

The letter in full

Sir,

The mayoral election is just six weeks away. We, charities and Church groups operating in London, call upon the candidates to reaffirm their support for the poorest and most vulnerable in our capital.

London is already one of the areas hardest hit by changes to the social security system, with families and individuals facing significant personal challenges. Whilst the next Mayor will not have the power to stop these changes, he or she will have both the power and the responsibility to tackle their effects. Developing a housing strategy to prevent families from losing their homes as a result of benefit changes should be a matter of priority, and support must be put in place for those who are forced to move away from their communities.

Although there are clear financial pressures on London's transport system which are affecting all users, it is imperative that in this area too, the most vulnerable are not overlooked. Disability access should remain at the forefront of the transport strategy, it is not simply an indulgence for good economic times. The next Mayor should also seek innovative ways to support affordable access to transport for unemployed Londoners and those returning to work, recognising the benefits that this will bring, not only for individuals but for society more broadly.

We trust that in the final stages of their campaigns, the candidates will take serious account of these issues and focus upon the ever increasing number of vulnerable people in the city.

Yours sincerely,

Helen O'Brien, Chief Executive, Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN)

Rosie Bairwal, National Coordinator, Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ)

Davina Bolt, Director of Social Justice, Diocese of Brentwood

Mick Clarke, Chief Executive, The Passage

John Coleby, Director, St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre

Cathy Corcoran, Chief Executive, Cardinal Hume Centre

Sr. Lynda Dearlove, Director, Women@thewell

Keith Fernet, Director, Anchor House

Alison Gelder, Director, Housing Justice

Dr. Rosemary Keenan, Chief Executive, Catholic Children's Society (Westminster)

Vincent Manning, Chairperson, Catholics for AIDS Prevention and Support

Christine Newman, President, National Board of Catholic Women

Fr Michael Scanlon, Chair, Diocese of Southwark Justice and Peace Commission

Sr. Maureen Tinkler, Director, Vincentians in Partnership

Mike Worthington, President, St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)