



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**The Rt James Brokenshire MP**

*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local  
Government*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local  
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*Dear Councillor,*

### **Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities – Terminally Ill Homeless People**

I am writing to you to make you aware of changes we have recently made to the Homelessness Code of Guidance in respect of how local housing authorities should work with terminally ill people who are receiving palliative care and find themselves homeless.

It is clearly unacceptable for any homeless person to die on our streets. Everyone should be able to have a roof over their head and receive the support they need to sustain themselves in suitable accommodation. This is why we supported the Homelessness Reduction Act as a central element in our approach to reducing homelessness and rough sleeping. The Act will ensure support for more people, as well as more preventative action to stop people from becoming homeless in the first place.

I recognise the Act introduced significant changes in how your teams support those who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness. I am grateful to all the work your teams have done in preparing for and adopting the Act since April, although I recognise there is more to do. Its successful implementation will be vital to us achieving our shared goal of supporting those in need and ensuring everyone has a roof over their head. My officials have been engaging and supporting your teams and will continue to do so, particularly as we soon move into reviewing the implementation of the Act and the new burdens funding for it.

Those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness have a wide range of needs which require support from a number of different public agencies. This is certainly true of those who unfortunately find themselves coming to the end of their life with a terminal illness and are homeless. I am sure your teams treat such cases with compassion and already ensure effective support for those in this most challenging and difficult position. We have made a couple of changes to the Homelessness Code of Guidance which provide details about how the Act should be applied and interpreted, to reflect the support this particular cohort of people should receive. These changes will come into effect on 1 November:

- Chapter 8 of the Guidance addresses 'Priority Need' – we have added a new paragraph (8.40) which sets out our expectation that a terminally ill person will almost certainly be in priority need and stresses the importance of co-ordinated support with health and social services in providing palliative care;

- Chapter 17 of the Guidance addresses 'Suitability of Accommodation – we have added a new paragraph (17.9) which sets out our expectation that authorities should continue to keep an applicant's case under review where the applicant is receiving end of life care, to ensure the applicant's accommodation remains suitable.

I also want to take this opportunity to set out my expectations in respect of terminally ill homeless people who are found to be intentionally homeless. This cohort should be treated with particular compassion and sensitivity when considering your duties under section 190(2) of the Housing Act 1996. Particular attention should be made to the type and length of accommodation provided to the individual. While the Guidance already sets out that each case must be considered on its merits, I believe a person who is receiving end of life care may well need to be temporarily housed for a longer period of time than a person who is not coming to the end of their life. I would urge your teams to fully consider the impact this will have on the person's health condition when considering the length of time you give them to secure their own accommodation.

The Government is committed to working with local authorities and homelessness organisations to ensure homeless people at the end of their life receive co-ordinated care. I believe the changes we have made to the Guidance will support this.

I would be grateful if you could send this message to your housing teams.

*Yours sincerely,*

**RT HON JAMES BROKESHIRE MP**