

The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

19 March 2024

Dear James

The Criminal Justice Bill

At our meeting of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee on 11 March 2024 we considered a joint letter from homeless charities and housing organisations which operate in Wales in respect of the Criminal Justice Bill. Those organisations raised with us their concerns – which they described as grave concerns – in respect of the Bill's clauses on nuisance begging and nuisance rough sleeping.

We note from the Bill's Explanatory Notes that you consider the Senedd's legislative consent process to be engaged in relation to a number of its clauses, including clauses 38 to 47, 51 to 60, 63 and 64 which make provision in relation to nuisance begging and nuisance rough sleeping.

Due to the gravity of the concerns raised with us, I would be grateful if you could address the specific points which the organisations raise, including:

- the measures are "dehumanising" and "could not be further from the general direction of travel in Wales", as outlined in Welsh Government's ending homelessness action plan and White Paper on ending homelessness in Wales;
- "fining or moving people on who have nowhere to go does not solve homelessness"; and
- the clauses will "cause people who are sleeping rough to be displaced into less safe areas" and will "create a break down in trust between people forced to sleep on the streets and the organisations and authorities that can provide them with support".

Please could you respond to this letter by Wednesday 10 April 2024.

I am copying this letter to John Griffiths MS, Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee, and Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip.

Yours sincerely,

Huw Irranca-Davies

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Chair