

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP



25 November 2021

Dear Mr Gove and Mr Sharma

As the leading charities and organisations tackling homelessness in this country, we are seeing what inaction on climate change has cost us in our frontline work. Just this summer we have seen people who are rough sleeping have their tents washed away in flash floods. Families in inadequate emergency housing are finding it impossible to stay cool in summer heat waves and who are now heading into a Winter where they cannot afford to keep warm due to the inflated costs of fossil fuel heating. Just as is the case around the world, it is the poorest that are also being hit hardest by the climate emergency. Those in the Global South have faced this reality for decades and showed what it would mean for us, but we did not act in time.



We know we need to do what we can now. We call on the Government to urgently review whether current rough sleeping emergency weather measures are fit for purpose in our new reality of extreme weather. In addition, just as in Glasgow you heard why the poorest who did not cause this problem must not bare the financial burden of fixing it, we must take the same approach in our own country. Instead we should take this as an opportunity to build back better. The Future Homes Standard will be in place by 2025, but right now developers are delivering homes that do not meet the standards that are coming, so buyers face an extra £20k bill to retrofit their home despite it being far cheaper to install these standards in a new build. Social housing providers are financially stretched to the very limit and face a dark challenge between building the homes we need and ensuring those home are fit for the future. We will not be ready for 2025 if we go from a standing start.

We believe you can show the way forward in a social equitable approach of funding a new era of climate resilient and carbon negative housing offered at a social rent piloted to reduce costs and show how a Net Zero transition could help the most vulnerable reduce bills and produce better places to live.

We have two crises that need dealing with – a net loss of social housing each year and the ambitious need to meet our net zero commitments. We believe you can come together as two departments to end both these crises. A new era of net zero social housing would make achieving our climate goals and level up the country possible. We urge you to take on this approach.

Yours sincerely

Rick Henderson, CEO, Homeless Link

Polly Neate, Chief Executive, Shelter

Jon Sparkes, Chief Executive, Crisis