



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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Response to 'Stop the Scandal' homelessness campaign – June 2017

Thank you for contacting me about homelessness and health care.

I would like to pay tribute to the excellent work that St Mungo's do and the importance of their campaigns in highlighting the issues around homelessness.

In the 2010-2015 Parliament, significant progress was made in tackling homelessness across the country. £500 million was provided to councils and charities to deal with homelessness and help the most vulnerable in society get their life back on track. This helped to prevent over one million people from becoming homeless.

In December last year, the Prime Minister and Communities Secretary announced the areas set to benefit from new homelessness prevention funding. This consists of £20 million for Homelessness Prevention Trailblazers to pilot new initiatives; £20 million in rough sleeping grants, to provide targeted support for those at imminent risk of sleeping rough or those new to the streets; and £10 million in locally commissioned Social Impact Bonds, to help long-term rough sleepers with the most complex needs.

It is important to recognise that sleeping rough is rarely the result of a housing crisis alone, and I appreciate that many rough sleepers and homeless people have complex needs, such as mental health difficulties. That is why I am encouraged that the Department of Health is providing £40 million for the Homeless Change and Platform for Life programmes. This will help address mental health issues by providing decent accommodation and health support for homeless people, and highlights the importance of services coming together to help those on the street with complex needs.

The Government has also encouraged local areas to develop and improve hospital discharge arrangements for people who are homeless through the £10 million Homeless Hospital Discharge Fund, including by more effective multi-agency working. In addition, £1 billion a year has been put in place to help alleviate mental health problems more generally.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP