

Resolution Date: 13th February 2018

Resolution Title: Homelessness (#RoyalSleepover)

This branch notes the rise in numbers of people reported as sleeping rough – up 15% in the last year alone. These figures represent the impact of austerity, cuts to welfare and a broken housing system.

While demand for services has massively increased, funding has been squeezed.

We welcome the recent high court ruling that homelessness agencies acted in an unlawful manner in cooperating with the immigration authorities, and note that this vindicates the branch campaign in defence of EU migrant rough sleepers.

This is one of a series of cases where major homelessness agencies have failed to speak in defence of homeless people because of management's focus on not upsetting funders and politicians. As these organisations become increasingly dependent on local and national government contracts, they are either unable or unwilling to take action, and Unite now has to take on this responsibility.

We condemn moves by some local authorities to criminalise rough sleeping. Regrettably, some Labour local authorities have taken such steps, for example, Bristol Council using the 1824 Vagrancy Act to arrest people sleeping rough.

We condemn the call by Simon Dudley, leader of The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, for the police to prosecute rough sleepers at the time of the royal wedding. We commit to support protests against this council which has starved local homelessness services of resources and failed to build social housing.