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Homelessness and Rough Sleeping:

I believe everyone has a basic right to a decent, safe, secure and affordable home, but I am concerned this is being denied to too many people.

Despite committing to ending rough sleeping by the end of 2024, I am disappointed Ministers are far from reaching that target. Government data shows a 74% rise in rough sleeping in autumn 2022 compared to 2010, and the number of households in temporary accommodation has been increasing steadily since 2011, reaching around 104,500 households on 31 March 2023.

We need to address the root causes of homelessness to eliminate it, but the number of social homes has been declining and reforms to introduce stronger protections for renters in the private sector continue to be delayed. I am concerned people are also being hit by rising rents and increased costs of living.

I support calls for more rights and better protections for renters in the private sector. I want to see a Renters' Charter that includes an end to automatic evictions for rent arrears, longer notice periods for landlords and an end to section 21 'no fault' evictions, which allow landlords to evict tenants at short notice and without establishing fault on the part of the tenant.

It has been over four years since the Government first committed to banning section 21, but I do not believe it is acting with the urgency required. The Renters (Reform) Bill, which includes a ban on these evictions, was introduced in May but it has made no progress since. I worry that these delays are having a knock-on effect on homelessness, with over 70,000 households being threatened with homelessness from Section 21, since Ministers promised to end it.

I believe we also need to build more homes and put social and genuinely affordable housing at the heart of our plans. That is why I support calls to restore housebuilding targets and make social housing a priority once again. I want to see reforms to arcane purchasing rules to make it easier for councils to buy land for development, bringing in a new generation of council housebuilding.

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