

20<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Constituents,

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.

UK 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 one million households from becoming homeless and the Government is now protecting homelessness prevention funding for councils. This will total £315 million by 2020. The Government 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.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**