

Secretary of State for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities
The Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

By email only

Re: Bristol's One City response to the cost of living

Dear Secretary of State,

On behalf of Bristol's organisations and partners undersigned, we are writing to **invite you to visit Bristol**, to see how our partnership approach is responding to cost of living challenges and explore how government can partner with us.

As representatives and leaders in the city, we are concerned about the impact that rising costs are having on citizens, businesses, charities, organisations and institutions. We are particularly concerned about how households and communities who are already marginalised and experience poverty and economic exclusion will endure this winter.

- Between April-June 2021 and April-June 2022, [the number of households in Temporary Accommodation in Bristol](#) rose by 39.3%.
- Between April 2022 and August 2022, applications to our Local Crisis Prevention Fund rose by 168% (Source: Bristol City Council).
- According to [Business West's Quarterly Economic Survey](#) (Q2, 2022) 23% of businesses were considering scaling down or closing due to the cost of living increase.

Beyond these immediate challenges there are long-term costs, both human and financial.

Just as we did in response to the pandemic, we have come together through a One City Approach –bringing together public, private, voluntary and third sector partners aimed at making the city a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable place - to assess the impacts of the cost of living crisis and develop a plan of action for supporting communities most at risk over the winter.

A network of communities and organisations have been meeting since this Spring to ensure we have a plan in place to address the cost of living crisis.

We recently [published our plan](#). It sets out how we are working together as a city to deliver:

- A network of **Welcoming Spaces**: Accessible public venues will be open across Bristol so that people can gather to meet others, join community activity, and access basic necessities if they need them.
- A network of **Community Hubs**: Funding has been available to third sector organisations to offer support within their local neighbourhoods.
- Ensuring there is co-ordinated **advice, emotional wellbeing and mental health support available to those who need it**.
- Coordination of up to 100 dedicated **cost of living volunteers**: who will be professionally trained to help people better understand their finances and ways of getting further support.
- **A city-wide campaign** to promote advice, information, and support, including a [cost of living support website](#).

The collective action we are taking now will help prevent and mitigate against isolation, serious mental ill-health incidents and impact to our local economy.

We need a better-quality relationship with government officials if we are going to be successful in meeting this challenge and take the opportunities that lie beyond it. We look forward to hosting you and sharing more details about our work.

Yours sincerely,



Marvin Rees
Mayor of Bristol

Undersigned by:

Richard Bonner, **Chair, West of England Local Enterprise Partnership**
Nigel Costley, **South West Regional Secretary, TUC**
Mark Runacres, **Superintendent, Avon and Somerset Constabulary**
Richard Harris, **Deputy Principal and Chief, City of Bristol College**
Vivienne Faull, **The Right Rev. Bishop of Bristol, Member of the Lords Spiritual**
Professor Evelyn Welch, **Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Bristol**
Louise Woods and Alessandra Hodgson, **Acting Co-Directors, Changes Bristol**
Dominic Ellison, **Chief Executive Officer, West of England Centre for Inclusive Living (WECIL)**
Layla Ismail, **Development Manager, Refugee Women of Bristol**
Ped Asgarian, **Director, Feeding Bristol**
Karen Bowers, **CEO, Bristol Law Centre**
Kirsten Kerr, **Citizens Advice Bureau Bristol**
Sado Jirde, **Black South West Network**