

**JEREMY QUIN MP**  
Member of Parliament for Horsham



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

11th October 2016

*Dear Constituent,*

**RE: SUPPORTED HOUSING**

Thank you for contacting me about supported housing.

I completely agree with you that for many vulnerable people supported accommodation plays a vital role. I can assure you that the Government is committed to building a secure long-term funding framework for the sector, and encouraging further development in the sector.

The changes to Housing Benefit announced in the 2015 Autumn Statement involve aligning the rules for claimants in the social sector with those for claimants renting privately. This means extending the Local Housing Allowance rules, which limit the amount of rent which Housing Benefit will cover, to the social sector. Let me assure you, however, that the Government recognises the importance of ensuring those who are providing supported accommodation to some of the most vulnerable members of our society receive appropriate protections. That is why Government departments have been engaging closely with providers to better understand the issues faced by the supported housing sector, which is made up of an extremely wide variety of housing types.

I welcome the fact that as a result of these discussions the Government has decided to delay any change in the sector's funding regime to 2019. From 2019 the Local Housing Allowance rules for Housing Benefit will apply to the supported housing sector, but this will not include the Shared Accommodation Rate, in recognition of the particular challenges this would have placed on tenants. To reflect the higher average costs of offering supported accommodation, which may go above the level of Local Housing Allowance, the Government will devolve 'top up' funding to local authorities (and to the devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland). This will give local authorities an enhanced role in commissioning supported housing, and allow them to take a more coherent approach to planning for housing needs in their area.

I also welcome the fact that the one per cent yearly reduction in social sector rents which the Government announced in the 2015 Summer Budget will not apply to supported housing for one year, with provision for some providers to continue to be exempt in cases where they do not have the capacity to offset the decrease through efficiencies or other adjustments. Specialist types of supported accommodation will be exempt from the rent reduction for the full four years of its duration.

I am proud that the Government is doing so much to support disabled people. Around £50 billion is spent every year on benefits to support people with disabilities or health conditions, and that spending will be higher in every year until 2020 than it was in 2010. Funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant, which helps disabled people make adaptations to their home, is due to increase by nearly 80 per cent next year. The Government is also spending £400 million on delivering 8,000 specialist homes for the vulnerable, elderly or those with disabilities.

On the issue of domestic violence, Ministers are aware of the specific issues faced by women's refuges. The Government is listening to the views and concerns of providers and is working to ensure refuges continue to receive appropriate funding for their important work. While the funding mechanism for shorter-term accommodation such as refuges may be different from the rest of the sector, I can assure you refuges will benefit from the same protection being given to the supported housing sector in general. Refuges will also be entirely exempt from the requirement for social sector housing providers to reduce rents by one per cent each year for four years.

More broadly, I welcome the fact that in the last Autumn Statement the Government committed additional support to services for victims of domestic abuse which represented a tripling of the funding compared to the previous four years, and will be spending £80 million on these services up to 2020. The Government also published a renewed Violence Against Women and Girls strategy in March this year.

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The Government will shortly launch a consultation on developing the details of this new funding model for the supported housing sector. I welcome the considered approach the Government has taken on this issue, and hope that providers will continue to engage with the Government to ensure the new model is effective and appropriate.

Thank you again for contacting me.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Quin'.