



150 YEARS OF HELPING HOMELESS PEOPLE: 1860-2010

**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Government cuts will make 82,000 homeless in London**

The government's cuts to housing benefit will result in an estimated 82,000 evictions and lead to a homelessness crisis in London, according to the charity Providence Row.

This figure is in addition to the 2,221 people that already sleep rough on London's streets. "There is already a dire housing situation in London with sky-high rents and these cuts will mean that those already struggling will face eviction," said Jo Ansell, chief executive of the charity.

As part of the cuts announced today in the government's spending review, the coalition has increased social housing rents to 80% of the market rate. This is in addition to their previous announcement to cap the Local Housing Allowance at 30% of all private rentals (down from 50%), making 70% of all of London's accommodation unaffordable to the capital's poorest – including those on minimum wage, pensioners, carers and those with long term illnesses.

This means tenants will be required to pay more to meet the shortfall between their income and actual rent. In the case of Local Housing Allowance if a tenant falls into arrears, they face eviction and will not be eligible for re-housing help from the Local Housing Authority.

Many of the people that fall into these categories are already in vulnerable situations. Jo Ansell said "We are deeply concerned that people with mental health problems and addictions will simply be unable to cope with these changes and will end up living on the streets, only to become more isolated."

Grant Shapps, Minister for Housing, has suggested moving to the outskirts of London is the answer but although accommodation is cheaper away from central London this could incur considerable travel costs and move people further away from paid work. It will also cut important community ties for those households forced to move.

The future looks bleak for those unable to afford their rent. Jo Ansell said, "The best case scenario for many of these disadvantaged people will be isolation from their families, friends and communities. The worst case scenario will be life on the streets."

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**Notes to editors**

- Estimate of 82,000 evictions from London Councils.
- Evictions will take place from October 2011 when the cuts take effect.
- 2,221 sleeping rough in London according to Broadway Chain *Street to Home* Quarterly Report April – June 2010.

- Providence Row's services include hot breakfasts, showers, advice on housing and benefits as well as reconnection to people's local area or home country.
- To tackle the causes of homelessness it helps people with mental health issues and addictions as well as hosting a needle exchange; the Meaningful Occupation department provides activities such as an in house volunteering programme and digital media classes.

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