



**domestic
abuse
commissioner**

Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales
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28 October 2021

Sent by email

Dear Minister Hughes,

I am writing to warmly welcome the increased funding announced in the Spending Review to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

It is a pleasure to work with you to promote the housing needs of survivors of domestic abuse, including through the National Expert Steering Board on Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act. As you know, the overwhelming majority of women sleeping rough will have experienced domestic abuse, yet most refuge and other safe accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse are often unable to meet their more complex needs, such as poor mental health and substance use. In turn, many homelessness services can be unsafe and ineffective in ending homelessness among women, such as mixed hostels where domestic abuse perpetrators may also be housed.

I would therefore strongly recommend that a proportion of the £639 million to end rough sleeping is allocated for gender-informed services to support women who are sleeping rough, which we know are most effective in ending women's homelessness. Investing in these services would best enable the government to meet its manifesto commitment in this area.

As you will be aware, with regards to women who are sleeping rough, or at risk of rough sleeping, a significant gap still remains, for migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse. My recent report *Safety Before Status* found that migrant victims of domestic abuse are often shut out of vital routes to safety, with too many forced to stay with their abusers or face homelessness and destitution because they cannot access public funds to flee. I am calling for an £18.7m funding injection over 3 years to local authorities to ensure those with no recourse to public funds can get safe refuge and I would strongly welcome your support for this allocation.

In addition, I would welcome the establishment of a dedicated local authority fund to enable victims and survivors to rebuild their lives after fleeing an abusive household. This fund would cover costs such as replacing essential items left behind after fleeing abuse, paying off debts incurred through financial abuse, and support to move on from refuge. We are calling for an estimated £10.7m to be allocated to this fund over three years.

Finally, I am calling for £262.9m to be allocated over three years to a single dedicated cross-government funding stream for specialist by and for services supporting victims and

survivors with protected characteristics (including Black and minoritised, LGBT+ and Deaf and disabled survivors) as well as victims and survivors who have no recourse to public funds. This fund would help support the effective delivery of the Part 4 duty on local authorities to commission support within safe accommodation, with evidence suggesting that specialist by and for services are less likely to be commissioned by local authorities. I would welcome your support for this funding, including working with other government departments to feed into this cross-departmental initiative.

I believe that taken together, these measures would make a significant impact on reducing the numbers of women facing homelessness and rough sleeping.

I am grateful for your ongoing support and look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping can access the accommodation and support they need.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Jacobs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicole Jacobs
Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales