

Rough Sleepers Briefing Note for Older Peoples Council

Overview

- Rough sleeping is harmful and dangerous and should be avoided, prevented and discouraged.
- The Council is committed to ending rough sleeping and ensuring that action is taken as soon as we know of someone who is rough sleeping in the City.
- The Council ensure that appropriate support and accommodation options are offered to rough sleepers through commissioning of the CRI Rough Sleepers Team.
- Where rough sleeping develops into crime or antisocial behaviour the Council will work with partners to use enforcement measures as necessary according to circumstances and behaviour.

The Council has a strategy to prevent homelessness which can be found on the main website: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c306>. A more detailed strategy tackling single homelessness and rough sleeping can be found on the website here: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1215935>

CRI Rough Sleepers Team

The Council commissions the charity CRI to provide a specialist assertive outreach service. It provides support and accommodation solutions to rough sleepers. The accommodation offer is dependent on someone's Local Connection. If there is no Local Connection to Brighton & Hove, accommodation will be sought in another area and rough sleepers are offered 1-1 and financial support with this and they never relocate anyone to rough sleep in another area – there's always a housing solution at the other end. People can help by contacting CRI if they know of rough sleepers in their area.

FREEPHONE: 0808 168 0414

E-MAIL: brighton.rssrt@cri.org.uk

CRI will need to know where someone is rough sleeping; a brief description of the person and when they were last seen. Their key approach is to get rough sleepers to engage with the offer of help. 'Moving people on' often results in rough sleepers disengaging from help and continuing to rough sleep in another area. CRI also work closely with the Police and the Community Safety Team to address antisocial behaviour issues associated to rough sleepers but it's important to understand that rough sleeping is not a crime and nor is drinking alcohol in public.

Severe Weather Shelter

In winter we provide a Cold Weather Emergency Shelter for rough sleepers when the temperatures drop consistently below zero overnight for three nights or more. We aim to prevent loss of life & reduce the amount of people rough sleeping on the streets. This is our Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). There is an offer of shelter regardless of someone's Local Connection status. All referrals into the emergency shelter are through the CRI Rough Sleepers team on the same number above.

Older Rough Sleepers

In 2010/11 people aged 55 or over made up 3% of the people worked with by the CRI Rough Sleepers team (19 out of 588 people in the year). In the first two quarters of 2011/12, that figure stands at 2% (9 out of 425 people). CRI work together with accommodation providers to ensure the needs of older people are met in their pathways off the street and into more independent living; linking in with Adult Social Care and Health services when appropriate.

Closure of St. Patricks Night Shelter

The Council is sensitive to the impacts of the St Patrick's closure and are taking several practical measures to reduce them:

- The CRI Rough Sleepers Team (RSSSRT) are working closely with Riverside ECHG to ensure there is an offer of support for every person who might be affected. An action plan has been drawn up between the two organisations so that individual needs can be assessed and met over the coming months before the closure happens. We are hoping that no-one currently using the service will have to sleep rough as a result of the closure.
- The RSSSRT and Sussex Central YMCA are commissioned to provide relocation services to rough sleepers who do not have a local connection to Brighton and Hove. They have been successful in achieving over 250 relocations per year between them. They ensure that the offer of support at the other end is in place and that a suitable housing solution has been set up.
- Riverside ECHG have made an offer for the night shelter to be used for Severe Weather Shelter services this year after it closes it's normal operation. We will ensure that our contracted partner Brighton Housing Trust works with Riverside ECHG to ensure there is a suitable offer of shelter for every rough sleeper in the city this winter.

We are hoping that the above measures will reduce the knock-on effect of the closure for service users and the local community.

City Accommodation for Rough Sleepers with a Local Connection

Through the Supporting People programme, eleven high needs supported accommodation services (371 bed spaces) are commissioned in the city as part of an Integrated Support Pathway for single homeless people. These provide 24hr support for people with a local connection to Brighton & Hove. 82 of those units (22%) including 29 at the St Patrick's Hostel (which will continue to deliver a service after the night shelter closure) are reserved for the RSSSRT, who can move people off the street directly into these rooms. Other referrals come through the Council's Housing Options Team, Community Mental Health Team and Sussex Probation Service. With the right interventions, service users are able to move on to greater independence and accommodation with a lower level of support on offer.

Please contact us for further information on our commissioned services or the partnership work we are undertaking to tackle homelessness.