

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to you as 32 of the country's leading homelessness charities to express our deep concern that the Government is not on track to meet its manifesto target of ending rough sleeping in England by 2024.

Everyone deserves a safe place to live and the support they need to keep it. No one should have to face the trauma of sleeping rough. When we wrote to you during your leadership campaign last summer, your campaign team responded with the following:

“Ensuring that everyone has a roof over their head is absolutely crucial to Rishi, and despite the economic circumstances, he is still committed to ending rough sleeping once and for all by 2024.”

We were encouraged by your commitment to the target of ending rough sleeping, even despite the economic circumstances. However, almost a year down the line, the data shows that we are going backwards in terms of meeting the goal.

The Annual Rough Sleeper Snapshot, which was conducted in late 2022, showed rough sleeping rose by 26% between 2021 and 2022, the biggest year on year percentage rise since 2015. Meanwhile, the London homelessness database CHAIN, the most detailed homelessness database in the country, showed that rough sleeping in the capital rose in every quarter of 2022/23 when compared to the previous year. As service providers, we are seeing these numbers play out on the ground, with more and more people needing our support.

We were pleased to see the Government finally table the Renters Reform Bill, as Section 21 'no fault' evictions have been one of the biggest causes of homelessness in recent years. We also appreciate that the Chancellor acknowledged the pressures facing third sector providers due to the cost of living crisis through announcing £100m of new funding in the recent Spring Budget.

But, despite these positives, we remain deeply concerned about the financial position of homelessness services across the country. Very few local authorities have the resources to uplift commissioned homelessness contracts in line with

inflation, meaning some homelessness providers are currently trying to manage annual shortfalls in the hundreds of thousands of pounds for commissioned services. Polling of the homelessness sector from the charity Homeless Link found that nearly half of the 356 organisations who responded agreed that the rising cost of living means their organisations risk service closures. Clearly the £100m the Chancellor outlined in the Spring Budget, which is due to be spread across the whole of the third sector, is simply not enough.

We are already hearing of examples of homelessness services scaling back their work to cut costs. If this continues and services have to close all together, not only will it mean people not having safe and trusted providers of support and accommodation to turn to, many of those already housed will face the trauma of returning to the streets. These are not just numbers, but people, let down by systems that should protect them. It could be a young person who's recently left the care system, a woman fleeing an abusive partner or someone who simply couldn't keep up with rising rents no matter how hard they tried.

Homeless Link's research found that 82% of people experiencing homelessness report they have a long-term illness, while 82% have a mental health diagnosis. The average age of death for someone experiencing homelessness is 45 for men and 43 for women. Meanwhile, as service providers, we have seen first-hand how high quality support and accommodation allows people to address the issues causing their homelessness, improving their health and wellbeing, helping them re-integrate into local communities and into employment.

Therefore, we sincerely hope that your commitment to the target of ending rough sleeping by 2024 was genuine and that you will take the necessary action to get there, including giving local authorities the resources to uplift commissioned homelessness contracts to reflect inflation so services like us can provide the best possible support to people who need it.

Yours sincerely,

Rick Henderson, CEO at **Homeless Link**

Kate Henderson, CEO at **National Housing Federation**

Emma Haddad, CEO at **St Mungo's**

Liz Rutherford, CEO at **Single Homeless Project**

Stephen Bell, CEO at **Changing Lives**

Amanda Dubarry, CEO at **Your Place**

Lorraine Mealings, CEO at **BCHA**

Mark Simms, CEO at **P3 Charity**

David Smith, CEO at **Oasis Community Housing**

Dr Jan Sheldon, CEO at **St Martins**

Richard Gammage, CEO at **Two Saints**

Mike Barrett, CEO at **Porchlight**

Malcom Putko, Operations Director at **Harbour Housing**

Jean Templeton, CEO at **St Basils**

Mark Grant, CEO at **Action Homeless**

Helen Bedser, CEO at **Julian House**

Steve Rundell, CEO at **Nomad Opening Doors**

Tim Fallon, CEO at **Spear London**

Amanda Croome, Head of Homelessness Services at **Caritas Salford**

Lawrence Santcross, CEO at **Transform Housing & Support**

James Boulton, CEO at **Wycombe Homeless Connection**

Andrew Brown, Chair of Trustees at **Harbour Place Grimsby**

Kate McSweeney, Deputy CEO at the **Booth Centre**

Jayni Gudka, CEO at **Unseen Tours**

Keely Dalfen, CEO at **The Brick**

Paul Roberts, CEO at **Aspire Oxford**

Tom O'Connor, CEO at **Providence Row**

Jools Ramsey-Palmer, CEO at **Ipswich Housing Action Group**

Wendy Taylor, Associate Director of Services at **Cranstoun**

Jodie Geddes, CEO at **AMAT UK**

Chris Keating, CEO at **Connection Support**

Jo Carter, CEO at **Glass Door Homeless Charity**