

23 February 2022

Eddie Hughes MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Dear Minister

Re: Ending rough sleeping for good

We are writing to you from Redbridge to seek a partnership with government to help us end rough sleeping for good. We wrote to your offices in August of last year and we are conscious that time is running out to find a solution. However, it is not too late if we can act now.

We are aware of the support you have given over the last 18 months during the pandemic to make a real difference for the many people who unfortunately find themselves on the street. We want to acknowledge that this has made a real difference. On the back of this, Redbridge has made a major commitment to really shift the situation, and the successful outcomes are considerable.

There is one cohort that we remain very concerned about - those people classified as having no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Last month, there were **76** people in Redbridge who fitted this description. Changes to the immigration rules will make the legal case for supporting these people very unclear from April 1, and the council will no longer have the funds to continue to do so without government funding. Likewise, allowing the situation to return to as it was pre-pandemic is a huge opportunity missed.

We are writing to ask if you will work with us to end rough sleeping for people with no recourse to public funds for good. We have set out a short business case that is attached with this letter. It is built around five core asks, with the final one being to seek a partnership with the government.

Our five key asks are:

- 1.** For the government to continue to fund emergency accommodation and support until an individual's immigration status is resolved, and allow rough sleepers to claim local housing allowance and welfare benefits to keep them safe and off the streets
- 2.** For the government to allow people with no recourse to public funds to access education, employment and training so they can have the opportunity to build better lives
- 3.** For the government to reduce the amount of evidence rough sleepers have to provide to prove how long they have lived in the UK – the current level of evidence is an insurmountable obstacle for people in desperate need of support
- 4.** For the government to reverse the 20-year rule back to the 14-year rule, so that people with insecure immigration statuses who have lived in the UK continuously for 14 years can apply for limited leave to remain – this step alone would resolve most cases in Redbridge
- 5.** For the government to commit to working with local councils to solve the real cases we are dealing with, and use our processes here in Redbridge as a blueprint

Redbridge's track record on supporting rough sleepers into accommodation demonstrates that it is possible to give everyone the support to come in off the street.

Since March 2020, and through 2021, Redbridge Council supported **389** rough sleepers to keep safe throughout the pandemic.

The table below illustrates what we have been able to achieve in Redbridge to date. However, the one cohort that we need to solve is our NRPF group. In 2018, eight NRPF rough sleepers died on the streets of Redbridge - this can never happen again.

Cohort	As at September 2020	Projected April 2021	Actual April 2021	Actual as at 23 January 2022
Tier 1 low	23	0	10	1
Tier 2 medium	47	19	26	1
Tier 3 high	45	38	30	0
Tier 4 very high	5	0	3	3
Tier 5 NRPF	96	55	85	76

We are committed to ending rough sleeping for good - and we know that the government shares this ambition. But we must work together to make this a reality. By working together, and through our five key asks, we can prevent people with NRPF from having no choice but to return to sleeping on the streets - but we must act now.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this in more detail, and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



CLlr Jas Athwal
Leader, London Borough of Redbridge



CLlr Solanki
Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness