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**The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP**  
*Minister for Housing and Local Government*

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Dear Margaret

## **PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND ROUGH SLEEPERS**

Despite the tough fiscal climate and the need to tackle the nation's deficit, this Government has committed to prioritising the needs of, and services to, the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our communities. We know the damage that can result both for individuals and communities if needs are not addressed, and we can not see a return to the levels of homelessness and rough sleeping seen in the past.

To make sure this does not happen, we maintained homelessness funding at £400m in the Spending Review. In addition, the importance of the Supporting People programme in helping vulnerable people was clearly recognised in the Spending Review, and, in order to limit the number of different funding streams to local authorities, its funding has been included as an element of formula grant - based on an average reduction of less than 1% a year in each of the next 4 years. This gives local authorities maximum flexibility and we would encourage all authorities to do as much as they can to maintain services to the most vulnerable people in their community in these economically challenging times.

Councils should be continuing to 'invest to save' - they already know that investment in preventative housing related support services can save them huge bills in more expensive adult social care costs later on. So, despite their exceptional record on homelessness prevention and commissioning effective Supporting People services, it is disappointing to see several councils are indicating significant cuts in Supporting People services, particularly for the homeless. It is difficult to understand why some councils appear to be targeting any disproportionate spending reductions on programmes that support the most vulnerable people in their communities.

I know that as well as sharing the contents of this letter with your members, you will also want to encourage and support councils to continue to prioritise these important services going forward. I would also very much welcome your support in building a shared sense of direction between central government and councils on how to tackle the multiple issues that contribute to homelessness. This is an issue being considered by the Ministerial Working Group on Preventing and Tackling Homelessness.

I therefore propose that the LGA is represented at the Ministerial Working Group's next meeting by a couple of elected politicians, to try and establish an agreed approach. If you are able to nominate suggestions for attendees, my office will make the necessary arrangements. I look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grant Shapps", with a flourish at the end.

**GRANT SHAPPS MP**