

Please accept the following letter as a written submission and added to the council agenda in relation to the CPSC report, item number 4.2 Report Back: Basic Needs and Pathway Options Feasibility of Contract Extension - 519Pursuit umbrella Relief Programs Inc.

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For decades I have been helping the poor in the core of London through The Society of St. Vincent de Paul. About five years ago, it became apparent that there had been a marked increase in the number of people we were not able to help effectively as they were homeless and living rough on the streets. Seeing people hungry and trying to shelter in doorways, under bridges and in flimsy tents by the river even on the coldest and wettest of nights is simply unacceptable in any civilized society.

At that time, 519Pursuit was being organized and this provided an opportunity to actually do something positive to help those in such desperate need. I quickly found out through the personal interaction with the homeless that was provided by 519, that those living on the street are not there because they want to be there. Every street person has his or her personal story recounting how they have ended up homeless. Sometimes they could be faulted for having made bad choices that have led to addiction, health problems or family estrangement, but never have I encountered any street person who "deserves" to be where they are. All need help to acquire the essentials to live-food, clothing, shelter and a degree of security. The quality of any society should be judged on how it treats people on its margins.

Consequently, I urge London City Council to use public money to fund the social services needed that will ensure that those most in need in this city can live safely and have the essentials of life. 519Pursuit provides a particularly effective way of helping those on the fringes.

Best regards.....Gerry McKeon (Volunteer with 519Pursuit)