



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Chief Executive of Local Authorities

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***Department for Communities and Local
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As you will be aware, the Homelessness Reduction Act received Royal Assent in April this year. The Homelessness Reduction Act will mean people across the country get the help they need to avoid becoming homeless in the first place, and those already experiencing homelessness are able to access help regardless of whether they have a priority need.

The Government is committed to preventing and tackling homelessness, and no one should ever have to spend a night on the streets. The timely commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act will ensure that local authorities intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness. I would like to inform you that it is our intention to commence the Act in **April 2018**. I very much hope that your authority is already preparing for implementation of the Act, and will use the coming months to ensure that you are ready to meet the new duties at the commencement date.

I confirmed in January 2017 that the Government would fund the Act in line with the longstanding 'new burdens' arrangement and provide £61 million to local authorities to meet the new burdens cost of the Act. The distribution formula is being finalised following consultation with local authorities from across the country, and we plan to announce allocations in autumn and make the first payments in winter 2017/2018.

My officials have been reviewing the Homelessness Code of Guidance with the assistance of a working group of local authorities and other stakeholders. We plan to publish a draft for consultation in the autumn ahead of publication of the final Code in spring 2018.

The Government wishes to make regulations, including on duty to refer, under the Homelessness Reduction Act. These will be laid in the winter and my officials will work closely with the relevant government departments and their delivery chains to ensure effective communications and workforce support ahead of commencement.

The current data collection system needs to be changed so that local authorities and central government can monitor the operation and outcomes of the new duties brought in by the Act. The change will generate much richer data both on homelessness problems and the impact of interventions, enabling better informed policy and resource decisions by both local and central government. You will also be aware that local authority data returns help government to understand homelessness pressures and challenges across the country, and inform decisions on the allocation of funding and resources.

We will be providing additional funding to support you with this change. An outline of what will be required will be placed on this webpage shortly and the page will be updated with the final data schema when it is available:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/statistics/working-with-users/dclg-homelessness-statistics-user-forum/>

This will enable you to progress discussions with IT providers in advance of implementation.

Our new Homelessness Advice and Support Team, drawn from local authorities and the homelessness sector, will provide support and challenge starting with a series of events around the country in September and October. One of the key resources available to the team will be the lessons emerging from the £50m Homelessness Prevention programme which they will share with you. We will also continue to fund NHAS to provide free training on the Homelessness Reduction Act up until April.

Local authorities are at the forefront of this work. I would like to put on record once again my thanks to local authorities up and down the country for the work that you do to tackle homelessness.

I know that we all share a firm commitment to tackling and reducing homelessness through a new focus on earlier intervention and prevention. I very much look forward to working with you to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act, which will reform the response to homelessness at a national and local level.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcus Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M' and 'J'.

MARCUS JONES MP