

MINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP ON PREVENTING AND TACKLING HOMELESSNESS
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MONDAY 14 MARCH 2011 5PM - 6PM
Large Ministerial Room, House of Commons

Attendees

Grant Shapps MP	DCLG (Chair)	Mark Davies	DH
Lord David Freud	DWP	Simon Bullock	HO
Crispin Blunt MP	MOJ	Rebecca Bradford	UKBA
Tim Loughton MP	DfE	Hugh Allen	DWP
John Hayes MP	BIS (item 3)	Savas Hadjipavlou	MOJ
James Brokenshire MP	HO	Shirley Trundle	DfE
		Howard Bines	BIS
Ruth Stanier	DCLG	Vida Paittoo	DCLG
Suzanne Kochanowski	DCLG		

Also attending for item 2

Cllr Tony Newman	LB Croydon	Martin Wheatley	LGA
Cllr David Sprason	Leicestershire CC		

Apologies

Andrew Robathan MP	MOD
Paul Burstow MP	DH

Agenda item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The chair welcomed members to the third meeting of the Ministerial Working Group. The purpose of the meeting was to hear directly from Councillors on local government's perspective on tackling homelessness, and to discuss the draft cross-government document and the commitments within it.

Agenda item 2 – Local Councillors' Views

2.1 Cllr David Sprason and Cllr Tony Newman welcomed the establishment of the Ministerial Working Group. Local authorities have been successfully tackling homelessness for a number of years, and it was important to recognise that councils operated in different ways, including in two-tier areas. New freedoms and flexibilities were welcome but funding reductions presented challenges. Initiatives that joined up funding streams across public services were particularly important for homelessness, and local government was keen to take forward further work in this area. The new Health and Well-Being Boards also offered an opportunity to improve co-ordination between NHS and housing services. It was important to continue to reduce the bureaucratic burdens on local government, such as the paperwork involved with personal budgets.

2.2 The chair asked the Councillors for their views on the No Second Night Out pilot in London (which is being run by the Mayor of London's Delivery Board to offer consistent support to new rough sleepers in

central London). The Councillors welcomed the scheme, and described the approach being taken in other urban areas such as Leicester.

- 2.3 Members asked a number of follow-up questions, including the Councillors' views on children leaving care, integrated offender management and local authorities' management of homelessness cases.
- 2.4 The chair thanked the Councillors for their contribution, and asked that they extend his thanks to other members for the hard work undertaken by local government to tackle homelessness.

Action: Officials to investigate the bureaucratic burdens associated with personal budgets and report back to the next Ministerial meeting.

Action: Officials to support the Local Government Association in developing a proposal for a community-based budget approach for homeless adults with complex needs.

Agenda item 3 – Analysis and Draft Document

- 3.1 The chair introduced the draft cross-government document developed by officials. He wanted the document to be more focused and shorter, with stronger and clearer commitments from departments. In particular, the chair requested that members revisit and firm up the commitments on ex-offenders, migrants and health commissioning. The aim was to publish a final document in May/June.
- 3.2 In discussion, it was agreed that:
 - The document should be more sharply focused on the help available to people at crisis point when they come onto the streets.
 - The document needed to make the case for action to delivery organisations, and capture commitments from external partners as well as government departments.
 - The document should have a clear narrative on the broader social disadvantage which can lead to rough sleeping, and summarise cross-government actions that prevent homelessness.

Action: Members to revisit and firm up government commitments. Officials to revise draft document.

- 3.3 The next meeting would be scheduled for summer 2011.