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Young People and Homelessness:

I believe everyone has a basic right to a decent, safe and secure home, because housing is much more than an investment or a commodity. It is where we grow up and grow old. Having a safe and secure home shapes the opportunities and the freedoms we have.

According to Centrepoin, the main cause of homelessness among young people aged 16 to 24 is family breakdown, which accounted for 46% of youth homelessness in 2021-22. The Government needs to act early to prevent children and young people from falling through the cracks, but I am concerned support for young people has been stretched too thin.

I worry that the decline of vital public services is leading to worse outcomes. We need to help young people into education, employment and training, deliver better health outcomes and ensure they are living in safe, quality homes. Economic growth is only possible when children and young people are fully nurtured and have the skills and confidence they need to get on.

We need to shift services toward a 'prevention first' approach, weighted towards early intervention, because catching problems before they get bigger gives young people the best chance of a successful future, is better for the public purse and ultimately saves lives. I am committed to championing youth and community services to support young people, open opportunity for them and transform mental health support.

Safe and sustainable housing is the first crucial step to breaking the cycle of homelessness, but in a survey of accommodation providers, Homeless Link found that around 40% of those being accommodated are unable to move on because of a lack of affordable housing. This is creating blockages, which, if released, could substantially increase available bedspaces for those in need.

That is why I support calls for a workable housing-led strategy to tackle homelessness. We need to put genuinely affordable housing, and in particular social housing, at the heart of plans to increase housing supply, ensuring a safe, warm and secure home for everyone. I believe a combination of secure housing and high-quality support can transform lives, helping people improve life chances.

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