

Dear Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak,

As the country's leading housing and homelessness organisations, we are writing to you to highlight the importance of homelessness and rough sleeping in your respective campaigns to become the next leader of the Conservative Party and therefore our next Prime Minister.

In its 2019 manifesto, the Conservative Party made a commendable commitment to end rough sleeping in England by 2024. Since then, largely due to the Government's leadership during the pandemic response and the tireless work of homelessness organisations and local authorities, rough sleeping has declined for four years in a row.

Additionally, within the same manifesto, the Conservative Party also committed to abolishing 'no fault' Section 21 private sector evictions, one of the major causes of homelessness in recent years, but this has not yet been enshrined in law.

Now we are at a precipice. Inflation is rising at the fastest rate for forty years, while rents in the private rented sector have reached record levels and are still rising. We are already in the midst of a housing crisis, with a chronic lack of genuinely affordable housing. Therefore, without governmental intervention, we fear many more people could be forced into homelessness.

It would be a deep shame to undo the progress made since 2019, therefore, as a sector we are asking you to commit to the following:

1. Your government will continue to strive to meet the 2019 Conservative manifesto pledge, set out on page 30 of the document, to end rough sleeping in England by 2024.
2. You will ensure that the planned refresh of the rough sleeping strategy is published by the end of 2022 at the latest to provide a blueprint for meeting the 2024 target.
3. You will bring forward the full list of reforms outlined in the recent White Paper: 'A fairer private rented sector', as legislation when parliament returns in September, including fulfilling the manifesto pledge of ending 'no fault' Section 21 evictions.

It's easy to think of homelessness and rough sleeping in broad numbers, but these are real lives, stories of people let down by a system that should protect them. Everyone deserves a safe place to live and the support they need to keep it. Homelessness is not inevitable. With the right political will, and through working together, we can end it forever.

Yours sincerely,

Rick Henderson - CEO at Homeless Link,

Polly Neate - CEO at Shelter,

Rebecca Sycamore – Interim CEO at St Mungo's,

Mathew Downie, CEO at Crisis

Amanda Dubarry – CEO at Caritas Anchor House,

Stephen Bell – CEO at Changing Lives,

Jo Carter – Interim CEO at Glass Door,

Ellie McNeil – CEO at YMCA Together,

Steve Benson – CEO at Two Saints,

Dr Jan Sheldon – CEO at St Martin's Housing Trust,

Mark Grant – CEO at Action Homeless,

Malcom Putko – Operations Director at Harbour Housing,

Sarah Lister – Chief Operating Officer at Oasis Community Housing,

Steve Rundell – CEO at Nomad Opening Doors,

Chris Keating – CEO at Connection Support,

Paul Roberts – CEO at Aspire Oxford,

Kate McSweeney – Deputy CEO at the Booth Centre,

Rachel Marshall – Policy & Best Practice Manager at the Frontline Network,

Mark Simms, CEO at P3,

Charlotte Talbot, CEO at Emmaus

Ben Richardson - Director at Caring Bristol,

Jo Moore – CEO at Accommodation Concern,

Lawrence Santcross – CEO at Transform Housing & Support,

James Boulton – CEO at Wycombe Homeless Connection,

Joe Heeney – CEO at Resolve,

Julie Berti – CEO at Hope Housing Bournemouth,

Pauline Gilbert – Chair of Trustees at Bexhill & Rother Homelessness Unity Group,

Jayni Gudka – CEO at Unseen Tours,

Sue Shirt – Stonewater.