

18th January 2021

Eddie Hughes, MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Eddie Hughes,

We are pleased to welcome you to your new role as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rough Sleeping & Housing at MHCLG. We have been in correspondence with your predecessor, Kelly Tolhurst, and look forward to continuing that correspondence. We know that this is a crucial window of opportunity for ending rough sleeping and preventing homelessness. The Government's strategic leadership with 'Everyone In' and the Protect scheme has been most welcome, and we would like to offer our sector's support and expertise to continue this work and make sure the opportunity for ending homelessness is not lost.

The National Federation of ALMOs is the membership body for local authority arms-length housing organisations (ALMOs). We represent 29 ALMOs across the country managing just under 400,000 council homes. A number of our members have responsibility for the delivery of homelessness prevention and relief services on behalf of their parent local authorities, and as a sector, we are proud of the innovative work that members deliver.

For example, Your Homes Newcastle, the ALMO for Newcastle City Council, is a key part of the Council's Active Inclusion Newcastle partnership which brings together 100 local organisations, supporting residents to have a more stable life. The partnership was awarded prestigious **gold in the UN World Habitat Awards in 2020** for their work on ending homelessness, only one of two gold award winners globally in 2020.

We highlight this work and other examples of best practice in our recently published [best practice report on homelessness](#), *Can social housing rebalance the homelessness equation?* which explores the structural causes of homelessness and the best practice work that ALMOs are doing in the areas of prevention and relief. We provide 11 in-depth case studies from areas as diverse as Newcastle, Barnet, Wolverhampton and Cornwall, all of which demonstrate the value of prevention, the need for strong local partnership working and strategic leadership, and innovation on the ground.

There are a number of strategic policy areas that we feel would assist ALMOs – and other local authority and housing association partners – deliver better solutions locally. This includes:

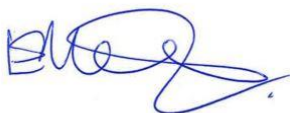
- The development of long-term, sustainable and sufficient funding to develop prevention and relief strategies, with built-in monitoring and evaluation to show they work; and a move away from short-term funding pots which are administratively difficult to manage and do not allow for long-term planning.

- Ongoing commitment to funding for those with complex needs through High Fidelity Housing First projects.
- Regulation of the PRS to stop it becoming a route into homelessness. We know that evictions are currently on hold, but we need a sustainable solution after evictions become possible again for the huge numbers of households that find themselves at risk of homelessness due to no fault of their own. Section 21 evictions should be banned, and we are asking the government to implement their proposed Renters Reform Bill as soon as possible.
- We are also asking for urgent welfare reform to remove the current triggers of homelessness: this includes permanent uplifting of the LHA rates each year to reflect the true cost of rent; removing the Benefit Cap which has hit families (particularly in London) hard during COVID-19; and reform of Universal Credit so that it is not a barrier to maintaining a home.
- Sufficient grant funding for the sector to deliver 90,000 to 100,000 **socially rented** new homes each year, with all the benefits of wraparound housing support which is provided to tenants and residents.

We would be very keen to meet with you and your advisors along with ALMO representatives to expand on these points, to discuss with you how we can work together to capture the good progress made under COVID-19 and think about how we end homelessness for good.

We should be grateful if you could let us know when might be best for a meeting by either replying to this email or by ringing our Policy Director, Chloe Fletcher on 07526171033.

Yours sincerely,



Eamon McGoldrick

Managing Director, National Federation of ALMOs