

Press release: Government announces up to £26 million for vulnerable rough sleepers

Vulnerable people sleeping rough across the country will receive specialist tailored support they need to recover from life on the streets and find accommodation, thanks to a £26 million fund announced today (1 March 2019) by the Housing Minister, Heather Wheeler MP.

Councils will be able to bid for the extra investment to fund innovative local schemes which help those sleeping rough and struggling with mental health problems or substance misuse issues into a home as a priority, and provide the wrap-around help they need get back on their feet.

Councils will use the funding to:

- create teams of 'Navigators' – specialist support workers who will work tirelessly as a single point of contact to help people off the streets and into recovery by directing them to the services they need, such as mental health support, substance misuse counselling and housing advice services
- establish dedicated lettings agencies for rough sleepers – specialist agencies which provide homes and advice for those sleeping on the streets, supporting them into affordable and stable accommodation
- set up specialist rough sleeping Somewhere Safe to Stay 'hubs' – new hubs which will ensure those on the streets have access to professional help and guidance to start their recovery, including immediate shelter and tailored mental health support
- introduce Supported Lettings schemes – helping vulnerable people sleeping rough to sustain tenancies – properties that they may not otherwise be able to access

Funding announced today forms part of the government's [rough sleeping strategy](#), which aims to end rough sleeping for good backed by investment of £100 million.

Minister for Housing and Homelessness, Heather Wheeler MP said:

No one should ever have to face a night on the streets, and steps are being taken to ensure people are never faced with this as their only option.

These are vulnerable people who need specialist support to get back on their feet and turn their lives around.

The funding announced today will ensure those sleeping on the streets across the country have access to the professional help and guidance they need to start their recovery – taking us one step

closer to our ambition to end rough sleeping for good.

Today's announcement follows the publication of the latest annual rough sleeping statistics, which shows the number of people sleeping rough has fallen for the first time in 8 years – with a decrease of 19% in the 83 areas supported through the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative.

To date, councils have used the investment to create an additional 1,700 beds and 500 rough sleeping support staff – meaning there are more people in warm beds tonight as a result of government funding.

Bidding for this fund is open from today and will close on 29 March 2019. Ministers will announce successful councils later this year.

In [August 2018](#), the government unveiled its [rough sleeping strategy](#), which sets out the next steps towards achieving the aim of supporting everyone off the streets and into a home and to end rough sleeping for good, backed by £100 million of funding.

The Rough Sleeping Initiative funds 83 councils with the highest number of rough sleepers across the country.

[News story: Hizballah banned in the UK](#)

An [order laid in Parliament](#) on Monday (25 February) to proscribe the terrorist organisations Hizballah, Ansaroul Islam and Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam Wal-Muslimin (JNIM) has now come into effect, following debates in the Houses of Parliament.

Under the Terrorism Act 2000, being a member – or inviting support for – these groups will be a criminal offence, carrying a sentence of up to 10 years' imprisonment.

All three groups have been assessed as being concerned in terrorism.

[Announcing his decision on Monday](#), Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

My priority as Home Secretary is to protect the British people. As part of this, we identify and ban any terrorist organisation which threatens our safety and security, whatever their motivations or ideology which is why I am taking action against several organisations today.

Hizballah is continuing in its attempts to destabilise the fragile situation in the Middle East – and we are no longer able to distinguish between their already banned military wing and the

political party. Because of this, I have taken the decision to proscribe the group in its entirety.

Decisions about whether to proscribe a particular organisation are taken after extensive consideration and in light of a full assessment of available information.

There are now [77 international terrorist organisations](#) proscribed under the terrorism Act 2000, alongside 14 organisations connected to Northern Ireland proscribed under separate legislation.

[Press release: Clean up work completed in Salisbury as area continues recovery](#)

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has today (Friday, 1 March) announced that the final site of decontamination in Salisbury is safe, and has been handed to the South Wiltshire Recovery Coordinating Group.

The completion of clean-up work at Christie Miller Road, Salisbury marks a significant milestone in South Wiltshire's return to normality following the sickening novichok nerve agent attack last year.

The property was declared safe following extensive cleaning and testing by specialist teams. Wiltshire Council will shortly begin to coordinate work to refurbish the property, with residents of Christie Miller Road consulted on its future use.

Alistair Cunningham, chair of the South Wiltshire recovery coordinating group, said:

It is good news that the site at Christie Miller Road has been handed back following extensive cleaning by specialist teams.

This is a significant moment for Salisbury, Amesbury and south Wiltshire as this property is the final site to be completed as part of the complex and extensive clean-up operation. South Wiltshire can look to the future now the short-term recovery work has been completed

Work will begin shortly to reconstruct and refurbish the house so it can return to being a home again. We are continuing to talk to the residents on the future of the property as it is important

their views are taken into account on how it is used in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the residents of Christie Miller Road, and the wider community, for their resilience and stoicism during what has been an extremely difficult and challenging time for them and their families. Since March 2018, we have been working closely to support residents and we will continue to do so for as long as that support is required.

I would also like to thank our partners for their skills and expertise and the diligence they have shown in dealing with this unprecedented situation. This clean-up operation has been a shining example of partnership working in extremely testing circumstances.

Salisbury has proved it is resilient, positive and looking forward and we are working on a range of regeneration projects and events to focus on an even better future for the city and south Wiltshire.

Over the last 11 months, around 190 military personnel from the Royal Air Force and Army, supported by specialist contractors, have undertaken highly specialised decontamination work as part of our precautionary approach to the clean-up across the twelve sites identified in Salisbury and Amesbury. In recognition of their painstaking work, the CBRN Task Force were awarded the 'Hero at Home – Unit' at the Sun's The Sun Military Awards ceremony in December.

Brigadier David Southall, Chief of Staff of Standing Joint Command, said:

The incredibly complex decontamination work carried out by the Armed Forces over the past twelve months, in collaboration with their multi-agency partners, reflects the expertise, courage and selfless commitment of our Servicemen and women in getting the job done and done well.

The handover of the site at Christie Miller Road effectively now concludes the significant military contribution to support Salisbury and Amesbury following the novichok nerve agent attack on 4 March 2018.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

I want to thank all involved in the decontamination process in what has been a challenging year. Their professionalism, expertise and thoroughness have been exemplary.

While decontamination may be complete, government support for the region will not end and we continue to do all we can to help Salisbury and Amesbury thrive.

Earlier this month, Business Minister Lord Henley was appointed Ministerial Champion for Salisbury, providing local leaders with a single point of contact in the heart of Government as the local area focusses on boosting business in the wake of the attack. As Salisbury gets back to business, the Government is working hand-in-hand with local leaders to deliver an ambitious local Industrial Strategy for the area, ensuring Salisbury not only recovers, but leads the way in some of the industries of the future.

Business Minister Lord Henley said:

In my capacity as Ministerial Champion for Salisbury I am continuing to champion the city and lead efforts to ensure this great city of culture and character continues to thrive, now and in the future.

The final site of decontamination in Salisbury being confirmed as safe is a significant moment for the area and the Government is working hand-in-hand with local leaders to deliver an ambitious local Industrial Strategy for the area. We are committed to ensuring Salisbury not only recovers, but leads the way in some of the industries of the future.

The government has committed over £13m since March 2018 to support businesses, boost tourism and meet unexpected costs of the incidents. £9.6m of that is special grant police funding.

[News story: Rogue builder imprisoned after conning Enfield residents](#)

Kiamil Alkan, trading as Kiki Builders and later as a director of Kiki Builders Ltd and as manager of Kiki Construction Ltd, of Sutherland Road, EN3, was sentenced at Wood Green Crown Court on Friday 22 February to four years and three months imprisonment.

Just before his trial was due to commence, Kiamil Alkan pleaded guilty to 14 counts, including four counts of obtaining credit as an undischarged bankrupt and one count of being concerned in the promotion and management of a company.

At court, Kiamil Alkan was also banned from running limited companies under the Company Directors Disqualification Act for seven years and has been made subject to a Criminal Behaviour Order to monitor his trading for six years.

The court heard that from April 2016 to September 2018, Kiamil Alkan had

repeatedly secured contracts to complete home extensions and refurbishments but failed to complete the works.

Kiamil Alkan also insisted his customers pay money in advance of starting work before delivering low-quality and incomplete work. Some contracts were worth over £100,000 and Kiamil Alkan is known to have worked on 11 residential properties in Enfield, raking in more than £485,000.

After several complaints from members of the public, he was interviewed by Enfield's Trading Standards team which began to monitor and investigate his work.

Alkan was declared bankrupt in May 2017 and this prevented him from being a director of a company. However, he ignored his bankruptcy restrictions and continued to act in the management of his construction companies. Between September 2017 and May 2018, he secured more than £123,000 from four customers and his most recent victims were a disabled resident and a young family.

Enfield's Trading Standards team had built a case against Alkan over a long period of time and worked closely with his victims to bring the charges against him.

On sentencing, HHJ Greenberg QC remarked on the moving personal statements from his victims and said Alkan had: "Acted callously without care for [the] misery you caused." Many of his clients have been left thousands of pounds out of pocket and with incomplete building works.

Gary Clarke, Criminal Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Kiamil Alkan adopted dishonest trading practices causing a significant amount of distress and harm for his customers and even being made bankrupt didn't put a stop to his unscrupulous activities.

Thanks to close working with Enfield Council's Trading Standards team we have secured a significant sentence against Kiamil Alkan and this should serve as a warning to others that we have the ability to prosecute those who abuse the law.

Enfield Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Guney Dogan, said:

This was an extremely complicated case for the Council's Trading Standards officers and legal team and victims have been left emotionally and financially scarred by the acts of this rogue trader. I am grateful for the work of the officers and partners in bringing this man to justice and would urge anyone who has concerns about a trader they are thinking of employing to contact [Citizens](#)

[Advice](#) for consumer guidance.

[News story: Chief Secretary, Liz Truss toasts the flavour of success in Suffolk](#)

- the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Liz Truss, will visit Suffolk and Felixstowe businesses
- this includes visits to Lallemand Yeast and Treatt, two companies specialising in food flavouring and ingredients production

At Lallemand Yeast, a world-leading manufacturer of yeast for food and drink products, the Chief Secretary will showcase the exporting success of food and manufacturing companies in the region. Liz Truss will also visit Mel Aviation and Treatt, a global ingredients manufacturer.

Latest figures show that exports from the East of England are rising, up by 8% in 2017 compared to the previous year, and worth £29 billion to the UK economy.

Suffolk businesses are driving strong economic performance across the region – the East of England has seen the largest fall in unemployment in 2018, and has the second highest employment rate across the UK.

This regional growth comes alongside positive economic news this month, with the UK currently having the joint highest employment rate on record.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury Liz Truss said:

It's great to be in Suffolk today to meet businesses who are a vital part of the regional economy and to see UK businesses who are creating products that are in demand across the world.

We want this success to continue, with UK businesses having every opportunity to increase their trade, leading to more jobs and higher wages.