

MAYOR OF LONDON

Sian Berry AM
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Our ref: MGLA110619-4644

Date: 24 OCT 2019

Dear Sian,

Thank you for your letter of 10 June about the Housing Committee investigation into Housing First in London. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

I very much welcome the investigation. As you are aware, homelessness is an issue very close to my heart and I am determined to do everything I can to help ensure that there is an immediate and sustainable route off the streets for everyone sleeping rough. Like you, I see Housing First as an important part of the solution for many of London's most vulnerable people sleeping rough.

I would like to take the opportunity to respond to each of the recommendations of the committee in turn:

Recommendation 1 - a longer-term funding stream for Housing First projects

I agree that we need a longer-term, sustainable funding model for Housing First. Like you, I was extremely disappointed that the Government overlooked London when it allocated Housing First funding last year. My rough sleeping team is now in discussions with Housing First England, Crisis and Homeless Link about undertaking a pan-London Housing First feasibility study, so that we can make the case for Government funding well ahead of the evaluations of the Housing First projects the Government funded in Manchester and Liverpool. This study will address key issues such as long-term support funding, the supply of properties, eligibility and how Housing First fits into borough-commissioned rough sleeping pathways.

On this year's round of the Rough Sleeping Innovation Fund, no bids were received for Housing First projects. As you rightly point out, this fund is not the most appropriate source for Housing First as it is intended to provide relatively short-term seed funding to support new and innovative projects.

Recommendation 2 - a pan-London lettings agency to source accommodation for chronically homeless people

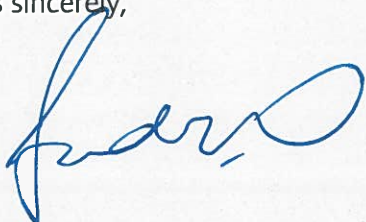
I agree that there is a need for a more coordinated approach to procuring and providing privately rented homes for former rough sleepers. One way of achieving this could be by extending the Capital Letters project. While this project is currently focused on statutory homelessness, a further phase could be put in place in the future, once the current one has been rolled out across the capital.

MAYOR OF LONDON

However, in the meantime, I am pleased to have secured funding from the Government for a pan-London private rented property sourcing service for people being supported by Mayoral rough sleeping services. This service, which will commence later this year and operate for at least a year, will enable those with lower support needs to access independent accommodation more quickly.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London