

Rt Hon. Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government  
2 Marsham St  
Westminster  
London SW1P 4DF  
28/05/2020

RE: An open letter calling for the government to extend the 'Everyone In' policy

Dear Secretary of State,

This letter has been written by local community-led groups and charities across England. We have provided essential services throughout the pandemic, working closely with people who are homeless both within the emergency provision and with those left on the streets or in inadequate accommodation. We are deeply concerned about the Government's reported decision to end the 'Everyone In' policy and the continued provision for homeless people.<sup>1</sup> We are also very concerned about the risks associated with vastly reduced winter provision and about the significant population - in particular those with No Recourse to Public Funds - that remain substantially at risk during the pandemic despite the huge effort made by all to accommodate people.

We note your announcement of 24 May of measures to support those rough sleepers currently accommodated to move on to sustainable, long-term housing.<sup>2</sup> While the language used shows positive ambition, much of your statement recycles previously announced pre-COVID-19 lockdown pledges, such as 6,000 new housing units.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the majority of the funding announced was already announced at budget, albeit accelerated. This announcement did not clarify whether the Everyone In policy was actually coming to an end or not. It did not confirm if the new units would be available for use by those who have not been able to access the current available provisions, thus remaining street homeless. The announcement also did not address the question of support for people with No Recourse to Public Funds. Finally, it made no mention of people who will become homeless in the future and how they might be accommodated.

What is needed is a far more substantial allocation of funding to local authorities, with a guarantee that central government will fund all shortfalls which are leaving rough sleepers on the streets, and urgently assist local authorities in acquiring sufficient housing for all.

This need for the Government to urgently provide substantial funds on a long-term basis, as well as clarify and amend its instructions and guidance to Local Authorities, is crucial. On 26th March, the Homelessness Minister, Luke Hall MP, issued his directive to local authorities to 'bring everyone in' during the ongoing coronavirus crisis.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, his directive stated that 'it is imperative that rough sleepers and other vulnerable homeless persons are supported into appropriate accommodation by 29<sup>th</sup> March'. Although councils

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-52637283>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/6000-new-supported-homes-as-part-of-landmark-commitment-to-end-rough-sleeping>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bigissue.com/latest/the-big-issue-breaks-down-rishi-sunaks-budget/>

<sup>4</sup> Hall L, (27/03/2020) *Coronavirus (COVID-19): letter from Minister Hall to local authorities on plans to protect rough sleepers* (Online). Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-minister-hall-to-local-authorities>. Viewed 21/04/2020.

have continued their efforts to meet the Minister's directive, it has never been met in full: many people continue to sleep on the streets or have become newly street homeless.

Nonetheless, the principle of 'Everyone In' was, and remains, correct. Homeless members of society need to be able to access secure and safe accommodation during the pandemic, both for their own health and safety and for our wider public safety but this principle should reach far beyond public health measures. It is the principle of a fair society.

We therefore urge that, if the goal of the government is to end rough sleeping then the Everyone In policy must be extended so that **all** people experiencing homelessness are able to access safe and secure accommodation for the entirety of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

This provision should include funding and support for the sector to problem solve winter provision. Pre-pandemic, the vast majority of people sleeping rough have been accommodated through the winter shelter network from November - March each year. We are now facing the risk of a humanitarian disaster as the shared winter shelter spaces commonly used will not meet public health requirements.

This stark reality demonstrates that the impact of COVID-19 on our homeless population reaches far beyond the months of lockdown. In this crisis, a failure to protect the most vulnerable constitutes a failure to protect us all. With shelters being closed, the winding down of the 'Everyone In' scheme with no robust alternative in place would mean our buses, our A&E waiting rooms, and our high streets becoming crowded with those who have nowhere else to go. This risks a spike in infections, posing a grave danger to the health of rough sleepers, and all other members of our society. A long-term commitment is essential to save lives.

To this end, sufficient funding should be provided to Local Authorities immediately. Neither the £3.2 billion the Government released to Local Authorities for their overall Covid-19 response, nor the £3.2 million dedicated to provisions for rough sleeping, nor the allocated funds mentioned in your most recent statement are sufficient for municipal governments to do the urgent work of protecting residents from the ongoing crisis at hand. It is crucial that additional funds, beyond the budget, be released for Local Authorities to procure further accommodation stock, to finance long-term welfare support, and to pay for the training and the recruitment of homelessness outreach workers and charity staff.

It is also of critical importance that the Government clarify that those without regularised immigration status will not be removed as a result of taking up temporary accommodation, and that data held by Local Authorities or their contractors will not be shared with the Home Office without consent. The No Recourse to Public Funds condition should also be removed so that everyone can access housing support, regardless of immigration status. Funding should be allocated towards supporting homeless people with NRPF, who make up a large percentage of all rough sleepers.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to funding, and following the MHCLG's Inquiry into the impact of coronavirus on homelessness, rough sleepers, and the private rented sector, we echo the Committee's recommendation that the Government must also provide guidance clarifying councils' use of

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<sup>5</sup> Written evidence submitted by the Association of Housing Advice Services and the North London Housing Partnership <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/3448/pdf/>

discretion in lifting the No Recourse to Public Funds condition, so that homeless people can access vital accommodation support.<sup>6</sup> No one should be punished for trying to protect their own safety and the safety of the wider public, particularly as the mechanisms of the current immigration regime directly contravenes leading scientific recommendations for an effective Coronavirus response.<sup>7</sup>

Local Authorities must have the funding, legal authorisation, and government guidance needed to allow them fulfil the “in for good” principle: the understanding that, once service users initially engage with homelessness services, they will be guaranteed the long-term housing support needed to avoid returning to the streets. To this end, the Everyone In policy should not be abandoned, but instead, extended.

Yours sincerely,

Haringey Migrant Support Centre, London  
Museum of Homelessness, national  
The Rt Rev the Lord Bishop of Salisbury  
Albert Kennedy Trust, national  
The Big Issue Foundation, national  
Emmaus UK, national  
London Renters Union, London  
The Simon Community, London  
Oxford Homeless Project, Oxford  
Street Treats, Manchester  
West Yorkshire Destitute Asylum Network, Leeds  
Sanctus St Mark's, Stoke on Trent  
Streets Kitchen, national  
Solidarity Shelters, national  
The Outside Project, London  
Homeless Support Project, Manchester  
The Pavement magazine  
Voices in Exile, Brighton  
Hope Housing, Bradford  
Sussex Homeless Support & Brighton and Hove Housing Coalition, Brighton  
Denis Tully, CEO, Emmanuel House, Nottingham  
Institute of our Lady of Mercy, Leeds  
Society of St James, Southampton  
Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network, London  
Northampton Hope Centre  
Union Chapel, London  
Street Storage, London  
With One Voice, International  
Barnsley Rough Sleeper Project, Barnsley  
Jon Beech, Director, Leeds Asylum Seekers' Support Network  
The Margins Project, London  
Kalayaan, London  
The Tricky Period, London  
Positive Action for Refugees, Leeds  
Project 17, London

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<sup>6</sup> [https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmcomloc/309/30905.htm#\\_idTextAnchor006](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmcomloc/309/30905.htm#_idTextAnchor006)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30971-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30971-5/fulltext)

No Accommodation Network, national  
The Solace Community, Wolverhampton  
Thousand 4 1000, Brighton  
Greenwich Winter Night Shelter, London  
Rev David Britton, Forest Churches Emergency Night Shelter, London  
The Bromley Homeless Shelter, London  
London Jesus Centre, London  
Labour Homelessness Campaign  
ACORN, national  
Paper Cup Project, Liverpool  
The Night Shelter, Coventry  
The Robes Project, London  
Surviving the Streets, Hastings  
Migrant English Project, Brighton  
Birmingham Community Hosting Network, Birmingham  
Renewed Hope Trust, Surrey  
Metro, London  
Public Interest Law Centre, London  
Quaker Homeless Action  
St Werburghs Medical Practice for the Homeless, Chester  
Campbell Hall Homeless Drop In, Boughton, Chester  
Homeless Support Project, Manchester  
Neighbourhood Food Larder, Warrington, St Helen's and Leigh  
Myriad Foundation, Manchester  
Lola's Homeless, Newham, London  
Feed Manchester, Manchester  
Spotlight Outreach, Manchester  
Chester Cathedral  
The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark  
The Very Revd Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark  
The Venerable Alastair Cutting, Archdeacon of Lewisham and Greenwich  
Ruth Martin, Diocesan Secretary of the Diocese of Southwark  
PLOD Foundation, Wandsworth, Putney  
Case Art, London  
Camden Community Law Centre, London Borough of Camden  
Migrants' Rights Network  
Greater Manchester housing action