

Homelessness Reduction Bill

Homelessness is on the rise in Milton Keynes and is a concern I know is felt throughout the city. In just a few hundred words, I will try to report to you on what I have been doing in the last few months to support our local authority and the voluntary sector groups working on this issue.

I was grateful to welcome the Homelessness Minister, Marcus Jones, to meet with several stakeholders at the YMCA in Central Milton Keynes earlier this year. Following this, I approached the Department for Communities and Local Government to identify the funding avenues that could help the local authority and voluntary organisations in better delivering homelessness support. Having missed the application deadline by a few months, we were encouraged to look out for future bidding opportunities.

I also met with representatives at the Milton Keynes People's Assembly in Wolverton before visiting St. Mungo's and Kings Chapel – all of whom do an admirable job in advocating for and supporting some of the most vulnerable in our community.

This is why I placed my full support behind the Winter Night Shelter's bid to make long term use of the Old Bus Station (Buszy) as a one stop homelessness support hub, which not only brings together various support services but also helps those affected to move on to a more secure and independent living.

This is also why I was in Parliament on Friday 28th October, normally my constituency day, to vote through the Homelessness Reduction Bill. The Bill will address shortcomings in current legislation whereby single homeless people are often turned away because they are not considered a priority. The Government has announced new funding to support local authorities with these duties.

This is an issue I take very seriously and I am of the view that in order for us to effectively tackle the issue of homelessness in Milton Keynes, it is essential that we all work together in a non-partisan manner. I will continue to robustly advocate with government ministers, the case for our local authority in future as I have done in the past.