

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Murad Qureshi AM**

Chair

London Assembly Housing Committee

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**Our ref:** MGLA130121-3786

**Date:** 19 March 2021

Dear Murad,

**Re: Five steps to build on ‘*Everyone In*’ in London**

I would like to thank the Assembly’s Housing Committee for its valuable analysis of the *Everyone In* response spearheaded in London, its recognition of the enormous contribution that this has made and its five-step proposals for the way forward. I also very much welcome the opportunity to respond to your eight recommendations and have done so to each in turn below.

- **Recommendation 1 London should not lose what it has gained from successful multi-agency working during the pandemic. Learnings from *Everyone In* on cross-sector health, housing, and homelessness collaboration should inform relevant Mayoral strategies, such as the next iteration of the Health Inequalities Strategy, and the new budget missions that are part of the Mayor’s recovery plan**

You are right to highlight how productively different sectors and stakeholders have worked, and continue to work, together to respond so quickly and effectively to keep rough sleepers safe, reduce infections and save lives, and provide the support they need to exit rough sleeping for good. This has strengthened and built on the structures and collaborations that existed pre-COVID-19, such as my Life off the Streets Taskforce and the Healthy London Partnership, and I am committed to preserving these enhanced ways of joint working and stronger links between disciplines and strategies into the future.

- **Recommendation 2 The incoming Mayor should advocate for long-term ring-fenced funding for support services, as part of next year’s Comprehensive Spending Review.**

The Government’s approach to funding for rough sleeping services has long been characterised by short-termism, with settlements of one year or less and a multitude of rushed bidding rounds. Since March 2020, the rough sleeping COVID-19 response funding from the Government has been similarly piecemeal, with a marked lack of forward planning and a long-time lag between there being an obvious need and funding being made available to meet that need. Both before and during the pandemic, this has been incredibly frustrating to me, London’s councils and our charity partners, as it militates against a strategic and effective approach and ultimately restricts the contribution that we can make to ending rough sleeping. I have raised this with the Government on numerous occasions and will continue to do so, including in negotiations on next year’s CSR.

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- **Recommendation 3 In order to improve services for people with high support needs, the Mayor should ensure that people with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping shape the design and delivery of programmes in London.**
- **Recommendation 5 The Mayor should consider how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion requirements could be developed to better support homeless people of different backgrounds, and extended to providers that deliver rough sleeping services in London.**

My team will shortly be embarking on a major re-procurement of our key rough sleeping services. There will be extensive consultation with a range of partners and stakeholders as part of the process of developing the programme and specifications for services, and this will certainly include people with a lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping. In addition, as with my new Affordable Homes Programme, there will be a specific emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations, in terms of both the nature and delivery of the services themselves and the organisations providing them.

- **Recommendation 4 The Mayor should urgently expand specialist, pan-London services for groups such as young people, BAME people, veterans, LGBT+ people, and people escaping domestic abuse.**

I am doing everything I can with the limited resources available to me to contribute to the provision of specialist services. For example, I have launched a service for under-35s in the hotel being used to accommodate people coming through our new triage hubs and am grant-funding Veterans Aid Welfare to Wellbeing service, the Stonewall/Outside Project shelter for LGBTQ+ Londoners and a project supporting women rough sleepers. In addition, through my Move On Programme, I am delivering homes and specialist support, including through my Casa Project, to victims of domestic abuse. However, I completely recognise the desperate need for more to be done. But with the bulk of my rough sleeping budget dedicated to major services such as London Street Rescue, No Second Night Out and the Tenancy Sustainment Teams, we need to look to Government for the funding required. Unfortunately, most recently, the Government turned down my bid for dedicated emergency accommodation and support for young homeless people during the pandemic. More recently my team have had constructive discussions with London Councils and youth homelessness charities about joint work on youth homelessness.

In recognition of the impact of the pandemic on young people in particular, this year my winter rough sleeping fundraising campaign has been raising money for four youth homelessness charities. I am delighted that thanks to the generosity of Londoners, more than £60,000 has been raised.

- **Recommendation 6 The Mayor has committed to investing in immigration advice so that Londoners can secure their full residency and citizenship rights. The Mayor should evaluate the likely increase in EEA rough sleepers in London after the Brexit transition period, and ensure that immigration advice is open to both EEA nationals and those with NRPF. The Mayor should provide investment to councils and third sector organisations to meet any gaps highlighted by the evaluation exercise.**

London's COVID-19 rough sleeping response has highlighted the high numbers of homeless migrants with insecure immigration status in our city. I will continue to monitor how COVID-19 and

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the end of the transition period impact on the number of migrants on the streets and will continue to advocate for changing the policies that drive migrants into destitution and street homelessness. At a recent meeting with the Minister for Housing and Homelessness, my Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development specifically raised the impact of Government policies such as No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) on migrant rough sleepers and reiterated my call for such policies to be at the very least suspended.

Within the limited resources available to me, I am or will be funding several initiatives to support non-UK nationals, including rough sleepers. This includes my Routes Home service, and a new fund to increase immigration advice and support for rough sleepers with insecure immigration status, including EEA and those with NRPF. Moreover, this year I will be funding projects to enable European Londoners and young Londoners to access information and advice about their rights post-Brexit as well as projects to improve local authorities' ability to support non-UK national children in their care to secure their residency and citizenship rights.

- **Recommendation 7 The Mayor should urgently advocate to Government for further support funding under the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme, so that longer-term housing solutions, including options such as Housing First, can be delivered.**

I will do everything I can to ensure that London's share of the remaining funding for the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP) reflects the capital's needs and circumstances. It is very positive that the Government took on board our request to provide both capital and revenue funding for move-on programmes such as this. The provision of four years' revenue funding for support is undoubtedly what made London's RSAP attractive to providers this year, with more than 900 homes – including some for Housing First – set to be delivered. I am therefore pressing the Government to ensure that every home delivered with future years' RSAP capital funding also comes with revenue for four years' support. Without this ongoing revenue support, it is likely that appetite for providers to bid for this funding will diminish. I will also seek to secure, in next year's CSR negotiations, continuation funding for support for properties delivered through the RSAP and Move On Programme once current funding ends.

- **Recommendation 8 The Mayor should also urgently address the £535m that is yet to be allocated from his £4.82bn government-funded Affordable Housing Programme, to ensure that suitable provision is made for long-term housing solutions for rough sleepers.**

With a little over two years remaining in the current Affordable Homes Programme, 90% of our funding has been allocated to partners. We are still seeking and receiving bids and would be keen to fund schemes that will benefit rough sleepers. However, there are challenges to delivering homes for this group through this Programme. For example, it is a capital fund, so there would be no revenue funding for support, should people need it. In addition, most homes for social rent must be allocated via local authorities' housing needs registers, which must prioritise those in a range of forms of housing need, including homeless households in temporary accommodation. There is also an issue for non-UK nationals, who form around half of all rough sleepers in the capital, in that many are not entitled to help with housing costs through the welfare system and are therefore unlikely to be able to meet the cost of their rent. As stated, I have long lobbied Government on both the issues of both support funding and policy change to increase the options for non-UK-national rough sleepers.

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We are clearly aligned in our thinking on what is needed in the capital to meet the needs of those sleeping rough and on ensuring that we capitalise on the huge opportunity that *Everyone In* has given us to help many thousands of people accommodated during the pandemic to rebuild their lives. But it is in the hands of the Government to make the funding and policy changes needed, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Assembly, London's councils and the sector to press for the resources and reforms so that we can meet our shared aims.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London