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Homelessness and Young People:

I believe everyone has a basic right to a safe, secure and affordable home. It is the foundation of a good life, providing opportunities and freedoms. Yet too often they are treated as a speculative financial asset, out of reach and unaffordable for so many people, particularly young people.

According to Centrepoin, one in 52 young people are homeless or at risk in the UK, with 136,000 young people approaching their local authority for help in 2022/23.

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) strengthened the duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services – including a personal housing plan - to all those affected and eligible.

Yet Centrepoin research finds 35% of young people did not receive an assessment last year and only one in three received appropriate support to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

A government-commissioned review of the HRA found that a lack of affordable housing is the biggest challenge facing local authorities in fulfilling their duties under the Act. Meanwhile, a minority of local authorities with good local affordable housing supply reported the greatest success in achieving positive outcomes for homeless people or those at risk.

I support calls to deliver the biggest boost to affordable, social and council housing for a generation. 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. This forms part of a wider ambition to deliver 1.5 million homes over five years and make social housing a priority, ensuring a decent affordable home for everyone regardless of tenure.

Alongside this, I support a workable housing-led strategy to tackle homelessness, providing people with access to support before they arrive onto the streets, and ensure everyone has a meaningful route out of rough sleeping. This includes an updated role for supported housing.

The combination of secure housing and high-quality support can transform the lives of young people in our constituency and across the country.

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