

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2020

Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email.

Councils were given 48 hours to find emergency accommodation for all rough sleepers in England following an unprecedented request from the government that all homeless people should be housed immediately.

It was imperative that rough sleepers and other vulnerable homeless are supported into appropriate accommodation. The Government also highlighted the importance of stopping homeless people from congregating in day-centre facilities to reduce the risk of transmission. This was to be funded from the £1.6bn given to local authorities for their Covid-19 response.

In a significant departure from normal rules, he also stressed that people classified as having “no recourse to public funds” (a status given to people who are seeking asylum, or who have a limited immigration status), who normally have no right to housing support or benefits, should also be helped with emergency accommodation.

Going forward, I firmly believe that just one person without a roof over their head is one too many, and it is vitally important that the most vulnerable people in society, including homeless people and rough sleepers, are helped to get their lives back on track after this pandemic. I am glad that the Government has announced that it will carry out a review of legislation around homelessness and rough sleeping, including the Vagrancy Act, to ensure the best measures are in place and that rough sleepers are not discriminated against.

The Government has a strong record of preventing and relieving homelessness. Between 2010 and mid-2018, there have been over 1.6 million cases of homelessness prevention and relief across England. While this is welcome progress, there is much more to be done.

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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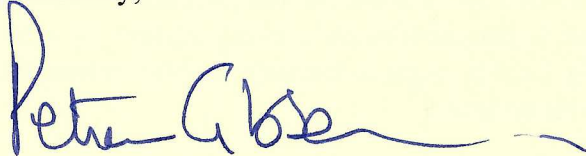
    @gibbo4darlo

I welcome the launch of a new £100 million Rough Sleeping Strategy expected to provide rapid support to up to 6,000 vulnerable people either new to the streets or at risk of becoming rough sleepers. This will complement the £28 million Housing First pilots which are supporting the most entrenched rough sleepers off the streets by providing them with stable accommodation and intensive wrap-around support.

Furthermore, I am glad that the Homelessness Reduction Act, the most ambitious legislative reform for tackling homelessness in decades, has recently come into force. This Act, praised by both Shelter and Crisis, requires councils to provide early support to people at risk of homelessness.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Gibson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PETER GIBSON MP