

# Press release: James Brokenshire unveils action plan to combat rough sleeping

- New road-map sets out next steps to support thousands of people off the street for good as government works to end rough sleeping by 2027
- £11 million fund opened for councils across the country to support local people into safe accommodation where they can turn their lives around
- This builds upon concrete government action to create a further 1,750 new beds and 500 additional outreach workers

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP has today (8 December 2018) unveiled the government's next steps to help people off the streets and meet its target to end rough sleeping for good by 2027.

Following the publication of the [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) this summer, the Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan, to be published on Monday 10 December, sets out how important measures contained in the strategy will be delivered – including targets and tough deadlines for all 61 commitments.

These include:

- New Work Coaches for every single Jobcentre Plus by summer 2019 – helping the homeless to navigate the support available to them.
- An expectation placed on all councils to publish detailed rough sleeping and homeless strategies by winter 2019 – setting out how councils plan to provide specialist support and accommodation for vulnerable people on the street. Government will take action where councils fail to do so.
- Carrying out a comprehensive government study into the links between homelessness and the LGBT community – making sure the right support services are in place to help LGBT homeless people off the streets and into stable accommodation. The study will be published in summer 2019.

Ministers have also launched an £11 million fund for councils across the country to get as many people as possible off the streets and into secure accommodation where they can get the help they need to rebuild their lives.

This builds on the first year of the [Rough Sleeping Initiative](#), launched in March, which is providing £64 million to over 80 councils over the next 2 years in England to support rough sleepers in their area.

This funding is creating 1,750 new bed spaces, as well as an additional 500 outreach workers many of whom who are already working tirelessly to support

people off the streets and into recovery.

Communities Secretary, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

No-one is predestined to spend their lives sleeping on the streets. Yet, despite this, too many people still sleep rough on any given night.

That is why we are taking action to provide support to help get people off the street this winter and set the foundations to put an end to rough sleeping altogether by 2027. This new action plan sets out the next steps to making this goal a reality.

And while we are already seeing progress, I am clear we must go further than ever to achieve our ambition of a country in which no-one needs to sleep rough.

The delivery plan also sets out more detail on the new Rapid Rehousing Pathway, putting in place structures to prevent and quickly respond to rough sleeping in the long term.

Other commitments outlined in the Delivery Plan include:

- Ongoing discussions with key sector bodies such as the Local Government Association and the Safeguarding Adult Boards Chairs Network to ensure that Safeguarding Adult Reviews are undertaken when a person who sleeps rough dies or is seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect; and
- Reporting on the findings of a feasibility study on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping

In recent weeks, the first people supported through the Housing First pilot scheme in the West Midlands have moved into their new homes.

The pilot is 1 of 3 currently being funded by £28 million in government funding – with Liverpool City Region and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority also piloting the approach.

## **Further information**

Government previously established the Rough Sleeping Initiative in March this year with £30 million allocated to 83 areas with the highest number of rough sleepers in June this year. A further £45 million was pledged for these areas at the launch of the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

A total of £34 million of this funding was provisionally allocated to the 83 authorities this September with the remaining £11 million to now be allocated to authorities outside of the initiative.

Bidding for this fund is open from today and will close in February. Allocations of this fund will follow in due course.

# Case Study: Rough Sleeping Initiative

## Cheshire East – Emerging Futures

- Funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative this year has helped Cheshire East Council fund an organisation called Emerging Futures to deliver a number of beds for rough sleepers with complex needs – including substance abuse and mental health problems
- The majority of beds were filled within weeks and each individual has a dedicated support worker in place as well as additional 24/7 support from organisation staff
- Workers engage with the client to address their substance misuse and to help them rebuild their lives.

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## [News story: Matt Hancock orders review into over-prescribing in the NHS](#)

The review will be led by Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Dr Keith Ridge. It will look at:

- addressing ‘problematic polypharmacy’ – where a patient is taking multiple medicines unnecessarily
- creating a more efficient handover between primary and secondary care, for example ensuring GPs have the data they need and feel able to challenge and change prescribing made in hospitals
- improving management of non-reviewed repeat prescriptions – including encouraging patients to ask questions about their treatment to ensure they don’t remain stuck on repeat prescriptions which are no longer needed.
- the role of digital technologies in reducing overprescribing
- the increased role for other forms of care, including social prescribing

Estimated total NHS spending on medicines in England has grown from £13 billion in 2010 to 2011 to £18.2 billion in 2017 to 2018. This is an average growth of around 5% a year – with 1.1 billion prescription items dispensed in primary care by GPs and pharmacists.

Health Survey England 2016 found that nearly half of over 75-year-olds surveyed were taking 5 or more medicines, with this percentage rising the older people get.

While in the majority of cases patients will be receiving multiple drugs due to specific or complex needs, the review will look at how to ensure treatment remains up to date and appropriate so patients feel as well as possible.

The review will look at how doctors and pharmacists can be supported to review prescriptions and ensure patients are receiving the most appropriate treatment for their needs. It will also look at instances where:

- prescriptions are made for conditions which in individual circumstances may be better helped by other forms of care
- there is potential overlap in patients being prescribed multiple drugs to manage the same condition
- individuals are remaining on repeat prescriptions which roll over – often for many years – without being reviewed

The review will take into consideration individual circumstances where patients may be most at risk of adverse effects from overprescribing. Overprescribing can be particularly dangerous for older people, who are often taking several different medicines to manage complex conditions and may suffer side effects that lead to them falling and being admitted to hospital.

It will consider how new digital systems can assist primary care providers in creating a better picture of overprescribing in their area to allow more targeted action, ultimately creating better personalised care for patients.

Addressing overprescribing will be an important part of the Department of Health and Social Care's [prevention](#) strategy.

Action is already being taken across the health system to address over-prescribing, including:

- the Medicines Safety Programme, which is co-ordinating work on reducing medication errors
- NHS England's Medicines Value Programme, which is working to reduce variation in prescribing using clinical evidence and the creation of metrics

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Recent advances in medicine have led to fantastic developments in managing and treating certain conditions, but poorly managed prescribing can lead to serious issues for patients such as increased admissions to hospital or antibiotic resistance.

As we invest an extra £20.5 billion a year into our NHS we want to empower doctors and pharmacists to use the data available to ensure patients get the medicines they need and stop taking those that no longer benefit them.

We also need to back our GPs to move towards alternatives such as social prescribing, so we can offer more tailored healthcare that focuses on prevention to stop people from becoming ill in the first

place – improving care and reducing the burden on the NHS.

Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer at NHS England, said:

Doctors, pharmacists and patients need to work together to ensure people are on the right medicines, for the right amount of time.

NHS England's recent successes in reducing unnecessary antibiotics and medicines with care homes and GP practices, on polypharmacy, and on beginning to end overmedication for people with learning disabilities, all show what can be – and indeed now is being – done on this important topic.

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## [Press release: UK Statement on Allegations of Chemical Weapons Use in Aleppo](#)



FCO Spokesperson:

The Syrian regime and its supporters have alleged that opposition forces carried out a chlorine attack on civilians in Aleppo on 24th November. We have seen nothing to support the claims made by Russia and Syria.

The UK assesses it highly unlikely that chlorine was used in this incident, as the regime and its Russian allies have claimed. It is highly unlikely that the opposition was responsible.

It is likely that this was either a staged incident intended to frame the opposition, or an operation which went wrong and from which Russia and the regime sought to take advantage.

We frequently see the Syrian regime and its partners making false claims and using disinformation to cover their tracks. Allegations that the UK or its allies are in any way involved in this, or any other incident involving chemical weapons in Syria, are complete fabrications.

We continue to work closely with international partners to establish more fully exactly what happened. We encourage those with relevant information to share it, and cooperate fully with the OPCW as it gathers information to further assess the incident. It is important for Syrians and the international community that the truth comes out.

The United States has today also issued a statement on this incident – <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/12/287941.htm>

### **Further information**

Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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## **[Press release: Bluetongue virus detected and dealt with in cattle in Yorkshire](#)**

The UK's Chief Veterinary Officer has urged farmers to increase their vigilance for Bluetongue virus after the disease was picked up and dealt with in three consignments of cattle imported from France.

Two consignments were brought to two separate premises in Yorkshire, where the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and the Pirbright Institute identified the disease as a part of routine post-import testing.

All infected cattle, plus one other animal which travelled in the same vehicle and was found to be susceptible to infection, will be humanely

culled.

The third consignment was taken to a premises in Northern Ireland where the disease was detected by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Bluetongue does not affect people or food safety, but outbreaks of the virus can result in restrictions on livestock movement and trade. The virus is transmitted by midge bites and affects cattle, goats, sheep and other camelids such as llamas. It can reduce milk yield and cause infertility and in the most severe cases is fatal for infected animals.

Action is being taken to ensure the risk of spread of the disease is reduced, with movement restrictions already in place at the affected premises.

The UK Chief Veterinary Officer, Christine Middlemiss, said:

Farmers must be aware of the risks of bringing animals from disease-affected areas into their flocks and herds. It is vitally important that we keep this disease out.

This detection is a further example of our robust disease surveillance measures in action, but I urge farmers to remain vigilant. They need to work with importers to make sure effective vaccination needs are complied with and that all animals are sourced responsibly.

All cattle and sheep farmers are reminded to:

- Discuss their needs with a private veterinary surgeon and carefully consider the risks and the health status of animals before deciding to import stock from regions affected by Bluetongue virus
- Carefully consider what additional guarantees the seller can provide as to the animal's vaccination status before purchasing (for example – by requesting that a pre-export test is carried out to prove immunity to BTV)
- Ensure that imported animals are accompanied by the relevant paperwork to show they meet certain conditions designed to reduce disease risk, such as correct vaccination
- Prevent the disease spreading by practising good biosecurity on the farm premises
- Stay alert to any signs of the disease, such as mouth ulcers and drooling from the mouth and nose, and report to APHA if necessary.

Importers should be aware that all cattle and sheep arriving in the UK from countries where Bluetongue is known to be circulating will be restricted until post-import testing is carried out and the animals are confirmed as compliant. Any animals which are infected with Bluetongue will be culled and no compensation will be paid. Any animals in the consignment which are at risk of becoming infected may also be culled.

In addition, all other susceptible animals on the premises will be placed under movement restrictions until we can confirm that the disease has not spread.

Last month a number of organisations across the livestock sector encouraged farmers to think carefully about importing animals from areas that are known to be infected with Bluetongue virus.

Following the interception of these consignments, the UK remains officially Bluetongue-free, the risk of the disease remains low and exports are not affected.

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## [Press release: The sound of Mars](#)

The NASA InSight lander, which is supported by the UK Space Agency, has recorded a haunting, low rumble caused by vibrations from the wind. These vibrations were detected by an ultra-sensitive seismometer, developed in the UK, and an air pressure sensor sitting on the lander's deck.

Both recorded the Martian wind in different ways. The seismometer recorded vibrations as the wind moved over the lander's solar panels, each of which is more than 2 metres in diameter and sticks out from the sides of the lander like a giant pair of ears. The air pressure sensor recorded the vibrations directly from changes in the air.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

Less than two weeks into the InSight Mission, UK science is already uncovering incredible things about Mars. As new Science Minister I am excited to see what more we can achieve on land and in outer space.

The mission is an example of our successful space sector making a difference to international science. Through the Government's Industrial Strategy, we are driving the biggest increase in public investment in research and development in UK history.

### [Video](#)

This is the only time during the mission that the seismometer – called the Seismic Experiment for Interior Structure, or SEIS – is capable of detecting these sounds. In a few weeks, it is due to be placed on the Martian surface by InSight's robotic arm. For now, it is recording wind data that scientists will later be able to cancel out of data from the surface, allowing them to separate "noise" from actual Marsquakes.

Sue Horne, Head of Space Exploration at the UK Space Agency, said:

This is brilliant news because it means we know the sensors have survived the rigours of landing on Mars and are meeting the requirements to achieve their science goals. It is just amazing to hear the first ever sounds from Mars.

SEIS includes three Short Period sensors (SEIS SP) developed in partnership by Imperial College London, Oxford University and STFC RAL Space, with £4 million in funding from the UK Space Agency. These sensors can detect motion at sub-atomic scales, which includes the wind on Mars, which is barely within the lower range of human hearing.

When the sensors pick up vibrations from InSight's solar panels, the whole spacecraft acts like a giant microphone.

InSight science team member Prof Tom Pike of Imperial College London said:

The solar panels on the lander's sides are perfect acoustic receivers. It's like InSight is cupping its ears.

Prof Pike compares the effect to a flag in the wind. As a flag breaks up the wind, it creates oscillations in frequency that the human ear perceives as flapping.

InSight, which landed on 26 November 2018, will study the inside of Mars to learn how planets, moons and meteorites with rocky surfaces, including the Earth and its Moon, formed.

Dr Neil Bowles, from the University of Oxford's Department of Physics, said:

To get the first data from the seismometer instrument package has been fantastic and even with a short test run the analysis is now full swing.

To 'hear' the low frequency rumble of the Martian wind on the lander being picked up by the SEIS-SP is really eerie and provides a strangely human connection to this very different environment.

Both audio samples have been released to the public almost completely unaltered. In some cases, they have been raised an octave in order to be perceptible to the human ear.

But an even clearer sound from Mars is to come. In just a couple years, the British-built Mars 2020 rover is scheduled to land with two actual microphones on board. One has been included specifically to record the sound of a Martian landing for the first time. A second will be able to detect the sound of the instrument's laser as it zaps different materials. This will

help identify these materials based on the change in sound frequency.