



Homelessness Manifesto 2024

FACT: Homelessness, including rough sleeping, has soared across the UK in recent years.

FACT: In Exeter, numbers of rough sleepers doubled in 2022 and remain high. There are now between 25 and 35 people sleeping on the streets of Exeter on a typical night.

FACT: We have seen almost a third more visits to our centre between April 2023 and March 2024, compared with the previous year.

FACT: Rough sleeping is the miniscule tip of a gigantic UK homelessness iceberg. Official statistics place the number of rough sleepers in England at around 4,000, but over 110,000 homeless households are living in temporary housing, with an unknown number of people sleeping on friends' sofas, in cars, or in unoccupied buildings.

The general election gives all political parties the opportunity to commit unequivocally to real change.



We call on all parties to commit to the following:

PLEDGE

Commit to a long-term cross-party strategy to address the housing crisis

The housing crisis cannot be fixed in one five-year term. To address the chronic under-supply of homes, which has in turn driven up rental costs beyond affordability and fuelled homelessness, will take decades. It therefore needs a consistent and focused cross-party effort lasting several governments.

PLEDGE

Invest heavily in new social housing, and in bringing empty homes back into use

Much more genuinely affordable social housing is needed to bring rent price inflation under control and ensure those on low incomes can afford to rent a home.

Over 261,000 homes sit empty long-term in England alone. A concerted effort is needed to bring these empty homes back into use - much cheaper, quicker and with less environmental impact than new builds.

PLEDGE

Ensure Local Housing Allowance keeps pace with actual rental costs

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the maximum Housing Benefit that will be paid to a household living in private rental accommodation. LHA was originally fixed at a level which would enable people reliant on it to rent the cheapest 30% of homes for rent. However, successive governments have usually failed to increase LHA in line with soaring rents, resulting in more people becoming homeless. A commitment to maintain LHA at the 30 percentile level will prevent this.



PLEDGE

Ensure timely and comprehensive support to prevent people from becoming homeless

Many people lack life skills that can prevent homelessness, such as budgeting, looking after a home, navigating the complex benefits system, or understanding their rights and responsibilities as a tenant. Factors such as learning difficulties or mental health problems only make things harder, so it's not surprising that many people end up losing their homes if they don't get basic support.

Whilst lack of housing is a major issue, there is also a direct link between successive reductions in housing support over time and spiralling homelessness.

PLEDGE

Ensure access to tailored, prompt mental health care and addiction recovery services


Homelessness is a traumatic experience that can often result in mental ill-health or substance misuse as people struggle to cope with such conditions. Addiction or mental illness in turn can make recovery from homelessness much harder, creating a vicious circle.

Mental health and addiction recovery services have become woefully inadequate due to chronic underfunding, contributing directly to increased homelessness while making it much harder for those without a home to achieve settled accommodation.

PLEDGE

Guarantee accommodation for prisoners on release, with support to prevent re-offending

Prisoners are often released onto the streets homeless and without meaningful support to help them. This makes it much harder for them to stay away from crime, and the resulting cost to the public purse of repeat offending is eye-watering. Basic provision of accommodation and intensive, responsive support on release not only prevents homelessness, but reduces crime and delivers huge savings to the taxpayer.



About St Petrock's

St Petrock's is Exeter's local homelessness charity. Supported by the local community, we provide a range of support for rough sleepers including survival gear, such as clothing and sleeping bags, as well as rucksacks and shoes. We provide showers, toilets and laundry facilities and our team walks around five miles on weekdays delivering breakfasts and cooked lunches to rough sleepers in and around the city centre.

We work closely with a variety of other services to ensure our clients can access specialist support as needed, and ultimately can find suitable accommodation as soon as possible, including in our own houses and flats.

We rely on the generous support of the local community in Exeter. To donate or to sign up for our newsletter, please visit our website www.stpetrocks.org.uk.

Alternatively scan this QR code with your mobile phone.
Thank you so much, we really appreciate your support.



St Petrock's is Exeter's local homelessness charity. Supported by the local community, we stand with and for people experiencing homelessness, and will not give up until everyone in the Exeter area can enjoy a place called home.

Registered Charity Number: 1090155

Company Number: 04312156

www.stpetrocks.org.uk

