

Former moderator likes the government's plan to spend more on the homeless

Campaigning minister welcomes plan to end homelessness

Very Rev Dr Russell Barr has welcomed the Scottish Government's announcement that it will commit £21 million to ending homelessness.

Dr Barr, who used his year as Moderator to highlight Scotland's homelessness problems, served on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group appointed last year to tackle the issue.



Rev Dr Russell Barr posed at the Fresh Start office just ahead of being installed as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on 21 May 2016 when they meet in Edinburgh.

The group's fourth and final report made 29 recommendations that together form a coordinated approach to preventing and

ending homelessness.

A co-founder of the charity Fresh Start, which helps formerly homeless people settle into their new housing, Dr Barr said the funding will be used on homelessness prevention as well as to rapidly rehouse people who have lost homes and to train front-line workers to give the best possible support.

“The most important thing is that we now have a plan that will see national and local government and the third sector all working together,” Dr Barr said. “In the past that sense of a coordinated effort has been missing.

“It has been a fascinating experience to be part of the working group and I hope our recommendations will help local and national government and the third sector, including churches, to pull together to ensure everyone in our country has a home.

“I am very confident if the recommendations are turned into action then they will lead to a dramatic change in the levels of homelessness in Scotland in the coming years.”

Housing Minister Kevin Stewart MSP announced the new funding package in the Scottish Parliament Wednesday, saying £21 million would be added to the £50 million ‘Ending Homelessness Together’ fund, created last year.

Mr Stewart said: “This funding will ensure we support people at times of crisis, while also taking an important step towards transforming the system and offering rapid routes back to settled housing.”

Jon Sparkes, chief executive of national homelessness charity Crisis and the chair of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, said:

“Everybody in Scotland deserves the dignity and stability of a safe and stable place to live, so we are very pleased the

Scottish government has accepted our recommendations to tackle homelessness across the country.”