



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rough sleeping – no going back
May 2020
(Ref CB48699)

Thank you for contacting me about ending rough sleeping. It has always been a priority for me and I am proud to have been elected on a manifesto that pledged to end it under this Parliament by expanding programmes such as the Rough Sleeping Initiative and Housing First.

This crisis has shown us what is possible. Since the start of the pandemic more than 5,400 rough sleepers – over 90 per cent of those on the street at the beginning of the crisis and known to local authorities – have been offered safe accommodation. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has also recently announced a £6 million emergency fund to provide relief for frontline homelessness charitable organisations who have been affected by Covid-19. Locally, more than 220 homeless people (in BCP Council area) have been helped by extra Government funding.

Looking forward, radical plans to provide thousands of long-term, safe homes for vulnerable rough sleepers taken off the streets during the pandemic have been unveiled by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP. This ambitious commitment – the biggest of its kind since the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative began – will be backed by £160 million this year and will support many of the thousands of rough sleepers currently housed in emergency accommodation to move on to more sustainable, long-term housing.

By accelerating plans for the £381 million announced for rough sleeping services at Budget - now extended to £433 million - the funding will ensure that 6,000 new housing units will be put into the system, with 3,300 of these becoming available in the next 12 months. In addition to accelerating this capital spend for investment in housing stock, the government is also increasing the revenue support of the total programme by 37% to make sure that the rough sleepers have the support they need to stay off the streets for good.

Once in their new home, rough sleepers will be supported by specialist staff to access the help they need, such as support for mental health or substance abuse problems, so they can rebuild their lives, move towards training and work, and remain off the streets for good. I know only too well from my own involvement that this is a vital element to resolving the problem.

I hope you share my optimism for the future and thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Conor Burns', with a horizontal line underneath.