



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Jeremy Pocklington CB
Permanent Secretary

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local
Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Meg Hillier
Chair, Committee of Public Accounts
By email

2 June 2021

Dear Meg,

Public Accounts Committee 49th Report. COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough – Update on Recommendation 6

In May 2020, the government announced the decision to accelerate delivery of the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and in recognition of the need for move-on homes for those in emergency accommodation following the success of the “Everyone In” initiative. This £433m programme to deliver 6,000 homes and support to former rough sleepers represents the largest ever investment in move-on accommodation, creating a national asset that will benefit vulnerable people for years to come.

Before opening the RSAP bidding process, we considered carefully how best to deliver this programme. One option would have been for MHCLG or Homes England to oversee delivery of RSAP directly outside of London, for example by procuring properties centrally. However, we took the view that a decentralised approach would be more sensitive to the needs of rough sleepers in local areas, and more tailored to local areas’ Covid responses during ‘Everyone In’. Consequently, we are heavily reliant upon councils (and local registered housing providers) as delivery partners.

On 29 October 2020 we confirmed allocations of funding, subject to due diligence, to 276 schemes to deliver up to 3,348 homes with support. Funding allocations were published at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/930786/RSAP_allocations.pdf

Funding was awarded to a range of varied and ambitious projects, tailored to meet the specific needs of rough sleepers across towns, cities, and rural locations right across the country. Some local authorities, registered providers and their partners have had to overcome considerable challenges to the delivery of their schemes in 2020-21, in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions. In some cases, individual project completion timescales have moved beyond 31st March as a result of unforeseen or unavoidable delays, or schemes have withdrawn where delays or challenging market conditions now make them undeliverable. Our delivery partners, the Greater London Authority and Homes England, have been supporting local schemes to drive delivery inside and outside London and as a result

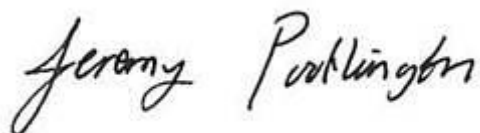
we are seeing an acceleration of delivery in Q1 of 2021-22. We have seen an impressive level of commitment to delivery, in challenging circumstances, to support our aim of ending rough sleeping. We will update the committee on the progress now being made in due course, following the completion of all units from the allocations announced in October 2020.

This government remains committed to investing in delivering move-on accommodation for this cohort. In March, we launched the next round of the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme with a further £212m available to councils and housing associations to bring forward move-on accommodation and support for rough sleepers. These homes are long-term assets which will support multiple rough sleepers. Government is committing funding up to 2023-24 to ensure those in RSAP units receive ongoing support, including to help prepare them for a move into PRS or wider social housing.

As set out in the bidding guidance for the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, RSAP tenancies will normally be for two years. We will work with local authorities to ensure that people receive the services and support that are appropriate to their needs. That might be new accommodation, but it might be other forms of support such as help with employment or reconnecting with family or friends, that then allows them to access other forms of accommodation. This individual approach is why local authorities are best placed to allocate individuals to appropriate, value-for-money accommodation when it is time for them to move on. Interventions should be aimed at rapidly delivering outcomes which meet individuals' housing and support needs.

While we are rightly still focusing on supporting rough sleepers through the pandemic, we are clear we want to set out our next steps for the next phase of work and we intend to do so in good time for the spending review. We will be setting out our approach to ending rough sleeping and other issues in due course as we update our strategy in line with the manifesto commitment, taking into account the impact of Covid-19, and our response to it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeremy Pocklington". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JEREMY POCKLINGTON