

To everyone celebrating Passover, Chag Pesach Sameach!

Millions of Jewish families and friends across the world will come together tonight to celebrate Passover.

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Author:

Greenways

There is a need for good public footpath and bridleway routes, so more rambling and horseriding can take place away from the highways. The latest consultation from the government, Health and Harmony, from DEFRA (Cm 9577) invites ideas on how a new farming policy can include incentives to persuade landowners to allow more access and completion of green routes over their land. This could be a good option for Wokingham, where the Council is also working on greenway issues. Anyone interested in these matters should respond to the government consultation.

Our plan to tackle child poverty

It is projected that by 2030, 1 in 3 children in Scotland will be living in poverty as a result of Tory welfare cuts. That is not acceptable in 21st century Scotland.

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Author:

Swinson: Excess packaging around Easter Eggs leaves bitter taste in the mouth

Swinson's report, which outlines the use of plastics by all major Easter egg manufacturers, highlights the need for companies to cut down the use of plastics to protect our oceans and reduce the amount of unnecessary plastic waste ending up in landfills.

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Author:

Press release: New government initiative to reduce rough sleeping

- New Rough Sleeping Team to drive reductions in rough sleeping
- Targeted £30 million fund for 2018 to 2019 for local authorities with high levels of rough sleeping
- Latest action is part of the government's ongoing work to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (30 March 2018) set out a bold cross-government plan of action to significantly reduce the number of people sleeping rough as the [Homelessness Reduction Act](#) comes into force next week.

Based on proven activity that has helped deliver substantial decreases before, this further action will have a rapid impact on rough sleeping now and represents major progress towards the government's commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

The new package of measures – which builds on government action to date – includes:

- a new Rough Sleeping Team made up of rough sleeping and homelessness experts, drawn from, and funded by government departments and agencies with specialist knowledge across a wide-range of areas from housing, mental health to addiction

- a £30 million fund for 2018 to 2019 with further funding agreed for 2019 to 2020 targeted at local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough; the Rough Sleeping Team will work with these areas to support them to develop tailored local interventions to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets
- £100,000 funding to support frontline Rough Sleeping workers across the country to make sure they have the right skills and knowledge to work with vulnerable rough sleepers.

In addition, the government is also working with the National Housing Federation to look at providing additional, coordinated move-on accommodation for rough sleepers across the country. This builds on the existing 3,750 'clearing house' places already provided in London

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

This winter has tragically claimed the lives of a number of people sleeping on the streets. This is completely unacceptable in modern Britain.

No one should ever have to sleep rough and this government is determined to break the homelessness cycle once and for all.

Tackling the causes of rough sleeping is undoubtedly complex but we must do all we can – working across central and local government, the voluntary and charity sector – to help the most vulnerable in society and eliminate rough sleeping for good.

The [Homelessness Reduction Act](#) is the most ambitious legal reform in decades and places new duties on councils to prevent and relieve homelessness, including for single homeless people who are at greater risk of sleeping rough.

The new package of measures announced today provides cross-government support and funding for local housing authorities to drive a significant reduction in rough sleeping.

Departments across government are working to support the Act and make sure there is sustained progress on the commitment to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it all together by 2027.

This package of new measures will be supported by the:

- Department of Health and Social Care – which will make available experts in mental health and drug treatment services to help support the new outreach teams, including in hostels

- Ministry of Justice – which will focus on making sure prison and probation work with local authorities and outreach teams to identify prisoners and offenders serving community sentences who are at risk of sleeping rough
- Home Office – will encourage the policing sector to work in partnership with local authorities on rough sleeping, including enforcement where appropriate, and to identify and share best practice
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport – which will work in partnership with MHCLG to explore opportunities for new Social Impact Bonds that build on the success of existing programmes providing effective and innovative support to rough sleepers

The government is taking significant action to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping through:

- £1.2 billion investment in various programmes, including protecting core funding of £315 million to local authorities for their work on homelessness, and an additional £617 million in Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding, which councils can use to work more strategically to prevent and tackle local homelessness pressures
- piloting the Housing First approach – working with the Metro Mayors in the Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, to support rough sleepers with the most complex needs
- a new cross-government taskforce supported by a panel of homelessness experts, charities and local government that is driving forward a new national strategy to be published in July that will make life on the streets a thing of the past
- investing £9 billion to build more affordable housing, including new council homes
- up to £135 million of dormant assets will be directed to Big Society Capital for them to deploy into a substantial programme of investment in housing for vulnerable people including those most at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping; the first investment opportunities in this programme will be launched in the autumn

Further information

Further detail is available on gov.uk

The [Homelessness Reduction Act](#) comes into effect on 3 April 2018. Read [more information](#) on the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Clearing Houses provide supported housing in London for people with a history of rough sleeping. All properties are self-contained 1-bed or studio flats and are provided by housing associations.

In January, the Secretary of State for Culture announced that up to £135 million of dormant assets would be directed to Big Society Capital (BSC). BSC are currently developing a strategy to deploy the majority of this into a substantial programme of investment in housing for vulnerable people including those most at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping. Read [more on dormant assets](#).

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