

Unscrupulous landlords who exploit vulnerable residents to be driven out of supported housing sector

- £20 million Supported Housing Improvement Programme will drive up quality in some of the most affected areas
- Programme builds on successful pilots in Birmingham, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bristol and Hull
- Measures include minimum standards for support provided to residents to help their progress towards living independently

Unscrupulous landlords who exploit vulnerable residents by charging high rents for poor-quality accommodation and offering almost no help will be driven out of the supported housing market by a new £20 million government improvement programme launched today (2 July 2022).

Supported housing provides accommodation alongside care, support, or supervision, helping vulnerable people across the country. In short term supported housing, residents may have experience of homelessness, mental health issues or domestic abuse, and schemes should provide them with the skills and confidence to enter longer-term independent accommodation.

Many people in supported housing receive good quality, tailored support to help them get their lives back on track by assisting them to access health services or mental health support, manage their finances, find employment and/or sustain a tenancy.

But there are instances of supported housing landlords providing unacceptable levels of support while charging extortionate rents. For example, there have been reports of landlords providing as little support as dropping off a box of cereal while claiming £250 per week in an area where the average rent is £80.

This will be stamped out with a package of government measures that include:

- minimum standards for support provided to residents in order to help their progress towards living independently
- new powers for local authorities to better manage their local supported housing market and ensure no individual falls through the cracks

- changes to Housing Benefit regulations to seek to define care, support, and supervision to improve quality across all specified supported housing provision

Alongside this, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are today opening the bidding round for local councils to apply for funding from a [£20 million Supported Housing Improvement Programme](#) to drive up accommodation quality in some of the most affected areas.

This follows successful pilots which saw DLUHC work with 5 local authorities around England to improve supported housing in these areas.

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Eddie Hughes MP said:

“We want vulnerable residents living in supported housing to have safe, appropriate accommodation, which meets their needs and can help them move onto more independent living.

“I’m pleased to open our Supported Housing Improvement Programme for bids today. This will build on the momentum from our successful pilots, helping councils in the worst-affected areas to tackle bad quality and poor value for money in supported housing, while preserving good provision by responsible providers.”

Minister for Welfare Delivery, David Rutley MP said:

“The welfare system acts as a safety net to help people, including those living in supported housing and the Improvement Programme further strengthens that.

“Having a settled home gives people the security to improve their lives by getting on the employment ladder or taking other steps towards financial independence.

“This, supported by changes we recently announced which will give people on benefits the choice of putting money towards a deposit, provides the chance to make progress on the pathway to home ownership.”

From October 2020 to September 2021, DLUHC funded 5 local authorities (Birmingham, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Hull and Bristol) to test interventions to raise standards of accommodation and support and improve local authority oversight of the local supported housing market.

The pilot authorities were able to drive up the quality of accommodation and support to residents. They also improved value for money through enhanced scrutiny of Housing Benefit claims to verify that costs were legitimate and reasonable.

The [independent evaluation of the pilots](#) was published in April 2022. It

found that increasing local authority capacity and capability had a positive impact on their ability to improve quality and value for money in supported housing at a local level.

This [prospectus published today](#) provides detailed guidance that will assist local councils in considering whether and how to bid, and for those selected to go on to participate in the programme.