



Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Eddie Hughes MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rough Sleeping & Housing
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

4 February 2021

Dear Eddie,

FURTHER INFORMATION FOLLOWING 28 JANUARY EVIDENCE SESSION

Thank you for your appearance before the Committee on Thursday 28 January as a part of our inquiry into the impact of Covid-19 on homelessness and the private rented sector. On behalf of the Committee, I wanted to congratulate you again on your new role and pass on our thanks for speaking to the Committee so soon after your appointment.

During the session, you promised to write to the Committee on a variety of points, which I set out below:

1. I asked if you could set out for the Committee all the funding streams that have been put in place by the Government to help homeless people and rough sleepers since the start of the pandemic—including the recent £10 million of extra funding and the £15 million Protect Programme—and explain precisely which can be spent on individuals with no recourse to public funds and which cannot. **You agreed to come back to the Committee on these points.**

2. The NAO reported in January that the Department has been collecting data on a weekly basis from local authorities since the start of June 2020, which appeared to confirm an upward trend in the number of rough sleepers. **You agreed to investigate the source of this data and provide it to the Committee, if it is available.**

3. The Committee asked about different data sets, **and you agreed to provide the following where it exists:**

- How many of the (a) estimated 10,000 people in emergency accommodation and the (b) estimated 23,000 moved into more settled accommodation are subject to no recourse to public funds.
- The estimated proportion of the 1 million extra unemployed persons by mid-2021—as forecast by the Chancellor—who rent privately.
- The current estimate of how many households have (a) any rent arrears, (b) rent arrears of six months or more, and (c) rent arrears of nine months or more. You mentioned a graph with the distribution; the Committee would welcome this as part of your response.
- The current estimate of the backlog of eviction cases in the private rented sector, and how much this backlog has changed since the introduction of the Nightingale courts and other measures designed to relieve the pressure on courts.

4. I raised the issue of longer-term problems in the private rented sector, including for example, credit ratings, issues with deposits used on rent arrears, and other related issues for tenants attempting to move properties, as well as landlords possibly exiting the market. **You agreed to write to the Committee on the Department's plans to address these issues.**

I am sure you understand how important many of these questions are to our inquiry, so we would appreciate a response by Thursday 11 February.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Betts', with a stylized flourish above the name.

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee