



Resolution Date: 14th March 2017
Resolution Title: Homelessness Agencies and Rough Sleeper Immigration Raids

This branch notes a recent report by 'Corporate Watch' sets out evidence that homelessness agencies operating outreach services have been complicit in forced deportations of rough sleepers resulting in some of London's most vulnerable people "disappearing into a nightmare of indefinite detention and deportation".

The government has adopted a policy of creating a "hostile environment" for "illegal immigrants", which can in practice mean harassing and victimising a particularly vulnerable group. Immigrants are not responsible for the rise in homelessness or overstretched public services, the responsibility lies with those who promote austerity and privatisation.

Outreach services play a vital role which must be preserved. It is essential to this function that there is no blurring of the distinction between outreach workers and immigration enforcement officers. Part of the value of outreach is to reach 'hard to reach' clients; any undermining of trust will damage that work. The Corporate Watch report which received widespread coverage in The Guardian and elsewhere, calls on the public to stop giving donations to organisations that are complicit in forced deportation. It is clearly urgent that management of St Mungos and other agencies give a clear statement on the issue following the internal policy review that they have announced.

This branch agrees to:

- Call on homelessness agencies to give a clear commitment to client confidentiality. Information must not be passed to immigration agencies without express permission from the client.
- Support any worker who refuses to pass information on to agencies on these grounds.
- Call on the GLA and local authorities to require that all outreach services adhere to high professional standards and commit to client confidentiality.
- Call on local authorities to ensure services are adequately funded that the 'payment by results' funding regime is terminated. This creates damaging financial uncertainty and introduces perverse incentives which can distort services delivery.
- Campaign against the policy of creating a 'hostile environment' for immigrants which, from May 2016, means European immigrants who spend just one night on the street can be arrested for deportation.
- Campaign with Unite nationally and with migrant groups.

The motion will be passed on to the Regional Industrial Sector Committee.
