

# GENERAL ELECTION 2024 PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES BRIEFING

WHAT OUR RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES  
NEED FROM THE NEXT GOVERNMENT



## About Riverside

Riverside is a major charitable provider of social and affordable housing across England and Scotland, with more than 75,000 homes in 175 different local authorities. We are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. Our vision is to transform the lives of the 140,000+ people we house and revitalise the neighbourhoods in which they live.

We are also one of the biggest providers of care & support services across the country. Last year we supported 13,140 people either at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Our supported housing services cover: mental health, homelessness, youth services, extra care for older people, and veterans supported housing.

**As we head towards the general election, we are calling on candidates across all parties to support us in helping to tackle the housing crisis.**

## How can you help?

1. Read our key asks.
2. Meet with us to discuss our key asks (this can be virtual, at one of our offices or at one of our schemes)
3. Help us promote our key asks by advocating for them within your party.

## How can we help you?

1. We can brief you on housing, welfare or supported housing policy.
2. We can set up a visit to any scheme, development or service that's local to your constituency.
3. We can help with any casework regarding our residents that you might pick up while canvassing.

 **Riverside**

*Transforming lives*

*Revitalising neighbourhoods*

# Our key asks for our residents and communities

## Ask 1 – Long Term Plan for Housing

**A long-term plan to end the housing crisis, which prioritises investment to build more affordable homes and improve existing housing, so everyone has the chance to live in a good quality and secure home.**

- Make social housing a top priority for public investment by funding a programme to build 90,000 new affordable homes per year for ten years.
- Help housing associations and local authorities to secure private investment to outmatch Government funds, through introducing a guaranteed ‘rent lock’ – a fair ten-year rent settlement which builds on current arrangements.
- Reform the planning system to ensure developer contributions always deliver affordable housing and essential infrastructure first, based on ambitious local authority housing targets that link the number of homes needed locally to economic growth plans.
- Accelerate building safety improvements and the decarbonisation of existing social housing, by expanding and extending existing Government funding pots (such as the Building Safety Fund and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund), setting clear and comprehensive standards, and relaxing regulation to enable providers to invest more of their own funds into improving existing homes.

## Ask 2 – Homelessness Prevention

**A focus on homelessness prevention that provides a range of options, so no-one finds themselves without a roof over their head.**

- Restore guaranteed local revenue funding for services which tackle the revolving door of homelessness, ‘spending to save’ by reducing the extortionate cost of temporary accommodation. Riverside’s homelessness prevention service Sefton Families will save Sefton Council £1.6m in temporary accommodation costs over four years.
- Provide a stable funding environment which enables local authorities to commission a range of high quality, long-term services to meet a variety of needs. This would include services such as Housing First, floating support, and traditional accommodation based supported housing.
- End veteran homelessness, by continuing Government funding for housing support (Op FORTITUDE), adopting the Forces in Mind Trust’s Roadmap to End Veterans Homelessness.



## Ask 3 – Fairer Welfare System

### Welfare Reform that supports a fairer and safer benefits system that provides more choice for everyone.

- End the five-week wait for new Universal Credit claims, by introducing a guaranteed interim payment two weeks after a claim is made. Our own data shows that the current system is causing hardship, pushing many tenants into rent arrears for the first time and leading to escalating debt.
- Scrap the “overall benefit cap”, which limits the total amount a household can claim, despite their entitlement to individual benefits. For affected households, this reduces the benefit available to meet their rent, with a particularly severe impact on larger households with children. A typical household with three children in London is left with a maximum of around £100 per week to meet their rent.
- Give Universal Credit claimants more choice: to split payments between individuals in a household, and opt to have the housing element paid directly to their landlord. At the moment, only in exceptional circumstances can payments be divided between two members of the household. Direct payments to landlords can only be made where there is evidence that the tenant will struggle to pay the rent - by which time it may be too late.



Some of these proposals do not require significant funding, and could be implemented quickly by an incoming Government through a package of reforms. Others will require major short-term investment, but could lead to significant savings in the long-term.

# The role of Housing Associations

## A long-term plan for housing can fix the housing crisis

**8.5 million people** in England can't access the housing they need including **two million children** in England living in **overcrowded, unaffordable or unsuitable homes**.

**£1,343** is the average price a family in an energy inefficient social home (EPC D-G) will spend a year on **heating bills**.

The government has paid the social housing sector **only £214m** to remediate buildings with safety concerns, whilst it has paid the private sector **more than £2bn**.

**If we don't act**, by 2030 every school in England will have an **average seven children** who are homeless and living in temporary accommodation, and **85** who are living in overcrowded homes.

Just one year of building **90,000** social homes would generate net economic benefits of more than **£51bn** over 30 years, including a net profit to the taxpayer of nearly **£12bn**.

## Providing affordable homes and supporting communities

**Housing associations** provide quality affordable homes for **six million people**.

For every **£1 of government investment** in building new homes, housing associations can lever in up to **£6 of private capital**.

In 2010 the amount of **grant available** for new social housing **reduced by 63%**.

In the decade to 2020, housing associations built nearly **half a million new homes**, **26%** of the total built.





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