

Safer and Stronger Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee 14th March – Background Information on Rough Sleeper Initiative

Rough Sleeper Initiative

What is it?

In March 2018, the MHCLG announced the creation of a new multi-disciplinary rough sleeper initiative to work intensely with local councils to tackle rough sleeping. The main aim of this initiative was to identify and put in place actions to remove barriers to end rough sleeping in England.

Funding of £30 million was made available for this initiative and Sheffield placed a successful bid for a share of this funding to support local work.

The funding available to Sheffield has enabled the creation of a small team in Housing Solutions, who work alongside existing services with rough sleepers, helping them to find suitable and sustainable long-term housing options. The team are focused on developing a personalised, tailored response to each individual's circumstances.

The team have developed a clear assessment process alongside prisons, the probation services and hospitals to ensure that those being released or discharged from those services and who have no fixed address do not end up sleeping rough. Strong working relationships have been forged through partnership working with the commissioned outreach service, Framework and supported housing providers throughout the City.

What do the team do?

The Rough Sleeper team comprises of a number of staff who ensure that rapid assessments take place for anyone who is rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. These assessments can take place just about anywhere – such as on the street, at probation offices or at community outreach sessions, like the Archer project day centre.

For those people who access our overnight emergency accommodation they also provide next day assessments to try to plan a successful move on suitable housing.

Key to some of the success of the team is the work undertaken by the Enhanced Support and Resettlement officers, who develop an intensive support approach to help manage those with very chaotic lifestyles and who have complex needs. These officers provide long term support to help individuals adapt from living on the streets to living independently, which also ensures their engagement with key services such as health, drug, alcohol and substance misuse services.

Accommodation for the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI)

Some immediate accommodation options have been developed with our partners specifically for rough sleepers. Additional bed spaces have been made available at a number of sites across the City including The Salvation Army, our temporary accommodation schemes and hostels. A project is also underway to recommission a former hostel premises to provide emergency accommodation, some of which will be available to those who are homeless and sleeping rough.

Other social housing providers have also pledged properties specifically for rough sleepers as move on accommodation, which is provided alongside intensive and bespoke flexible support by the RSI team.

What have the team achieved?

Through targeted intervention, since August 2018, when the RS team was set up, it has:

- prevented 117 cases of homelessness and rough sleeping
- has relieved 99 cases of homeless and rough sleeping by finding and supporting longer term housing options.

Some of these have been entrenched rough sleepers who rarely engage with authorities, so we know that our approach to building up relationships and supporting them through their journey is a successful one.

What's next for the team?

The team are working alongside other agencies and partners to develop a number of initiatives to support those who are rough sleeping and to find further opportunities to engage with them and relieve homelessness.

Some of these are:

- Developing and piloting a 'Safe Space' project. This offers overnight accommodation and support for people who are sleeping rough or at risk of rough sleeping in Sheffield. This will not be a night shelter where people can stay for the duration, but an assessment hub providing access to advice and assistance. Placements will be made on a short term basis on the understanding that the individual will agree to engage with support and take the necessary steps in order to address their situation.
- Street Outreach Nurse. To work alongside and provide basic health care and advice for rough sleepers
- Review of the sit up service at Sheffield Fire Service during weather watch.