

POLICY UPDATE

February 2018

This update has been prepared by Homeless Link's Policy Team. Please contact Paula Reid (paula.reid@homelesslink.org.uk) or Chris Brill (chris.brill@homelesslink.org.uk) for more detail on any item contained within the briefing.

1. KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Government Re-shuffle

On 8 January 2018 the Prime Minister announced a re-shuffle of the Cabinet and junior Ministers. The main relevant changes are set out below:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (previously DCLG)

Sajid Javid remains the Secretary of State and the new Ministers include:

- Heather Wheeler MP, Minister for Housing and Homelessness (her responsibilities include homelessness & rough sleeping, PRS, supported housing and domestic abuse and refuges)
- Dominic Raab MP, Minister of State for Housing (his responsibilities include supporting the Housing Secretary on housing supply policy and delivery, home ownership policy, planning policy, social housing green paper).
- Rishi Sunak MP, Minister for Local Government (his responsibilities include local government policy & finances, adult social care and Troubled Families).

Department of Health and Social Care (previously Department of Health)

While Jeremy Hunt remains as the Secretary of State and Jackie Doyle-Price MP remains Minister of State for Care and Mental Health (with responsibility for mental health services, vulnerable group and Steve Brine MP remains as Minister for Public Health and Primary Care. The new Ministers include:

- Caroline Dinenage MP, Minister of State for Care (her responsibilities include: adult social care, hospital care quality and patient safety, community and health services and health and social care integration).

Department for Work and Pensions

Esther McVey MP is the new Secretary of State at DWP. The following are also new Ministers in the DWP:

- Alok Sharma MP, Minister of State for Employment (his responsibilities include Universal Credit and Employment Strategy).
- Sarah Newton MP, Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (her responsibilities include cross-government disability issues, work and health strategy, disability employment, PIP/ESA, etc.)
- Kit Malthouse MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance (his responsibilities include financial support for housing & supported accommodation)

Ministry of Justice

David Gauke MP is the new Secretary of State at the MOJ and the following are new Ministers:

- Rory Stewart OBE MP, Minister of State (for prisons and probation) (his responsibilities include: prison, probation services, sentencing and public protections)

- Dr Phillip Lee MP, Minister for Youth Justice, Victims, Female Offenders and Offender Health (his responsibilities include victims (including domestic abuse), female offenders, youth justice, offender health, Lammy Review, Race Disparity Audit and human rights).

Home Office

Amber Rudd MP remains as the Home Secretary (and Minister for Women and Equalities) and the new Ministers include:

- Caroline Nokes MP, Minister of State for Immigration (will also attend Cabinet) (her responsibilities include: immigration and border policy, foreign national offenders, implementation of the Immigration act 2016 and Border Force)
- Nick Hurd MP, Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service (his responsibilities include police resourcing, reform and workforce, IPCC, and Policing & Crime Bill)
- Victoria Atkins MO, Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability/ Minister for Women (her responsibilities include: drugs, alcohol, crime prevention, anti-social behaviour, gangs, youth crime and youth violence, mental health, modern slavery, violence against women and girls, missing people, sexual violence and prostitution, domestic violence. In addition, as Minister for Women she has overall responsibility for policy on gender equality.

2. POLICY UPDATES

Homelessness and housing

Rough Sleeping Statistics

Following last year's street counts and estimates, the annual rough sleeping statistics were released on 25 January. The number of people sleeping rough in England has increased by **15%** annually, with **4,751** people sleeping rough on any given night in 2017. This represents an increase of 169% since 2010. Our press release can be found at

<https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/news/2018/jan/25/homeless-link-responds-to-government%E2%80%99s-rough-sleeping-statistics-for-2017> – we received extensive media coverage with mentions in the [Independent](#), [ITV](#), the [Daily Mail](#), [Metro](#), and [24 Housing](#).

EEA administrative removal

The Home Office policy to deport rough sleeping European Economic Area (EEA) nationals who it deems to be “in abuse of EU treaty rights”, has been ruled unlawful by the High Court:

<https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2017/dec/15/home-office-policy-on-eea-administrative-removal-deemed-unlawful>

Homeless households

The Public Accounts Committee published its inquiry in to homeless households in December. The report concluded that DCLG has not shown enough urgency in tackling homelessness and recommended that a cross-government strategy should be published by June 2018:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubacc/462/462.pdf>

Public Space Protection Orders and rough sleeping

In December, the Home Office published updated guidance on the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which specifically stated that *'Public Spaces Protection Orders should not be used to target people based solely on the fact that someone is homeless or rough sleeping, as this in itself is unlikely to mean that such behaviour is having an unreasonably detrimental effect on the community's quality of life which justifies the restrictions imposed.'* Full details available on page 51 of the guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/670180/2017-12-13_ASB_Revised_Statutory_Guidance_V2_0.pdf

Future funding of supported housing

Following a series of consultation events across the country with our members and hearing a wide range of views, we have submitted our response to the consultation on housing costs for short-term supported accommodation. The main points we raised in the response reflect the key concerns of members on the proposals for short term accommodation:

- The definition
- Impact on tenants
- Local ring fenced grant
- Local authority commissioning
- Protecting and boosting supply
- Funding for support costs

We published a blog setting out our key messages on this and this can be found at <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2018/jan/08/supported-housing-consultation-update> and our full response can be found [here](#)

Homeless Reduction Act events

Homeless Link are holding a series of events around the country on Implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act and the focus of these work-shops is on bringing local authorities, the voluntary sector and other stakeholders together to identify opportunities for collaborative and partnership working, as well as focusing on 'culture change'. The details of the events can be found at <https://www.homeless.org.uk/events/regional/HRAEvents>

New Labour Party Policy on Rough Sleeping

On 28 January 2018, the Labour Party announced a new policy which promises that a future Labour government would make 8,000 affordable homes available for people with a history of sleeping on the streets – double the number previously promised. Under the plans, a future Labour government would strike a deal with housing associations to make the homes available immediately as they fall vacant, and fund the replacements via Labour's national housing programme. In this way, the homes for rough sleepers would become available much more quickly than if they were built from scratch. The new homes would be a mix of 'move-on' housing for people leaving homelessness hostels and 'housing first'. For more info go to <https://labour.org.uk/press/labour-announces-8000-new-homes-rough-sleepers-fresh-pledge-end-rough-sleeping/>

Welfare

Personal Independence Payment

In December 2017 the courts ruled that recent restrictions to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) discriminated against people with mental health problems. This relates to a change in law the Government introduced in March 2017 which meant that people who find it hard to make journeys because they experience overwhelming distress are entitled to less support from PIP than other people. The changes were found to be unlawful because:

- They unjustifiably discriminate against people with mental health problems
- The Government didn't consult on them
- The Government didn't have the right powers to make them

The Government will not be challenging this decision and have announced that they will make sure that people who experience psychological distress can be eligible for support from PIP in the same way as other disabled people. The Government has also announced that it will write to everyone who has been affected and will backdate payments to when the award was made.

Universal Credit budget announcements

The 2017 Budget announced a number of changes to Universal Credit (UC). Of these, the following have recently come into force:

- Reforming Advance payments so people can loan up to 100% of their initial payment, to be repaid over up to a 12 month period (from January 2018 with an option to apply online from Spring 2018)
- A slow-down in the roll out of Universal Credit until May 2018 and for more information go to https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664591/universal-credit-transition-rollout-schedule.pdf

The following are also due in the coming months:

- Abolishing the seven waiting day period, therefore reducing the delay in receiving initial payment by one week (from February 2018)
- When someone moves from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit, an additional two weeks' of housing costs will be paid after the end of their Housing Benefit claim and into their Universal Credit claim. This does not have to be paid back. (April 2018)
- direct payments of UC to landlords for people in temporary accommodation from April 2018 (short-term measure)

Our blog on all announcements in the Budget can be found here:

<https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2017/nov/27/budget-round-up-2017>

Health and social care

Joint Inquiry on Long-Term Funding and Provision of Adult Social Care

The Communities and Local Government and Health Committees have launched a joint inquiry on the long-term funding and provision of adult social care to feed in to the Government's forthcoming Green Paper. Ahead of the Government's Green Paper, the Communities and Local Government Committee and the Health Committee are holding a short inquiry to identify funding reforms which will command broad consensus, and which will enable the Government to make swift and tangible progress in this area. Bearing this in mind, submissions are invited from organisations and individuals on the following terms:

- How to fund social care sustainably for the long term (beyond 2020), bearing in mind in particular the interdependence of the health and social care systems; and
- The mechanism for reaching political and public consensus on a solution.

The deadline for written submissions is 7th March 2018 and submissions should be sent to

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/communities-and-local-government-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/long-term-funding-of-adult-social-care-17-19/commons-written-submission-form/>

Addiction and Mental Health

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Complex Needs and Dual Diagnosis has published a report on social action called 'People Powered Recovery'. It highlights how those with multiple needs can get their lives back with the support of community volunteers who have recovered from similar issues, such as drug and alcohol dependency. Four out of five prisoners who are drug dependent have two additional mental health problems. The report can be found at

http://www.turning-point.co.uk/media/1282974/people_powered_recovery_-_complex_needs_and_social_action_-_jan_18.pdf

State of the drug and alcohol sector

Adfam, on behalf of the Recovery Partnership, has launched the 2017 state of the drug and

alcohol sector report. Key findings include: the potential of the sector to absorb funding cuts through efficiency savings has been exhausted; service capacity continues to be eroded; only central government intervention will protect the sector from further cuts; service models must continue to evolve; and commissioning capacity and practices remain of great interest and concern. The report can be found at

http://www.adfam.org.uk/professionals/latest_information_and_events/news/735

Review into NHS charging

The Department of Health are carrying out a review of the new regulations on charging overseas visitors for NHS services. The changes introduced in 2017 significantly expanded the scope of services that were expected to charge and made it a legal requirement for them to do so. The review aims to understand the impact of the regulations and is particularly interested in whether they are having unintended consequences on access to healthcare for vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics. We have asked Homeless Link members for evidence to feed into the review. This can include data, case studies or anything else you are able to share to answer these key questions:

- Do you have any evidence of how the extension of charging to a wider range of services and providers has had a particular impact on any vulnerable group?
- Do you have any evidence that the extension of charging may have deterred individuals from seeking treatment?
- Do you have any evidence of how the requirement to charge upfront for treatment that is not immediately necessary or urgent, has had a particular impact on any vulnerable group?
- Do you know of any examples of good practice or steps that could be taken which might mitigate the issues that you have raised?

For more information go to <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2018/jan/12/review-into-new-nhs-charging-regulations>

Criminal justice

MOJ Single Department Plan

The Ministry of Justice has published its departmental plan, outlining four objectives: a prison and probation service that reforms people; a modern courts and justice system; a global Britain that promotes the rule of law; and a transformed department. As part of these plans, the department will recruit 2,500 prison officers, use the new 'Urgent Notification' protocol agreed with HM Inspectorate of Prisons, and deliver more effective and tailored interventions for people who are vulnerable or have distinct needs – such as women and young people. The plan can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-justice-single-departmental-plan/ministry-of-justice-single-departmental-plan>

Clinks State of the Sector Report

Clinks have launched their state of the sector recommendation paper, which finds that voluntary sector agencies in the criminal justice sector are experiencing significant challenges including: a rise in service users' needs; more pressure on staff due to increased workloads; and organisations struggling to achieve full cost recovery on the contracts they are delivering. The report can be found at https://www.clinks.or/community/blog-posts/we-all-have-role-play-ensuring-voluntary-organisations-can-thrive?utm_source=Newsflash&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=sotspaper030117

Mental health in prisons

The Public Accounts Committee published the findings of its mental health in prisons inquiry in December 2017. The Committee found that understaffing, the poor state of the prison estate, the availability of drugs in prisons and poor oversight of mental health contracts are just some of the factors contributing to the poor mental health of prisoners. The report makes a number of

recommendations to the Ministry of Justice, NHS England and HM Prison and Probation Service:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubacc/400/400.pdf>

Review of Police and Crime Commissioners Plans

Revolving Doors Agency has published a review of all police and crime plans across England and Wales for multiple and complex needs and transition to adulthood. These plans are the key public documents setting out Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) priorities for tackling crime in their local area. The review explores how PCCs seek to address the issue of people who come into repeated contact with police and courts as a result of experiencing homelessness, poor mental health and substance misuse issues, and how they will look to support young adults to grow out of crime. The review demonstrates that many PCCs recognise these multiple disadvantages and their relationship to crime, and across the country are willing to innovate and take risks in order to prevent and address crime. The report can be found at <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/file/2183/download?token=2cgqdhZt>