



Homelessness and Covid-19: Next Steps QSD on 14 May 2020

On 14 May 2020, Lord Bird (Crossbench) is due to ask Her Majesty's Government "what plans they have to support people who were previously homeless into permanent housing after the COVID-19 pandemic".

Recent announcements by the Government

On 2 May 2020, [the Government announced](#) that a specialist taskforce had been created to "lead the next phase of the Government's support for rough sleepers during the pandemic". It said that Dame Louise Casey would lead the taskforce and work with councils on plans to ensure rough sleepers can "move into long-term, safe accommodation once the immediate crisis is over". It also stated that councils across England would receive £1.6 billion in additional funding to help respond to Covid-19 pressures across all services.

Initial response to the Covid-19 outbreak

In March 2020, the Government took steps to reduce the impact on those who are, or who are at risk of, sleeping rough. [It announced](#) £3.2 million of emergency funding to help rough sleepers self-isolate. Later that month, the Minister for Local Government and Homelessness, [Luke Hall](#), set out the Government's response to Covid-19 and rough sleeping. He also gave instructions to council leaders, including asking them to urgently secure accommodation for people on the streets. The Government has [since stated](#) that over 90% of rough sleepers known to councils have now been offered accommodation.

Previous government work on rough sleeping

In its [2019 manifesto](#), the Government pledged to end rough sleeping by the end of the current parliament through an extension of the rough sleeping initiative (RSI), the housing first approach and using local services to meet the health and housing needs of those living on the streets. In January 2020, [it announced](#) allocations of a £112 million RSI fund for local councils for 2020/21.

Prior to this, Theresa May's Government published a [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) in August 2018 which was backed by £100 million of funding for two years. Published that December, the [Rough Sleeping Strategy: Delivery Plan](#) then provided an update on progress in implementing the strategy's 61 commitments and information on next steps. In September 2019, the Government published its [Impact Evaluation of the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018](#), which recorded some successful outcomes.

Nicole Winchester | 7 May 2020

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Further Information

- House of Commons, '[Written Question: Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus](#)', 5 May 2020, 40663; and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, '[Dame Louise Casey to spearhead government taskforce on rough sleeping during pandemic](#)', 2 May 2020

Written question setting out the Government's plans to support rough sleepers during and after the pandemic, and a press release providing information on the specialist taskforce created.

- Crisis, '[Open letter to the Prime Minister on the next steps needed to protect people experiencing homelessness in the coronavirus outbreak](#)', 3 April 2020; [Government Response to Homelessness and Covid-19](#), 3 April 2020; and Shelter, '[How the Government can avoid a rise in homelessness after Covid-19](#)', 16 April 2020

Letter from several charities to the Prime Minister commending the Government's response to protecting those experiencing homelessness during the outbreak, alongside recommendations for next steps and a briefing note setting out the charities' points in more detail. In addition, advice from the charity Shelter on how to prevent a spike in homelessness once the 'lockdown' ends.

- House of Lords Library, '[Covid-19 and rough sleeping: what is the Government doing?](#)', 7 April 2020; and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, '[£3.2 million emergency support for rough sleepers during coronavirus outbreak](#)', 17 March 2020

Article detailing the Government's response to rough sleeping in relation to the Covid-19 outbreak, including information on: Government actions; why rough sleepers are vulnerable; the number of rough sleepers; and the Government's rough sleeping initiative. In addition, the press release announcing £3.2 million of emergency funding for councils in England to help rough sleepers to self-isolate.

- House of Commons, '[Written Statement: Rough Sleeping Initiative Allocation of Additional Funding for 2020/21](#)', 28 January 2020, HCWS69

Written statement by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, announcing allocations of a £112 million rough sleeping initiative (RSI) fund for local councils in England for 2020/21.

- House of Commons Library, [Rough Sleeping \(England\)](#), 9 April 2020, pp 3 and 37–44.

Briefing on rough sleeping in England, including information on Government actions to tackle homelessness from 2015 onwards.

Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- A selection of recent written questions from both Houses: [HL3329](#) (5 May 2020); [HL3154](#) (4 May 2020); [40957](#) (4 May 2020); [40599](#) (4 May 2020); and [HL2969](#) (7 April 2020).

Press Articles and Comment

- Rick Henderson, '[Any short-term success in tackling homelessness won't be sustained unless we act on the reasons why so many people needed hotels in the first place](#)', *Inside Housing*, 7 May 2020
- Daniel Lavelle and Simon Hattenstone, '[The government hasn't 'ended homelessness' no matter what it says](#)', *Guardian*, 29 April 2020
- Leilani Farha, '[How can billions of people 'stay home' to beat Covid-19 without a safe place to live?](#)', *Guardian*, 29 April 2020
- Christina Lamb, '[Homeless swap the streets for hotel suites during coronavirus lockdown](#)', *Times (£)*, 26 April 2020