable, affordable accommodation and intensive wrap-around support to help people who are sleeping rough recover from complex issues and sustain their tenancies
- Introduce specialist support workers including Rough Sleeping Coordinators, navigators, and specialist health and care staff

The funding follows the Prime Minister's drive to tackle homelessness and the [announcement of over £260 million for local authorities](#). This will help people who are homeless or at risk of losing their homes improve their lives and get back on their feet.

## **Ipswich**

In Ipswich, there is a rough sleeper working group, each Tuesday morning with all relevant partners and agencies around the table.

The working group is successful due to its client focused approach and action planning. The working group acts as a weekly multi agency meeting on the back of outreach intelligence, street link alerts and ongoing relief and prevention work.

Having the working group set up and well-coordinated enables us to support our most entrenched rough sleepers with accessing housing, mental health support, addressing their substance misuse and health needs, because all agencies are an integral part of the Rough Sleeper Initiative which enables the project to provide a wrap around service to each client that meets their individual needs.

## **Nottingham**

Nottingham City Council leads a local partnership that has drawn on Rough Sleeper Initiative funding to add to a much needed range of interventions to help people who have sleep rough in Nottingham.

These services work together as a pathway providing outreach, emergency accommodation and resettlement support to help people to regain shelter and rebuild their lives away from the streets.

This year, our partnership plans to build on existing initiatives (including our complex needs hostel, Safe Space to Stay hub, housing led accommodation, navigators and other developments) to provide more opportunities for people to engage with services and find a route back to a settled home.

## **Rugby**

With funding from the Rough Sleeper Initiative, Rugby Borough Council has funded a specialist outreach officer to engage with partner agencies and third sector providers to support rough sleepers in moving from the street into accommodation.

This project is known as the Rugby Housing Pathway. The Pathway allows the long term homeless to access support to address the underlying causes of their homelessness while having somewhere to live, with the aim of them not returning to rough sleeping.

Since April 2019, 18 rough sleepers have moved into accommodation, and two of these people are now in employment.

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## **Yemen – escalation of violence:** **Minister for the Middle East statement**



Following ongoing violence in Nehm and Al Jawf, Yemen, the Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa, Dr Andrew Murrison, met United Nations Special Envoy Martin Griffiths in London on Monday 27 January.

Dr Andrew Murrison said:

The UK is following with concern the recent escalation of violence in Yemen. Following a period of reduced levels of violence, this

represents a serious and dangerous step backwards.

We call on the parties to the conflict to exercise restraint, return to de-escalation efforts and prepare for direct UN-led negotiations to achieve a lasting political solution. The UK fully supports the efforts of UNSE Martin Griffiths.

Published 27 January 2020