



U.K.C.R.P



**The UK Common Rights Project** insists that the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society should have the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation. After all, that is how a society is judged. The UK Common Rights Project upholds the rights of the most vulnerable people to be protected and to have access to the things needed for life. We believe it is fundamentally wrong that any person in the UK – whatever their situation – should be prevented from accessing these basic rights. And we are not alone in this belief. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, created following the global conflict of the Second World II, set out the fundamental rights of all humanity. The UK is a signatory.



[commonrights.org.uk](https://commonrights.org.uk)



# III



FOR THE FILM, SEE: [COMMONRIGHTS.ORG.UK](http://COMMONRIGHTS.ORG.UK)



**FOOD:** Many homeless people show the symptoms of malnutrition, whose long-term consequences include an increased risk of coronary heart disease and cancer, and worsening of diabetes, epilepsy and mental health conditions. Nearly three-quarters of homeless young people eat only two meals a day and a mere two per cent eat the recommended five portions of fruit and veg – in fact, over a third eat none at all. Day centres and hostels often provide food that is high in fat and salt, and many families in temporary accommodation, where cooking facilities are often inadequate, eat nutritionally poor food.





FOR THE FILM, SEE: [COMMONRIGHTS.ORG.UK](http://COMMONRIGHTS.ORG.UK)





**SANITATION:** Over the last decade, the number of public lavatories almost halved. Life became more difficult for homeless people, the elderly and disabled, visitors – even the police. The “bladder leash” traps elderly people at home; Blue Badge Guides found that tourists drank less to avoid having to find loos; and police in a force outside London were told not to drink so they wouldn’t have to keep returning to base. The lack of access to sanitation is a problem for everyone, not just homeless people, but they suffer disproportionately. Women develop cystitis because they can’t find loos even if they can find water; stomach upsets and periods are humiliating; and crapping in the street, whatever your gender, leaves you liable to arrest.



[commonrights.org.uk](https://commonrights.org.uk)



FOR THE FILM, SEE: [COMMONRIGHTS.ORG.UK](http://COMMONRIGHTS.ORG.UK)



**WATER:** A drinking fountain campaign was one of Boris Johnson's initiatives when he came to power in 2008, but since then, little progress has been made. Oxford Street attracts 200 million visitors annually, but has no fountain; there is currently only one per 100, 000 Londoners, and some of those are turned off in winter to avoid frozen pipes. Victorian philanthropists provided fountains for people and cattle, but they are now largely abandoned and decommissioned – Londoners today need what 19th century cattle had. The costs are not huge: basic drinking fountains cost under £200, and even contamination and vandal-proof models are around £1,000. Without clean water, you can develop kidney disease and dehydration, which can lead to lethargy, headaches, confusion, dizziness and fits. People whose alcohol consumption is already causing dehydration are doubly disadvantaged.



[commonrights.org.uk](https://commonrights.org.uk)





UK COMMON RIGHTS PROJECT

UKCRR



FOR THE FILM, SEE: [COMMONRIGHTS.ORG.UK](http://COMMONRIGHTS.ORG.UK)



**SHELTER:** There were 55,300 households in temporary accommodation in March 2013, including 4,500 in B&Bs. Temporary accommodation can mean a single room with no cooking facilities where you can't even sterilise your baby's bottle or where your children will be disproportionately affected by mental health problems. The latest figures show that 6,437 people were seen rough sleeping in London in 2012–13, but it is estimated that at least 500,000 people are insecurely housed, 'sofa surfing' with friends or squatting in non-residential properties, the so-called "hidden homeless". Three-quarters of squatters have asked their local council for help but are not eligible. Homeless numbers are growing at the same time as available bed spaces are declining. Whatever form homelessness takes, it takes a heavy toll on the mental and physical health of homeless people.



[commonrights.org.uk](http://commonrights.org.uk)