



150 YEARS OF HELPING HOMELESS PEOPLE: 1860-2010

## **PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Freezing temperatures and spending cuts will hit those at rock bottom, warns charity**

Government spending cuts will hit homeless charities this winter, making it more difficult for them to help the most vulnerable. The cuts kick in as the UK is in the grip of arctic conditions and hundreds of homeless men and women are living rough on the streets of London.

London charity Providence Row has been hit by a 40% cut in the funding which it uses to provide immediate relief to rough sleepers as well as helping them back into the community. From January, the charity will be forced to restructure its services and make redundancies to make savings.

Jo Ansell, chief executive of the charity, said 'We are seriously concerned about people being homeless in these temperatures. Severe weather shelters are opened by local authorities only when the temperature hits zero but when it's 2 degrees outside it can feel like minus 4 with the wind. We do everything we can to help people in these conditions but this relief costs money and we cannot provide it without funding.'

In the comprehensive spending review the government relaxed protection of the £100m Homelessness Grant which helps to fund homelessness charities. The cut comes into force as Christmas services for homeless people close and the charity sees a surge in numbers.

Homelessness is a real problem in the capital: last year 3,763 people slept rough on its streets. Some sleep in car parks, by vents for warmth or near tube stations for shelter. Bridges and stairwells are popular as they provide a refuge from the elements. The unique interactive project *150 Voices* has been commissioned by the charity to give homeless people a voice and a chance to tell their stories. The website is regularly updated with new stories and the project will culminate in an exhibition next April. To watch these films go to [www.150voices.com](http://www.150voices.com).

#### **Contact**

Dipika Kulkarni, communications and events officer  
Direct line: 020 7422 6763  
Mobile: 07870 358 739

#### **Notes to editors**

- Last year 3,763 people slept rough on London's streets (according to CHAIN 'Street to Home' Annual Report 2009-2010).

- Providence Row will be available for interview in the run up to Christmas and January. Call 07870 358 739 to arrange a time.
- 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.
- Go to [www.150voices.com](http://www.150voices.com) to view the project and the stories of homeless people. Single videos in HD are available on request.
- 150 Voices is kindly supported by Reed Smith LLP and Londonewcastle Project Space.