

MAYOR OF LONDON

Andrew Boff AM

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Dear Andrew,

London Assembly (Plenary) Meeting 8 February 2024 – Motions

Thank you for your letter about the motions agreed at the London Assembly (Plenary) meeting on 8 February 2024. My reply to motion 3.14 is below. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Motion 3.14 – Youth homelessness

It is unacceptable that so many young Londoners find themselves homeless. The ten per cent increase in the number of young people in London approaching their council as homeless or at risk of homelessness is deeply alarming. The latest figures from the City Hall-funded Combined Homelessness and Information Network present an even more concerning situation, with the number of 18–25-year-olds seen rough sleeping on our streets increasing by 43 per cent in the past year.

I am committed to doing everything in my power to help end rough sleeping in London for good by 2030. Since I became Mayor in 2016, City Hall's rough sleeping services have helped more than 16,500 rough sleepers to leave the streets, and more than 5,000 people exiting homelessness have moved into safe and secure homes. In addition, I recently secured £90m from the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme to tackle rough sleeping in the capital, and as part of that programme, City Hall has allocated substantial funding to deliver more than 90 new units of accommodation across seven schemes specifically for young people. Going forward, commissioning activities for City Hall's rough sleeping services will have an even greater focus on ensuring they are genuinely suitable for everyone who sleeps rough, and this will include better supporting young people, as well as women, minoritised ethnic groups such as the Roma community, and people who identify as LGBTQ+.

I agree with the Assembly that young people have for some time been overlooked in national homelessness and housing strategies. As noted in the motion, in 2021, I launched London's first Youth Hub, providing accommodation and support specifically for young people who are sleeping rough or at risk. The Youth Hub recognises the unique challenges faced by young people on the streets, and this innovative approach ensures vulnerable young people get a range of different types of support they need. This is life-changing and life-saving work, and since the Hub was first launched in Hounslow and with its subsequent move to Islington, it has helped 240 young people leave the streets for good. However, despite this progress, Government policy and inaction from the previous administration on the cost of living, housebuilding and protection from eviction not only drove more young people onto the streets but also made my core mission to end rough sleeping in the capital for good much harder. It is one of the many reasons I am delighted to be able to work so closely and collegiately with the new Government.

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I am also deeply concerned about the link between youth homelessness and care experience. The BBC recently reported that since 2018-19, there has been a 33 per cent rise in the number of care leaver households aged 18-20 assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness across the UK. For London, that means 390 care-experienced young people in this situation (11 per cent of all care leavers in the country).


I am determined to ensure that, through the Pan-London Care Leavers Compact and the national Care Leavers Covenant, we reduce these numbers and give care leavers the opportunity to thrive in our city.

As the Assembly states, the evidence for acting early and solving youth homelessness is clear. This is why I established the Life Off The Streets Executive Board with a specific sub-group on Ending Rough Sleeping for Young People. For the past two years, this group has been working hard to determine, drive and manage activities intended to make rough sleeping for anyone under 26 a rare, brief, and non-recurrent experience. This year, it will deliver the first-ever census of young people experiencing rough sleeping, with the aim of understanding the circumstances that led them to rough sleep for the first time and mirroring the ground-breaking women's rough sleeping censuses in 2022 and 2023, which I supported. Helping all people rough sleeping in London to rebuild their lives has been and will continue to be a top priority for me as Mayor.

I support the Assembly's call for the Government to adopt a cross-departmental strategy to end youth homelessness. When I launched my annual Rough Sleeping Winter Campaign last December, I called on the then Government to act urgently to assist those sleeping rough and halt the flow of people onto the streets. This included investing in new social and genuinely affordable housing, starting with an immediate £2.2bn boost in new supply and stopping refugees and asylum seekers being pushed into homelessness. I will elevate the issue of youth homelessness and ask that it receives proper attention in the new Government's early policymaking.

The stark reality is that the cost-of-living crisis has put unbearable strain on households across the country and in the capital, causing a conveyor belt of rough sleepers on our streets. Despite the huge amount of work being done in London, the legacy from previous national policy will take time to overturn. Whilst I am extremely proud of the huge progress City Hall has made so far in helping people sleeping rough off our streets, there is still a long way to go to end homelessness in the capital for good.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London