



## Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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### **Response to 'A Place to Call Home' Campaign (EDM 833) – January 2017**

Thank you for contacting me about the 'A Place to Call Home' campaign.

Supported housing provides an invaluable service for many vulnerable and disabled people, including many suffering from mental ill-health. The Government has made clear that it understands that supported housing providers have specific needs. That is why an evidence review of supported housing was carried out and has provided a helpful insight into the scale, scope and costs of the sector.

It is right that the Government is reforming the welfare system to ensure the support it provides is fair and reasonable, but it is also important that appropriate protections are in place. I welcome the fact that the Government has decided to defer the implementation of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in the social rented sector until April 2019.

At that point, those living in supported accommodation will have their core rent and service charges funded through their benefit up to the level of LHA. In recognition of the needs of those in supported housing, the Shared Accommodation Rate will not apply.

The Government will devolve to local authorities in England an amount of funding to cover costs above the level of LHA, and will ring-fence the top-up fund to ensure it continues to support vulnerable people. An equivalent amount will be provided for Scotland and Wales. Bringing in both the LHA rates and the new model in 2019 gives time to develop the detail in partnership with the sector, and for providers to prepare for the new system.

This ring-fenced pot of money will give local authorities greater flexibility to commission services in line with local needs and to work more closely with other local services. I can assure you that the Government is working with the sector to ensure this system of top-up funding will provide a secure long-term funding solution.

A consultation on the details of the new funding regime has been launched, which closes on 13th February. I hope providers and stakeholders will engage positively with that process and feed in to the design of the new model.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP