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Member of Parliament for Rochester and Strood

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To The Students of The Hundred of Hoo Academy.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me, I read your letters with great interest and am pleased that you have taken an interest in such an important issue that affects us both locally and nationally. I am grateful for the ideas and advice about how best to tackle this issue and I will make sure to pass this on to the relevant authorities.

Between September 2020 and January 2021, I was Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and so I have had some experience in this particular area.

I completely agree with and a single person without a roof over their head is one too many. I know that the Government is committed to ending rough sleeping once and for all by 2024.

The Government has published a new strategy 'Ending Rough Sleeping For Good' which sets out the Government's plan to prevent more people from finding themselves without a safe roof over their heads. This builds on the encouraging progress which has already been made, with the number of rough sleepers falling in every region of England and levels in 2021 reaching an eight-year low overall.

This will see £2 billion worth of investment over the next three years to 2025. This includes funding for emergency accommodation, longer-term housing, and tailored wrap-around support. The Government will also improve the support available to help people with experience of rough sleeping into employment.

I know the important role that safe accommodation plays in helping vulnerable people off the street. As a result of this, the Government is making the largest ever investment in move-on accommodation which is helping to provide vulnerable people with support and a place to live. The £433 million Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme will deliver 6,000 move-on homes to those who are rough sleeping or who have a history of sleeping rough. Once in their new home, rough sleepers will be supported by specialist staff to access the help they need.

A key focus of Government work is helping people find longer-term accommodation and ensuring that they receive personalised support to move forwards. Local councils

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have an important role to play here. I know that, already, the number of people in emergency accommodation has nearly halved, with more people securing long-term homes.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government awarded Medway Council with £867,450 funding from the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative for the 2020/2021 financial year.

This important funding will be used to continue the council's work supporting those residents who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Medway Council offers support for people with nowhere to live including a specialist outreach team which liaises with rough sleepers and advises them of the support available from different organisations.

Further, local charities such as, Caring Hands in the Community have received £100,000 and Medway Night Shelter have received £48,620 from the Homeless Transformation Fund. The fund enables the provision of self-contained accommodation that allows organisations to improve the quality of their accommodation and the support that they offer.

I hope that this response has reassured you that I, along with the Government and Medway Council, am working hard to reduce homelessness in the Medway and our constituency of Rochester and Strood.

As your MP, I will continue to speak out in Parliament about the important issue of tackling homelessness and supporting those who have experienced rough sleeping to rebuild their lives.

Yours sincerely



Kelly Tolhurst MP
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