

# MAYOR OF LONDON

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Sent by Email: [sian.berry@london.gov.uk](mailto:sian.berry@london.gov.uk)

Dear Sian

## **Re: Escalating Youth Homelessness in London**

Thank you for writing to me on this important subject. I share your concerns about rising youth homelessness. Our own CHAIN data in London tells us that more than 500 young people aged 18-25 were seen sleeping rough in the capital between April and September last year, a rise of 6% compared to the same period last year.

I recently met with Phil Kerry to discuss this very issue. Phil has been a tireless advocate for young people experiencing homelessness in our city, and my Rough Sleeping Team works closely with him and his colleagues at New Horizon Youth Centre, including on the young people's workstream of the Mayor's Life Off the Streets group, to develop solutions to address the rising crisis of youth homelessness.

I recognise the unique challenges faced by young people on the streets. It is why in 2021 we launched London's first ever youth homelessness accommodation hub, providing personalised support to prepare young people to live independently. Thanks to the life-changing work of our charity partners, including New Horizon Youth Centre, the Mayor secured funding from the government to continue running a pan-London youth hub for a further three years, until 2025. To date, the Mayor's youth hubs have supported more than 200 young people into accommodation, helping rebuild their lives away from homelessness and rough sleeping.

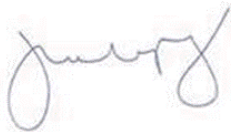
In December 2022, I was proud to announce London's portion of the national Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP), which is being delivered by the GLA and which will support hundreds of the most vulnerable Londoners into safe, supported housing. Crucially, the programme makes both capital and revenue funding available, and is designed specifically to address the unmet housing needs of young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, as well as adults sleeping rough long-term. Throughout 2023 GLA teams have been working with London local authorities, housing providers and specialist service providers such as NHYC to co-produce bids for this programme. An announcement of the allocations made through this programme is due shortly and will include funding for a significant number of specialist youth homelessness projects.

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The most recent figures for rough sleeping in London are deeply alarming. The cost-of-living crisis is putting more and more Londoners at risk of losing their homes and ending up with nowhere to go. We must continue to urge the Government to do much more to prevent the steady flow of new people coming onto the streets. In particular, the Mayor wants to see the Government put more robust measures in place to tackle the unprecedented cost-of-living-crisis, provide further assistance for those with drug and alcohol dependency and restore the social security safety net which helps stop people become trapped in a cycle of homelessness. Whilst I welcome the LHA unfreeze that was announced in the Autumn Statement this is for one year only, and I fear that this will not be enough to unlock as much PRS as is needed. The delay in passing the Renters Reform Bill continues to leave renters at risk from no-fault evictions. We will continue to urge the Government to ensure this important piece of legislation is strengthened via amendments, and is passed before the General Election is called, to protect renters from volatile private rents and stem the tide of rising homelessness.

We can't do this alone, and to end rough sleeping in our capital, particularly amid the cost-of-living crisis, I hope you will work with me and the Mayor to urge the Government to intervene to prevent the circumstances that lead to people sleeping rough, before thousands more are forced to face a winter on the streets.

Yours sincerely



Tom Copley  
Deputy Mayor, Housing and Residential Development