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## JOINT COMMUNITY STATEMENT

Issued Tuesday, April 21, 2026 • London, Ontario

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# London's Community Speaks: Advocacy Works. The Bridge Is Being Built. The Work Continues.

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*On Monday, April 13, London's Community and Protective Services Committee supported a motion to provide interim bridge funding to 519Pursuit and Ark Aid Street Mission — a direct result of community advocacy, sector solidarity, and a city that refused to let its most vulnerable residents fall through the gap. This statement is issued Thursday, April 16, as that motion moves toward a final Council vote on April 28.*

## THE STORY THAT CHANGED THE ROOM

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On Monday April 13, London's Community and Protective Services (CAPS) Committee heard from Michelle Boissonneault — a 519Pursuit employee and four years sober — who once lay on a heat grate at the corner of Dundas and Wellington, invisible to a city that stepped around her.

*"At the worst time of my life, I was sleeping on a heat grate at the corner of Dundas and Wellington. I'd been there so long, living in my own filth. I had flesh eating viruses and I just wanted to die. I'd become part of the sidewalk."*

— Michelle Boissonneault, 519Pursuit Employee and Delegate, Monday April 13, 2026

And then she told the Committee what changed everything.

*"The friendship and the connection of 519Pursuit started to change the narrative in my head. And I knew that I needed to do more with my life."*

— Michelle Boissonneault

Michelle's testimony left no one in that room uncertain about what is at stake when outreach services are threatened. It is the most powerful case for this work that any policy document, data set, or advocacy letter could ever make.

## WHAT HAPPENED LAST MONDAY

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On April 1, federal UHEI funding expired, threatening outreach delivered by 519Pursuit and drop-in services at Ark Aid Street Mission, among others. Fifty overnight spaces closed. On that same day, the federal government announced a \$125 million national renewal of UHEI — confirming these services are essential and that sustained investment is coming. A new London-specific agreement must be negotiated, and services needed a bridge in the interim.

On Monday, April 13, the CAPS Committee met to consider exactly that. In response to sustained community advocacy, Mayor Josh Morgan and Ward 7 Councillor Corrine Rahman brought forward a motion for interim bridge funding. The Committee supported it. As of this Thursday, April 16, that motion proceeds to full City Council for a final vote on April 28.

*“The federal government is coming forward with a renewal of \$125 million, and I commend them for that. But we’ve got to provide some sort of stability in the interim so that the agencies can continue to operate while we see if we can apply that funding.”*

— Mayor Josh Morgan, CAPS Committee, Monday April 13, 2026

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## THE MOTION: A BRIDGE, NOT A RETREAT

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The motion draws up to \$350,000 from the City’s social service reserve fund — \$60,000/month to Ark Aid Street Mission and \$25,000/month to 519Pursuit — covering April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027. Funds would be retroactively reimbursed to the City once UHEI or other provincial or federal funding is received. The motion supports transitional and supportive housing, shelter transformation, and case management.

Councillor Anna Hopkins strengthened the motion with an amendment directing Civic Administration to re-engage with all other previously UHEI-funded agencies about service opportunities — ensuring the bridge extends across the whole sector, not just two organizations.

*“It’s really important that we hear about the importance of outreach in our community. What you have to offer and what you have done.”*

— Councillor Anna Hopkins, CAPS Committee, Monday April 13, 2026

*“This is not just about maintaining a program. This is about maintaining stability in our community. It is about preventing further strain on systems that are already at capacity.”*

— Allison DeBlair, Executive Director, 519Pursuit

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## THE MOTION WAS SUPPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON MONDAY, APRIL 13.

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*Final vote before full City Council: Monday, April 28, 2026.*

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## WHAT THIS MEANS — AND WHAT COMES NEXT

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Monday’s Committee decision is a meaningful step forward. As we issue this statement on Thursday, April 16, the motion is moving toward a final Council vote on April 28. Our organizations are committed to the following:

- **Attending full City Council on April 28** to support the final approval of this motion
- **Engaging proactively with the federal UHEI application process** as soon as the new agreement framework becomes available
- **Continuing to call on the Province of Ontario** to match the federal UHEI investment — Ontario remains one of only two provinces in Canada not to have done so in the previous funding cycle
- **Maintaining sector-wide coordination** to ensure that the bridge reaches all previously UHEI-funded organizations
- **Working collaboratively** to deliver adaptive, responsive, life-saving services to people living unsheltered and unhoused in our community

The Province’s participation is the **critical missing piece**. The federal government has renewed its commitment. The City of London is building the bridge. Ontario has an opportunity — and an obligation — to match and exponentially expand the impact of this investment in favour of Londoners on the path to health, recovery, housing stability, and home.

## OUR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT

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The organizations signing this statement are united in their commitment to a coordinated, compassionate, and effective response to homelessness in London. We serve the same community and population. We share the same mission. And we will continue to speak with one voice until the system that surrounds the most vulnerable members of our community is as strong as the people within it.

To Michelle, and to every person whose story has yet to be told in a Committee room: this work is for you. We are not done.

## VOICES FROM OUR SECTOR

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*“ We are incredibly grateful to Mayor Morgan, Councillor Rahman, and the entire CPSC Committee for their unanimous 6-0 vote at last Monday’s meeting. It is important to mention the work of Councillor Trosow and Councillor Ferreira for getting this conversation into the room. This decision reflects a deep understanding of the needs in our community and the importance of maintaining a coordinated, compassionate response supporting our friends facing homelessness. By supporting this extension, the committee has taken an important step in ensuring front line outreach and essential services remain in place. We are thankful for the leadership shown last week and look forward to continuing this work in partnership with The City of London and all of our community partners.*

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— Allison DeBlair, Executive Director, 519Pursuit

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### Ark Aid Street Mission

*“Last Monday’s vote at Committee is proof that when a community speaks with one voice, governments listen. We are grateful to Mayor Morgan, Councillor Rahman, and every member of the Committee who recognized that the people living unsheltered on London’s streets could not wait for bureaucratic timelines to catch up with their reality. This bridge funding is not the finish line — it is what keeps us in the race while we push every level of government toward the sustained, year-round investment this crisis demands. The federal government has shown its commitment. The City of London is showing its commitment. Ontario must now show theirs.”*

— Sarah Campbell, Executive Director, Ark Aid Street Mission

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