

Homeless charity head 'delighted' with government benefits pledge

The head of Caritas Anchor House, a homeless charity based in Stratford, has supported the government's decision to continue housing benefit for supported housing.

Plans, revealed in the government's Rough Sleeping Strategy published on Monday, mean that supported housing, including hostels, refuges and shelters, will be kept outside the Universal Credit benefit system.

Anyone living in supported housing will have their housing costs paid for through the benefit.

Amanda Dubarry, chief executive of Caritas Anchor House, said "We are delighted at the government's decision to keep supported housing like ours funded by housing benefit.

"I have been one of the many

RHIANNON LONG
rhiannon.long@archant.co.uk

voices in the sector pushing to prevent the move to grant funding, and I'm really pleased the government have listened to the views of the housing community before finalising any decisions. By maintaining the current system, we will have the stability we need to grow as a sector. We can begin planning ahead to expand and improve our services, which are very much in demand in this current climate."

Newham has the highest number of homeless people in London, with one in 25 estimated to be without a permanent home. Caritas works with homeless people by providing shelter and



CEO Amanda Dubarry .

Picture: MATT GRAYSON/CARITAS ANCHOR HOUSE

running programmes to permanently take people off the streets. Housing minister Kit Malthouse said: "Protection of the most vulnerable has always been our primary concern, and following our consultation, the case for keeping supported housing in the welfare system became clear."

Universal Credit is an updated benefits system which combines six old benefits into one, in a bid to make claiming more streamlined and efficient. The decision to keep housing benefit

for supported housing separate to this system was outlined in a new governmental strategy announced on Monday.

The strategy highlights a three-pronged approach to tackling rough sleeping – prevention, intervention and recovery – in an attempt to eradicate it by 2027.

Prevention includes £3.2m a year for two years to help people leaving prison. Intervention focuses on supporting those in crisis, and the recovery aspect will involve putting homelessness experts in every Jobcentre Plus.

news

Crime

A man is alleged to have indecently exposed himself in the middle of the street.

The police are investigating after the man – described as being in his mid 20s to early 30s – allegedly exposed himself in Forest Lane, Forest Gate, after midnight on August 8.

A Met spokesman said: "The man left the scene before the police got there.

"A search of the local area was undertaken without trace."

Officers received a second complaint in a place nearby but the man had also left before they got there.

The suspect has brown hair and was wearing a white vest, according to the police.

Detectives are checking CCTV footage as part of their investigation.

The Met's enquiries are ongoing but at the time of going to press there had been no arrests.

Anyone with any information should call 101 or contact the charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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