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| <b>MINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP ON PREVENTING AND TACKLING HOMELESSNESS</b> |
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**4-5pm 28 February 2012**

**Large Ministerial Conference Room, House of Commons**

Attendees

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| Grant Shapps MP  | DCLG (Chair) |
| Lord David Freud | DWP          |
| Crispin Blunt MP | MOJ          |
| Lord Henley      | HO           |

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|---------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| Howard Bines        | BIS  | Rahima Elaheebucus | BIS  |
| Jon Bright          | DCLG | Roger Wilshaw      | DCLG |
| Suzanne Kochanowski | DCLG | Katie Hewett       | DCLG |
| Martin Gibbs        | DH   | Nerys Cross        | DH   |
| Stephen Hall        | DWP  | Martin Hill        | DWP  |
| Verity Morgan       | DCLG |                    |      |

External guests attending for items 2-4 respectively

Paula Daly  
Richard Blakeway (Mayor of London's Housing Adviser)  
Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick (Heriot-Watt University)

Apologies

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|--------------------|-----|
| Tim Loughton MP    | DfE |
| Paul Burstow MP    | DH  |
| John Hayes MP      | BIS |
| Andrew Robathan MP | MoD |

**Agenda item 1 – Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 The chair welcomed members to the fifth meeting of the Ministerial Working Group and in particular Lord Henley to his first meeting. The Group's first report, published last July, focused on rough sleeping and led to the roll out of the Mayor of London's *No Second Night Out* to support people off the streets. Richard Blakeway had been invited to the meeting to provide an update on learning from the pilot. Work has now begun on the Working Group's second report which will focus on preventing homelessness.

**Agenda item 2 – Paula Daly: A Personal Experience of Homelessness**

- 2.1 The chair welcomed Paula to the meeting and explained that he'd first spoken to her during a Radio Five Live call-in. Paula lost her business and became homeless when her house was repossessed. She was invited to share her story with the Working Group as her case demonstrates the universal nature of homelessness.
- 2.2 In discussion the following points were made:

- Paula had negative experiences of Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme. She felt that the training support she was offered was not set up for professionals;
- Paula had also had a negative experience with her privately rented accommodation and felt that she had received insufficient support from her landlord to address her difficulties with drug dealing neighbours. She noted that the Police had responded effectively when approached for assistance.

2.3 Members thanked Paula for her sharing her story and enhancing their understanding of the issues experienced by those facing homelessness. The Chair noted that Paula's story will help inform thinking for the Working Group's second report.

**Action: Lord Freud to follow up the points made on Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme.**

### **Agenda item 3 – Richard Blakeway: No Second Night Out Pilot**

2.4 The Chair welcomed Richard to the meeting and explained that the Working Group were keen to learn from the Greater London Authority's experiences from the No Second Night Out pilot. No Second Night Out is the Greater London Authority's (GLA) programme to identify new rough sleepers and ensure they can access the support they need so that they do not have to spend a further night on the streets.

2.5 Richard noted that since the six month pilot began last April the phone line had taken 4000 calls from the public and 700 people had been helped off the streets. No Second Night Out's success rate is significantly higher than conventional outreach services with only 14% of the 700 rough sleepers helped returning to the streets.

2.6 Richard highlighted the key challenges faced by the pilot:

- The GLA were keen to extend the service beyond the 10 inner London Boroughs in the pilot;
- The service was dependent on local authorities providing good quality advice to single homeless people and a rapid response from their housing options teams;
- A cross London strategic response is necessary to ensure the coordination of hostel bed spaces and outreach services. Transferring local authority rough sleeping funding to the GLA would help ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to tackling rough sleeping in the Capital.

3.1 In discussion the following points were raised:

- Recent CHAIN data demonstrated that 52% of London's rough sleepers are foreign nationals. UKBA's continued and consistent engagement will be critical to NSNO's future success; and
- There was discussion of the new legislation to make squatting in residential buildings a criminal offence.

3.2 The Chair thanked Richard for his contribution and noted progress being made to roll out No Second Night Out nationally. DCLG continues to prioritise single homelessness, recently announcing an additional £18.5m funding to support local authority services and a national rough sleeper reporting line. The Department is also supporting the GLA's work with embassies to ensure foreign nationals are aware of the realities of moving to England before they leave their home countries.

**Action: The GLA and Lord Henley to discuss UKBA's role in No Second Night Out.**

**Action: DCLG and MoJ officials to prepare for the introduction of the squatting legislation.**

#### **Agenda item 4 – Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick: Pathways to Multiple Exclusion**

3.3 Professor Fitzpatrick presented an overview of her statistically robust qualitative research 'Multiple Exclusion Homelessness in the UK: key patterns and intersections' which focused on rough sleepers and people accessing support services in seven UK cities. It found that there is a significant overlap (47%) between the four aspects of 'deep social exclusion' – homelessness, institutional care, street culture activities and substance misuse. The study identified four consistent pathways into homelessness. It found that individuals interact with a variety of public services before they become homeless at significant cost to the public purse. These interactions present opportunities to prevent their circumstances from escalating into a housing crisis. Interaction with drugs and alcohol services, schools and the Criminal Justice System are particularly crucial intervention points. With fewer complex needs, the profile of migrants is considerably different from the rest of the homeless client group.

3.4 In discussion the following points were made:

- The study and other research had highlighted that many of the issues faced by homeless people and those at risk of homelessness stemmed from childhood. This demonstrates the importance of the Government's Troubled Families work and the essential role of case workers in bringing services together;
- Early teens are a particularly important time with school exclusion, substance misuse and involvement with the Criminal Justice System tending to first occur at this age. Care leavers are also particularly vulnerable; and
- Family background is also critical with parents with drugs/ alcohol misuse, mental health problems and family homelessness also factoring highly in future homelessness.

3.5 The Chair thanked Professor Fitzpatrick and noted that her work had significantly enhanced understanding of the routes into homelessness and will be crucial in informing the second Working Group report.

#### **Agenda item 5: Draft strategy for preventing homelessness**

3.6 The Chair introduced the draft strategy which the Group had previously agreed would focus on prevention and early intervention to address underlying problems before they escalate into homelessness. He explained that the current draft needs to be recast and the departmental commitments firmed up.

3.7 The following points were raised in discussion:

- There is a great deal of activity already underway that will contribute to the prevention agenda. The strategy should seek to capture this and avoid duplication;
- The strategy should use learning from the Multiple Exclusion research to pinpoint key early intervention points and identify the department or agency responsible for delivering them. The draft should then be shaped around these points;
- The strategy should consider how services work together around the individual. The Troubled Families work and other evidence has demonstrated the value of the case worker approach where a single named individual is responsible for bringing services together; and
- Local authorities may be best placed to provide the local leadership necessary to coordinate services locally. Health and Wellbeing Boards may not be an appropriate forum because the Criminal Justice System is not represented.

3.8 The Chair summed up by agreeing that the Troubled Families work and learning from the Multiple Exclusion research on intervention points should feature more strongly in the Strategy. It would be important to clarify Departmental roles to avoid confusion given the extent of activity already underway on this agenda. The next draft of the Strategy would be circulated in correspondence.

**MWG Secretariat**  
**March 2012**