

JERSEY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC BOARD



14 February 2024

The Chief Minister
Government of Jersey
19-21 Broad Street
St Helier
Jersey JE2 3RR

OPEN LETTER

Dear Chief Minister, Deputy Farnham

JERSEY HOMELESSNESS

We would like to take the opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Chief Minister.

This letter has been prepared in consultation with member organisations of Jersey's Homelessness Cluster and references to "we" and "our" in this letter refer to those member organisations. Representatives of the Government of Jersey who are members of the Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board have not provided input into or comment on the contents of this letter.

The Jersey Homelessness Strategic Board was established in 2019 formed by representatives of the private sector, state sector and third sector and was responsible for the a detailed review of homelessness in the Island and the publication of Jersey's first Homelessness Strategy in November 2020. A copy of the Strategy is attached for reference.

The purpose of this letter is to directly share with you a copy of a recent letter, dated 27 February 2024, that we have sent to the Minister for Housing and Communities. This letter is attached and we await his detailed response.

We are encouraged by your appointment as Chief Minister, not least because of the commitments you made leading up to the election in 2022. By way of example, at the hustings held on 15 June 2022 in St Ouen, you responded very positively to a question from the floor asking if you were committed to the full implementation of the Homelessness Strategy during the next Assembly. You'll recall you confirmed that you support all recommendations of the Homelessness Strategy, and you especially cited the first, fifth and

seventh recommended actions as priorities. You particularly made reference to the Strategy's recommendations for a statutory definition of homelessness (the first recommendation), a housing safety net for all (the fifth recommendation) and the need for more affordable homes (the seventh recommendation).

All of the recommended priority action plans in the Strategy are designed to work together to have the greatest impact on the goal of eradicating homelessness in Jersey, but inevitably some actions are needed first.

For example, the need for a homelessness definition (the first recommendation) is key to having any credible chance of evidencing the scale and nature of the issue so that we can plan how to prevent and address it (the second recommendation)

You will see on page 2 of our letter to the Minister for Housing and Communities, attached, it is recognised that a statutory definition may include additional provisions committing certain agencies to take action when someone presents themselves as homeless. We understand this, which could only be a good thing, but we do not see why this should hold up primary law drafting. Just like the new rented dwellings licensing scheme, regulation can follow to cover the obligations of agencies and government departments.

Given your commitment to a statutory definition, we would be pleased to hear from you as to your expectations as to when a statutory definition will be brought forward.

We would also welcome your comments as to the steps you will take to support the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy in full.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Simon Burgess'.

Simon Burgess
Independent Chair