

Julie James  
**Minister for Housing and Local Government**

4 November 2019

Rough Sleeping in Wales

Dear Julie,

Thank you for giving evidence to the Committee on 17 October. The Committee felt that there was a clear sense of pace and urgency around the work, particularly stemming from the response to the Homelessness Action Group recommendations. As you are aware the speed of progress in tackling rough sleeping has been an area of concern previously for the Committee. We will continue to monitor progress on this important issue, and look forward to hearing your responses to subsequent reports from the Group.

However, there were some issues that we wish to follow up. One of the issues we explored was how support can be best delivered to specific groups, such as addressing youth homelessness amongst the LGBTQ+ community or for people with neuro-diverse conditions. While we acknowledge the potential impact of “artificial barriers” and the need to address homelessness across the piece, we are concerned that there is a need for greater tailoring of support services within the broader over-arching framework for tackling homelessness. How will you ensure that the wider framework which underpins this individual approach on a personal level will take account of the particular circumstances and needs of distinct groups with specific needs?

We have concerns about how effective the current system is at supporting those who have both substance misuse and mental health difficulties. This was

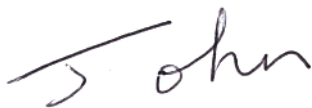
something that was particularly highlighted during our engagement with people who had experience of sleeping rough. As a result of our concerns, we will be undertaking some further work to better understand the current levels of provision, and whether there are barriers to accessing co-ordinated support which takes account of both substance misuse and mental health conditions.

We would also like some further information on how you will be evaluating the impact of the changes you are introducing, including the implementation of the Action Group recommendations. In particular, how will you take account of the views of those receiving support and services, and whether the changes have resulted in improvements as to how the system “feels” to them. We understand that this sort of qualitative evaluation is being undertaken on people’s experiences of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.

Finally, this is clearly an ambitious programme of change, that will hopefully result in real and visible changes, and a significant reduction on the numbers of people sleeping rough, but are you confident that local authorities and other support services will have sufficient resources to deliver this ambitious programme of change? In particular, we are aware that local authorities face challenging budgets, and that many services, both statutory and non-statutory, have been subject to significant reductions because of budgetary pressures.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

John Griffiths

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.