



Ministry of Housing,  
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Our Ref: 9403886

20<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Mahlea,

Thank you for your letter of 1 October to Number 10 about people with no recourse to public funds and homelessness. I have been asked to reply as this matter falls within my ministerial responsibilities.

The 'Protect Programme', the next step in the ongoing targeted support to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our communities from COVID-19, was announced by the Prime Minister on Thursday 5 November.

A further £15 million will be provided to support the ongoing efforts to provide accommodation for rough sleepers during the pandemic. This programme will help areas that need additional support most during the restrictions and throughout winter and is on top of the previously announced £10 million Cold Weather Fund for all councils to help keep rough sleepers safe this winter.

This builds on the success of the still ongoing 'Everyone In' campaign, which is helping to protect thousands of lives during the pandemic - by September it had supported over 29,000 vulnerable people, with over 10,000 in emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 provided with settled accommodation or move on support.

These efforts have been backed by significant government support. We are providing councils with a total of £6.4 billion to support their communities through this pandemic, which includes their work to support rough sleepers. This includes £4.6 billion in un-ringfenced funding, £1.1 billion from the Infection Control Fund, £300 million to support Test and Trace as well as funding allocated to councils from the new Local Alert Level system and a number of grants to support communities and vulnerable people.

The Next Steps Accommodation programme makes available the financial resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to prevent those accommodated during the pandemic from returning to the streets.

On 17 September we announced allocations to local authorities to pay for immediate support to ensure that people do not return to the streets. £91.5 million was allocated to 274 councils in England to help vulnerable people housed during the pandemic.

On 29 October, we announced allocations to local partners to deliver longer-term move-on accommodation. More than 3,300 new long-term homes for rough sleepers across the country have been approved, backed by Government investment of more than £150 million.

£23 million will be provided so that vulnerable individuals experiencing rough sleeping, including those currently in emergency accommodation as a response to COVID-19, can access the specialist help they need for substance dependency issues, in order to rebuild their lives and move towards work and education. This funding is part of the £262 million funding announced at Spring Budget 2020.

Taken together, the overall amount we are spending on rough sleeping and homelessness this year is over £700 million.

The rules as to eligibility relating to immigration status, including for those with NRPF, have not changed.

Local authorities must use their judgement in assessing what support they may lawfully give to each person on an individual basis, considering that person's specific circumstances and support needs.

Local authorities already regularly make such judgements on accommodating individuals who might otherwise be ineligible, during extreme weather for example, where there is a risk to life.

Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question.

The Government recognises that these are unprecedented times and expects local authorities to support people who are sleeping rough, and also to minimise unnecessary risks to public health, acting within the law.

We continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that local authorities are able to meet the needs of rough sleepers.

The decision to support asylum seekers regardless of the outcome of an asylum claim, has now been reviewed. The Minister for Immigration Compliance and the Courts wrote to Local Authority Chief Executives on Wednesday 5 August to inform them that the cessations for positive decisions would resume from 11 August 2020. However, we are aware of recent legal action regarding negative cessations and have paused the issuing of negative cessations for the time being.



**KELLY TOLHURST MP**