



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Homelessness Reduction Bill

Thank you for contacting me about the Homelessness Reduction Bill.

Every person sleeping rough is a tragedy and I am glad that the Government is working hard to reduce homelessness. Homelessness acceptances are now less than half of what they were during their peak in 2003-04 under the previous Labour Government.

Councils have a duty to provide advice on homelessness to anyone seeking help and they will take steps to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Since 2010, councils have prevented over 1 million households from becoming homeless and the Government is now protecting homelessness prevention for councils. This will total £315 million by 2020. It has also increased central funding to tackle homelessness to £139 million over the next four years. This includes targeted funding for rough sleeping.

I have been assured by my ministerial colleagues that the Government is considering a broad range of options, including legislation, to prevent more people from becoming homeless. The report by the Crisis Expert Panel, to which St Mungo's contributed, has been welcomed by the Government. It provides a valuable insight into how aspects of the current legislation in England can be updated in light of the models adopted in Scotland and Wales.

The Homelessness Reduction Bill, introduced by my colleague Bob Blackman, has been published in draft form and I look forward to examining the contents of the final Bill in due course.

I am committed to tackling homelessness and I am glad that this is an issue which the Government is taking seriously. In the last parliament over £500 million was provided to councils and charities to tackle homelessness and central Government funding is now increasing to reduce homelessness further. I welcome the Communities and Local Government Select Committee report and I am determined that we should act to prevent homelessness as far as possible. As you mention, the Government is considering a range of option such as legislation to tackle this issue and I will consider the contents of the Bill once it has been published.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Edward Timpson

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