



**From enforcement to ending homelessness:** How police forces, local authorities and the voluntary sector can best work together.

# From enforcement to ending homelessness: How police forces, local authorities and the voluntary sector can best work together

This document has been developed by Crisis, the national homelessness charity, in partnership with the National Police Chiefs' Council, to support the work of police forces and local authorities in finding appropriate and proportionate alternatives to enforcement. A shorter guide has also been developed to accompany this document.

## Purpose

The guide has been developed to help achieve both English and Welsh government's aims as set out in their rough sleeping strategies. Which broadly cover similar areas of focus, such as: prevention, support, outreach, emergency accommodation, Housing First, legislation and guidance, evaluating and monitoring, joint cross sector working, funding and promoting good practice.

This document will offer guidance and proven approaches to police forces and local authorities which demonstrate how increased partnership working with public services and the voluntary sector can help people move away from sleeping rough and street-based activities. Working more collaboratively will also help to ensure that people are linked to appropriate support and suitable housing at the soonest opportunity.

This guidance is based on feedback from officers across England and Wales and evidence on what works to sustainably tackle rough sleeping and

begging. It addresses the concerns officers have when responding to calls from businesses and members of the public who contact the police to deal with people who are sleeping rough, begging or engaged in street-based activities.

The guide identifies practice and initiatives that are already taking place across England, Wales and further afield, and highlights police forces and local authorities who are already working in partnership and collaborating to find long-term solutions to end homelessness and begging.

We hope that by bringing together the examples that are included, it will further support the work of police forces and local authorities in finding appropriate and proportionate alternatives to enforcement, and demonstrate how police forces, local authorities and wider public sector services can contribute to local partnerships and new ways of working that enable people to access the housing and support they need to move away from the streets for good.

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# Foreword

In the 21st century it's not right that any human is forced to live on the streets. That's why we are delighted to co-produce this practical guide designed to help police forces, local authorities and other frontline practitioners work together to address street homelessness.

Throughout coronavirus pandemic we have seen evidence of how important it is that police forces and local authorities work in partnership with health services, third sector organisations, local business and communities to keep people safe from harm.

There is a clear commitment from national government, across England and Wales, to end rough sleeping, as well as recognition that no single agency can deliver this alone.

The 'Policing Vision 2025' reinforces the importance of local agencies working collaboratively, with local communities, to understand, intervene and resolve the problems that can damage lives and lead to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Frontline professionals everywhere understand that all too often, they encounter the same individuals over, and over again. If the evidence demonstrates enforcement action alone is not working, potentially pushing people away from the support services they need, then we should review the way we respond.

Understanding the range of local support services available, and how to refer into them, is critical. This will not only make it easier for police officers and other frontline professionals to do their job, but most importantly, it will improve the consistency and quality of services offered to those in most need of them.

The best practice examples highlighted in this guide demonstrate just how much great work is taking place. It is our hope that sharing them will help to drive better, collaborative problem solving interventions in this crucial area of work.



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# Introduction

**Rough sleeping is the most visible and extreme form of homelessness. It deeply harms the individuals who experience it, and the communities we live in.**

Evidence tells us that many people are pushed into rough sleeping and begging as they have experienced, trauma, poverty, unmet support needs and have been excluded from the housing market.<sup>1 2 3</sup>

There is consensus that urgent action is still needed to address the root causes of all forms of homelessness and begging. Preventing people from being forced into these situations in the first place is the most desirable and effective approach.<sup>4</sup> As human beings, we all need a home to build a life and thrive.

Both English and Welsh governments have committed to end rough sleeping. Recognising that solutions need to be person centred and address housing, health and support needs. We know that there are multiple and complex factors that contribute to someone becoming homeless and sleeping rough and that a cross sector approach is needed to end rough sleeping.

In many cases police are called upon to take a role in engaging with people on the street. However, police forces are not the best placed agency to address the root causes of homelessness.

Recent research in England and Wales found when people are homeless and linked to genuine anti-social behaviour, police forces can play a role in making sure people have offers of accommodation and support, and enforcement can be a window of opportunity for helping people sleeping rough away from the streets. However, if people are moved on or arrested with no offer of help this can displace people sleeping rough, leaving people further marginalised and excluded from the help they need. It is important to note that if people are simply homeless or destitute, it is generally not in the public interest, nor is it proportionate, for criminal enforcement to take place.<sup>5</sup>

Evidence-based practice clearly shows us that to resolve the root causes and prevent reoccurring homelessness effectively we need to support those who are sleeping rough and or begging and provide the right individualised support, from whichever agency or service is needed, as soon as possible.

There has never been more evidence about how to end rough sleeping. Long-term street homelessness risks harm and distress to any person who is sleeping rough, and it can also cause concern to the wider community. This needs to be addressed carefully and with a flexible, patient and assertive approach that is mindful of the trauma that people in this situation may have experienced. Where genuine anti-social behaviour is taking place, this should be dealt with and enforcement plays a crucial role, alongside offers of housing and support for those who need it. Of course, where people are engaged in crime such as drug dealing, harassment or intimidation, this should be taken seriously and dealt with by the police.<sup>6</sup>

Most recently, the coronavirus pandemic showed how much we depend on others for help and support and to stay safe. People experiencing homelessness, especially those sleeping rough are among those who are most exposed to the risks of coronavirus.

Working together, local authorities and partner agencies took a collective responsibility to ensure that everyone was offered a safe place to stay, a place to self-isolate, if needed, alongside access to the resources and support needed to keep people safe.

The responses of English and Welsh governments, their respective local authorities, the police, partner agencies and wider communities has demonstrated and proved how much we can achieve when we come together and work in partnership.

Recent research undertaken by Crisis during the pandemic has shown that local authorities and voluntary sector services have reported not only an increase in need, but also an increased demand for their services since the pandemic began.<sup>7</sup>

It is especially important that we continue to address the underlying causes of homelessness such as the shortage of affordable housing, poverty and inequalities in health. But we also need to maintain the levels of partnership working that we have seen during the pandemic. All services need to continue to work together to support people who have been provided with emergency accommodation to now access and maintain secure housing, and prevent a sharp increase in the numbers of people forced to return to the streets.

1 <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/types-of-homelessness/homelessness-projections-core-homelessness-in-great-britain-2017/>

2 Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Bramley, G., Wood, J., Watts, B., Stephens, M. & Blenkinsopp, J. The Homeless Monitor Series, Crisis

3 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/793471/Homelessness\\_-\\_REA.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793471/Homelessness_-_REA.pdf)

4 Johnsen, S (2016), Enforcement and interventionist responses to rough sleeping and begging: opportunities, challenges and dilemmas. ESRC,

5 Sanders, B. and Albanese, F. (2017) An examination of the scale and impact of enforcement interventions on street homeless people in England and Wales. London: Crisis; Mackie, P., Johnsen, S., and Wood, J. (2017) Ending rough sleeping: what works? An international evidence review. London: Crisis.

6 Morris, N (2019) 'Scrap the Act' The Case for repealing the Vagrancy Act (1824), p 54. London: Crisis

7 [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/243806/the\\_impact\\_of\\_covid-19\\_on\\_people\\_facing\\_homelessness\\_and\\_service\\_provision\\_across\\_great\\_britain\\_2020.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/243806/the_impact_of_covid-19_on_people_facing_homelessness_and_service_provision_across_great_britain_2020.pdf)

# Rough sleeping in England and Wales

## England

The Westminster Government pledged to review the Vagrancy Act (1824) as part of a *Rough Sleeping Strategy* that committed to ending rough sleeping by 2027. This ambition has been further increased with a new target to end rough sleeping within this parliament term, which could be about three years earlier than originally promised.

The Westminster Government strategy recognised that people sleeping rough experience some of the most severe health inequalities, reporting much poorer health than the general population. Many have co-occurring mental ill health and substance misuse needs, physical health needs, and have experienced significant trauma in their lives. The strategy said cross-government working is essential in preventing and relieving rough sleeping, as well as ensuring that ill health is not a cause of, or barrier to, people moving away from rough sleeping. At a local level, this involves collaboration between the NHS, local authorities, social care and housing services.<sup>8</sup>

More recently, in response to the pandemic, the Westminster Government set up a COVID-19 rough sleeping taskforce to ensure as many

people as possible are not forced to return to rough sleeping when the lockdown is fully lifted. More funding has been provided to local authorities to enable them to provide a range of help to ensure people have access to safe and stable accommodation, and to prevent future homelessness.<sup>9</sup>

**Voluntary sector worker, north of England: “Enforce[ment] has been very light touch [during the pandemic], and it’s more been about operating alongside the engagement to try and get them in.”<sup>10</sup>**

## Wales

The Welsh Government has a homelessness strategy (2019) with an aim to make homelessness “rare, brief and unrepeatable”.<sup>11</sup> The new strategy for Wales puts forward a more tailored approach to people with a range of public services, not simply housing, working together to prevent and relieve homelessness.

The Welsh Government also accepted the recommendations of a Homelessness Action Group in March 2020 stating that there should be a

8 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-rough-sleeping/health-matters-rough-sleeping>

9 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/105-million-to-keep-rough-sleepers-safe-and-off-the-streets-during-coronavirus-pandemic>

10 [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/242907/homelessness\\_monitor\\_england\\_2020\\_covid19\\_crisis\\_response\\_briefing.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/242907/homelessness_monitor_england_2020_covid19_crisis_response_briefing.pdf)

11 <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/homelessness-strategy.pdf>

12 <https://gov.wales/homelessness-action-group-report-march-2020>

13 <https://seneddresearch.blog/2019/11/05/whats-being-done-to-end-homelessness-in-wales/>

14 [https://twitter.com/WG\\_Communities/status/1220283831384780803](https://twitter.com/WG_Communities/status/1220283831384780803)





# What we know about homelessness, rough sleeping and begging

## The experience of being on the street

Spending any time living on the streets is harmful to a person's health and wellbeing. Statistics report that 726 people died while homeless in England and Wales during 2018, a rise of 51 per cent since this data was last collected in 2013.<sup>15</sup>

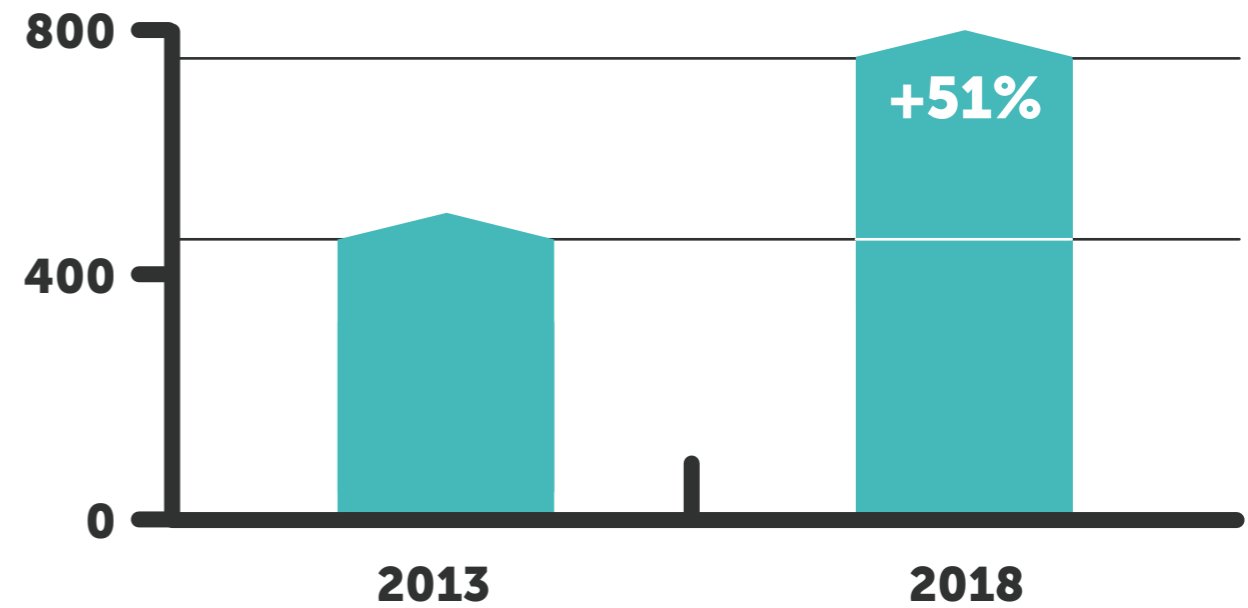
People on the street say that trying to navigate the complex systems of bureaucracy, applications, appointments and paperwork at a time when you are at your lowest can be overwhelming. This is especially true if you are trying to keep yourself safe and don't know where you are going to sleep for the night.

It can be difficult for people sleeping rough to access integrated substance misuse and mental health services, and it has been reported that there were cultural and leadership barriers within organisations which hindered the delivery of integrated services.<sup>16</sup>

People who are sleeping rough are almost 17 times more likely to be victims of violence and 15 times more likely to have suffered verbal abuse compared to the general public.<sup>17</sup>

More concerning was that the majority of these incidents were carried out by members of the public and were not reported to the police, mainly because people did not believe anything would be done.<sup>18</sup>

The consequences of the violence and abuse that people face whilst living on the street can be significant. It can add to the many pressures that people on the street experience and can negatively affect their mental and physical health and their ability to trust others; stopping people from seeking help to move on from homelessness.



Statistics report that **726 people died** while homeless in England and Wales during 2018, **a rise of 51 per cent** since the data was last collected in 2013.



**17 times  
more likely**



**15 times  
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People who are sleeping rough are almost **17 times more likely to be victims of violence** and **15 times more likely** to have suffered verbal abuse compared to the general public.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsofhomelesspeopleinenglandandwales/2018>

<sup>16</sup> National Assembly for Wales; Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee Rough sleeping follow up Mental health and substance misuse services, <https://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld12937/cr-ld12937%20-e.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Sanders, B. and Albanese, F. (2016), "It's no life at all" - Rough sleepers' experiences of violence and abuse on the streets of England and Wales. London: Crisis.

<sup>18</sup> Sanders, B. & Albanese, F. (2016) "It's no life at all": *Rough sleepers' experiences of violence and abuse on the streets of England and Wales*. London: Crisis.

# Policing, rough sleeping and begging

Many police forces are under pressure to deal with rough sleeping, begging and street-based activities and a significant amount of time is spent in response to these issues. Local authority homelessness teams and other specialist local services are better placed and should in almost all cases lead the response, especially the rough sleeper and assertive outreach teams. Police may be the service that is called but they do not have all the tools needed to help people on the street to access accommodation and support.<sup>19</sup>

Effective policing includes a greater focus on positive relationships and communication and working with a wider range of partners such as health services, charities, and local authorities.<sup>20</sup>

In some areas of England and Wales enforcement measures are used by the police and local authority enforcement officers, without people accessing wider help to deal with the root causes of their situation. Eight out of ten people in Crisis' research, when asked about recent experiences of enforcement, said that enforcement action did not result in advice or support being provided.<sup>21</sup> Instead a system-wide, partnership approach is needed to ensure that there are range of linked services available to support those in need.

Evidence shows that criminalisation is more likely to push people away from services and the opportunities that can enable people to move on from their current situations. Laws and policing have greatly changed since the introduction of the Vagrancy Act (1824) and our understanding of the causes of homelessness, anti-social behaviour and other associated street-based activities have vastly improved. The nature of policing has changed, and officers now have to be more mindful of human rights principles, disability equality, and have higher awareness of how individuals respond to trauma and how this can affect the way they interact with officers.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/679391/Policing\\_Landscape\\_Review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/679391/Policing_Landscape_Review.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> College of Policing, Engagement and communication <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/engagement-and-communication/?s=>

<sup>21</sup> Sanders, B. and Albanese, F. (2017) An examination of the scale and impact of enforcement interventions on street homeless people in England and Wales. London: Crisis;

<sup>22</sup> Morris, N (2019) 'Scrap the Act' The Case for repealing the Vagrancy Act (1824). London: Crisis



Chris, a former police officer from Guildford, tells his story:

**"I personally never found it comfortable arresting someone for rough sleeping or begging. The only good thing that came out of it was them being able to have a cup of tea and biscuit in the station and use the toilet. Just to help them get warm for a short while, but then they went straight back to the street. The real reasons for homelessness, like relationship breakdown, poverty and job losses, are not solved by criminalising people. They were just moved on. It never solved the problem."**



# Why people are homeless and why people sleep rough

**Poverty, the lack of affordable housing, inadequate welfare support, and policies which exclude certain groups from local authority support force people into homelessness.**

On an individual level, the constant pressure of high rents and low wages can push people already on the brink into homelessness, especially when this is combined with a significant life event, such as losing a job, fleeing domestic abuse or a relationship breakdown.

Homelessness regularly occurs when people leave prison, care, the forces or hospital, or asylum accommodation with no home to go. Sadly, these opportunities for the state to help prevent homelessness are too often missed.

Experiencing trauma as a child can lead to emotional and psychological issues that may not emerge until later in life. Adults who experienced trauma during childhood may experience difficulties in many aspects of their lives. People may not realise that these traumatic experiences are contributing factors to their current issues or behaviour. If public services and society do not adapt to become more understanding towards people who have experienced trauma it can cause extra difficulties for people, including homelessness.





# Types of homelessness

There is no national figure for how many people are homeless across the UK. It is recorded differently in each nation but many people facing homelessness do not show up in official statistics at all. Different types of homelessness are also linked, and people can experience more than one type. Research by Crisis, for example, found that people 'sofa surfing' in Great Britain were more likely to have come from other insecure housing situations – including sleeping rough – and were often forced back into these situations again after a period sofa surfing.<sup>23</sup>

Many people facing homelessness are hidden from statistics and services as they are dealing with their situation informally. In 2018, Herriot Watt University estimated for Crisis that there are more than 170,000 families and individuals across Great Britain experiencing the worst forms of homelessness, including sleeping rough, in hostels, or on sofas of friends or family. The majority of these – 71,400 (42 per cent) – are sofa surfing.<sup>24</sup>

## Rough sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most visible and extreme form of homelessness and is usually defined as someone sleeping or bedding down in the open air, or in buildings, such as sheds and car parks that are not designed for people to

sleep in. Rough sleeping is not usually the first form of homelessness people experience. However, tackling it must be central to any plan to end homelessness, given the extreme dangers facing people living on our streets.

The hidden nature of rough sleeping makes numbers difficult to estimate.

The coronavirus pandemic and actions taken by national governments have actually shown us that the levels are much higher. Levels of homelessness are much higher than we knew. For England; the overall number of people accommodated, as of January 2021 was 37,430<sup>25</sup> and in Wales, the overall number of individuals placed in temporary accommodation between August and December 2020 was 5,010.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Sanders, B., Boobis, S., and Albanese, F. (2019) 'It was like a nightmare' The reality of sofa surfing in Britain today. London: Crisis

<sup>24</sup> Bramley, G. (2018) (unpublished data) <https://www.crisis.org.uk/aboutus/media-centre/more-than-170-000-families-and-individuals-across-britain-are-experiencing-the-worst-forms-of-homelessness/>

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) Coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency accommodation survey data: January 2021. London: MHCLG. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-emergency-accommodation-survey-data-january-2021>

<sup>26</sup> Statistics Wales (2021) Homelessness accommodation provision and rough sleeping: December 2020. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government. <https://gov.wales/homelessness-accommodation-provision-and-rough-sleeping-december-2020>

## COVID-19 statistics



**England;** the overall number of people accommodated, as of **January 2021 was 37,430.**



**Wales;** the overall number of individuals placed in temporary accommodation between **August and December 2020 was 5,010.**

In 2020, governments provided emergency accommodation to those who were sleeping rough or at risk of doing so. In the same year, in England, we saw a decrease of 37% in the number of people sleeping rough relative to the previous year, a decline much larger than anything seen in recent history.<sup>27</sup> Wales saw the numbers of people sleeping rough decline by 40% between August and December 2020.<sup>28</sup> These figures highlight that there are other tools available, which will support government aims to reduce rough sleeping. Working collectively and proactively to provide housing and support, rather than the use of enforcement to move people away from the streets.

## Sofa surfing

Sofa surfing is defined as being forced to stay with a friend or an extended family member on a sofa or a floor on a short term or insecure basis because there is nowhere else to go. It is an insecure and precarious arrangement and all these situations leave the person more exposed to risk.

Crisis research (2019) found that for many people sofa surfing is not a short term or stop-gap but a form of homelessness that is difficult to move out of. People sofa surfed on average for between six months and a year. People end up sofa surfing before and after experiencing sleeping rough and other extreme forms of homelessness. Moves into sofa surfing from, and out of it, to securer forms of housing are much less prevalent.<sup>29</sup>

## Temporary accommodation

Each type of temporary accommodation has its own rules on access and lengths of stay and may not always be appropriate for the individuals staying in them. The length of time people can stay in temporary accommodation can range from a single night to indefinite. There are a range of different types of temporary accommodation, including; night/winter shelters, hostels, bed and breakfasts and women's refuges.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2020/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2020>

<sup>28</sup> <https://gov.wales/homelessness-accommodation-provision-and-rough-sleeping-december-2020>

<sup>29</sup> Sanders, B, Boobis, S and Albanese, F (2019) "It was like a nightmare" - the reality of sofa surfing in Britain today. London: Crisis



### Statutory homelessness

There is separate housing legislation in England and in Wales, but both have an increased focus on preventing homelessness. Local authorities must take 'reasonable steps' to prevent homelessness for anyone who applies for help who is at risk of homelessness and is eligible for help, regardless of priority need.<sup>30</sup> This can involve assisting them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live, and local authorities must take reasonable steps to help an applicant secure suitable accommodation.

If not accommodated after 56 days, the local authority should look at a person's situation again and if assessed as being in one of the 'priority need' categories and meeting other tests, they would then be regarded as being 'statutory homeless' because their council has a duty to rehouse them. Local authorities have a duty to secure a home for some groups of people facing homelessness, this is often referred to as the main homelessness duty, although the rules are slightly different between England and Wales.

In England there is also a 'duty to refer'. A list of public bodies in law must refer (with consent) any person they are aware of who is at risk of homelessness in the next 56 days, to the local housing department in the council. While the duty does not cover police forces, good practice would still be for police officers to do this. Previous research suggests that areas that respond more effectively to rough sleeping have good multi-agency working in place and can use this rather than relying on enforcement action on its own.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Priority need is one of the qualifying criteria applied by a council to establish if a housing duty is owed. People who meet all the qualifying criteria and are in certain 'priority need' groups will have an enhanced right to housing and will have a right to interim and settled accommodation. Priority need groups include; pregnant women, people with dependent children, people who are vulnerable as a result of some special reason such as old age or disability, care leavers and armed forces veterans.

<sup>31</sup> Sanders, B., and Albanese, F. (2017), An examination of the scale and impact of enforcement interventions on street homeless people in England and Wales, London: Crisis

# People who are more exposed to risk when sleeping rough

**Sleeping rough is dangerous for everyone but the evidence shows some groups of people are more exposed to risk and need targeted help to relieve the pressures they face.**

### Women

Women sleeping rough carry the added burden of gender-based violence and abuse before, during, and after their time on the streets. Hiding from harm can mean that women are not receiving support from homelessness services and are missing from statistics. Women tend to rely on informal hidden arrangements with family, friends or acquaintances, and may alternate between hidden homelessness and sleeping rough. Women also say that they avoid homeless services where men are present. Sexual harassment, abuse and violence are common, so women tend to conceal themselves, to keep themselves safe.<sup>32</sup>

Women who experience rough sleeping are more likely than men to have experienced traumas, including self-harming and domestic violence.

Despite not always being a direct cause of homelessness, evidence has shown that experience of domestic violence and abuse is very common among women who become homeless.<sup>33</sup>

Porchlight Kent, in their recent research found that, multiple levels of trauma can lead to a cycle of abusive relationships, mental and physical ill health, the use of drugs and alcohol, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, making the journey out of homelessness complicated and challenging.<sup>34</sup> Their recommendations included the need to develop specialist services that can support the needs of women and that further research into the needs of females who are sleeping rough should be commissioned.<sup>35</sup>

Service design and organisational structures like policies and training need to consider and incorporate gendered responses.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.mungos.org/app/uploads/2018/10/Women-and-Rough-Sleeping-Report-2018-Summary.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Gov.uk, Health Matters – Rough Sleeping February 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-rough-sleeping/health-matters-rough-sleeping>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.porchlight.org.uk/news/kent-has-a-hidden-female-homelessness-crisis>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.porchlight.org.uk/news/kent-has-a-hidden-female-homelessness-crisis>



## Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people

A recent Shelter England report highlighted that a quarter, 24 per cent, of people making homelessness applications to local councils in England are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, even though they make up just 11 per cent of all households in England. We also know that Black people are disproportionately affected by homelessness with 1 in 23 Black households becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness, versus 1 in 83 households from all other ethnicities combined.<sup>36</sup>

In 2010 a Race Equality Foundation report highlighted that there are substantial differences among ethnic groups relating to the types of homelessness that people experience, but there was consensus that homelessness is due largely to a complex series of factors associated with material and physical deprivation, including low income and levels of employment or employment in low-skilled jobs.<sup>37</sup>

Some of the key messages in the report included that; homelessness service provision needs to be informed by, a knowledge and understanding of the causes, manifestations and perceptions of homelessness within communities, that the provision of homelessness services could be improved by developing stronger links between black and minority ethnic and mainstream homelessness organisations, and that partnership working between black and minority ethnic and mainstream organisations can seek to increase awareness of homelessness services among communities, widen access to early

intervention, maintain ongoing support to vulnerable individuals and inform policy development.<sup>38</sup>

The Social Care Institute for Excellence carried out 'A rapid evidence assessment of what works in homelessness services'. The review identified a lack of evidence about what works to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, and when they did, outcomes were not as positive as for other groups. They went on to suggest that cultural needs need to be built into services and in order to do this we need to improve Black, Asian and Minority engagement and involvement, so that person-centred services can be developed.<sup>39</sup>

For this reason, it is especially important to create links with local organisations who represent different communities. Linking in with local authority homelessness teams may also help to build a knowledge base about which communities are represented in homelessness presentations, and efforts could then be focussed on building relationships within these communities.

## People who are LGBTQ

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning or Queer (LGBTQ) people are more at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping. LGBTQ people can become homeless for a diverse range of reasons. This can often be because their support systems of family and friends do not accept their sexual orientation or gender identity. Not having a 'family' who cares has significant impacts on people's ability to navigate healthy relationships and can increase vulnerability when

someone is experiencing street homelessness.<sup>40</sup>

Research by Stonewall found that the majority of LGBTQ people surveyed felt that the streets were an unsafe space. Many people they spoke to chose to find an alternative, however most people told us there was nowhere they felt safe. Some people said how drugs, alcohol, sex work or transactional sex (sex exchange for accommodation) was used as a way to secure accommodation, usually at great risk to safety. Many also felt that they came up against discrimination from landlords, housing providers and those in authority, such as police or social services.<sup>41</sup>

## Non-UK nationals

People with 'no recourse to public funds' are unable to access many forms of state help, such as welfare benefits and housing assistance. They are at high risk of rough sleeping and may feel forced into begging because of the lack of alternatives.

Many people who move to the UK have a 'no recourse to public funds' condition attached to their immigration status that stops them from receiving state support, such as housing benefit and local authority homelessness services.<sup>42</sup> Local authorities have a duty to provide services to destitute migrants who meet certain eligibility criteria. Targeted interventions are needed to address the situations of these specific groups as rough sleeping amongst migrants might occur as a direct result of restrictions applied by immigration legislation.

Providing support and housing to people sleeping rough or begging if they have no recourse to public funds can be challenging. Working alongside local authorities and local migrant organisations can help people understand the options that are available to them. This may include; assistance from Social Services, humanitarian support, access to housing, legal and employment support.

## Disabilities

Evidence suggests that cognitive impairment is disproportionately over represented in homelessness populations.<sup>43</sup> The number of people experiencing homelessness who have a learning difficulty or disability is largely unknown, as they are often unrecognised or not disclosed. This may make it difficult for people to interact and communicate with others and if these are coupled with substance misuse or mental health issues, learning disabilities and difficulties are often missed.

Autism affects how people perceive the world and interact with others. As with other disabilities or difficulties it can lead to social isolation, poor employment prospects, alongside difficulties or a reluctance to access support, all of which are risk factors for homelessness.

36 [https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press\\_release/black\\_people\\_are\\_more\\_than\\_three\\_times\\_as\\_likely\\_to\\_experience\\_homelessness](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/black_people_are_more_than_three_times_as_likely_to_experience_homelessness)

37 <https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/housing-brief15.pdf>

38 <https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/housing-brief15.pdf>

39 Sheikh, S and Teeman D, Social Care Institute for Excellence (2018) A rapid evidence assessment of what works in homelessness services, London: Crisis

40 Stonewall Housing, Finding safe spaces Understanding the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans\* rough sleepers 2014

41 Stonewall Housing, Finding safe spaces Understanding the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans\* rough sleepers 2014

42 <https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information-and-resources/rights-and-entitlements/immigration-status-and-entitlements/who-has-no-recourse-to-public-funds-nrpf#guide-sections>

43 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/hsc.12682>



# Begging

Recent years have seen an increase in the levels of rough sleeping alongside reported rises in begging and anti-social behaviour, such as street drinking. Local authorities and other enforcement agents are responding to these changes in large part because of complaints they receive from members of the public and local businesses but also to address concerns for the wellbeing of those engaged in sleeping rough and anti-social street activities.<sup>44</sup>

Evidence on who begs is patchy but:

- A considerable number of people who beg are homeless in some form, varying from sleeping rough or in temporary accommodation or other unstable housing situations.<sup>45</sup>
- A profile of homelessness service users showed that while only a minority of their clients who engaged in street activities such as drug use, drinking and begging might be currently sleeping rough, many had done so in the past.<sup>46</sup>
- Research carried out in 2017 found that just over 1 in 3 people sleeping rough interviewed said that they have begged at some point during the last 12 months. Six per cent had busked. The three main reasons given for begging were needing to

buy food (78 per cent), buy drugs (45 per cent) and buy alcohol (39 per cent).<sup>47</sup> These findings are consistent with existing evidence that shows an association between begging, alcohol, drug misuse and that those engaged in it are often homeless in some form.<sup>48</sup>

The evidence shows enforcement activity without an offer of support can displace people physically to other locations, potentially further away from support services and also make people feel more lonely and more isolated.<sup>49</sup> Other evidence shows it can also lead to 'activity displacement', where people engage in potentially riskier behaviour, such as shoplifting or street-based sex work, instead of begging.<sup>50</sup> A small-scale study in Newcastle also found that people who

are begging felt guilt and shame about the situation.<sup>51</sup>

Evidence also shows a "strong overlap" between street homelessness and begging.<sup>52</sup> Research finds that this group has a higher incidence of mental health issues compared with physical health problems, underlining the need for a psychologically informed approach.<sup>53</sup>

44 Sanders, B. and Albanese, F. (2017), *An examination of the scale and impact of enforcement interventions on street homeless people in England and Wales*. London: Crisis

45 Shelter Scotland (2019), *Street Begging in Edinburgh*, Edinburgh: Shelter Scotland

46 Randall, J. and Brown, S. (2006) *Steps off the street: solutions to homelessness*. London: Crisis. [http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/document\\_library/research/crisis\\_-\\_steps\\_off\\_the\\_street.pdf](http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/document_library/research/crisis_-_steps_off_the_street.pdf)

47 Sanders, B., and Albanese, F. (2017), *An examination of the scale and impact of enforcement interventions on street homeless people in England and Wales*, London: Crisis

48 Kennedy, C. and Fitzpatrick, S. (2001) *Begging, rough sleeping and social exclusion: implications for social policy*. in *Urban Studies* Vol. 38 Issue 11: 2001-2016 and Fitzpatrick, S. and Kennedy, C. (2010) *The links between begging and rough sleeping: a question of legitimacy?* In *Housing Studies* vol. 16 Issue 5: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02673030120080053>

49 Sanders, B., and Albanese, F. (2017) *An examination of the scale and impact of enforcement interventions on street homeless people in England and Wales*. London: Crisis

50 Johnsen, S (2016), *Enforcement and interventionist responses to rough sleeping and begging: opportunities, challenges and dilemmas*, ESRC

51 Fulfilling Lives (2017), *Exploring begging in Newcastle City Centre: Consultation* <http://www.fulfillinglives-uk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Exploring-begging-in-Newcastle-EBE-2017.pdf>

52 [https://pureapps2.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/14572313/Interventionism\\_Event\\_Summary.pdf](https://pureapps2.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/14572313/Interventionism_Event_Summary.pdf)

53 Shelter Scotland (2019), *Street Begging in Edinburgh*, Edinburgh: Shelter Scotland





# Trauma and links to homelessness

**Homelessness in adults is more likely amongst those who have experienced a history of childhood adversity and poverty.<sup>54</sup> People who are in the criminal justice system, who use substances, and access homeless services have often experienced trauma.**

Police and the criminal justice system are generally not the best lead agencies to help people out of these circumstances and contact with police and criminal justice services can lead to further trauma for the individual if they do not help address the root causes.<sup>55</sup>

These experiences not only impact on people's physical and mental health, they also make it more difficult for people to move away from the streets. Capacity needs to be built into services across sectors in order to take a multi-agency, trauma-informed approach to the vulnerable child or adult.<sup>56</sup>

People who have experienced four or more adverse childhood experiences are:

- 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated at any point in their lifetime.

- 4 times more likely to be a drinker at high risk.
- 14 times more likely to have been a victim of violence in the past 12 months and 15 times more likely to have committed violence against another person in the past 12 months.<sup>57</sup>

The link between police forces and local authorities and wider support services is critical to putting effective responses in place to address the root causes of a person's situation and not just deal with the presenting issues.

Crisis research found that any contact with police (or any agency that offers support or outreach) is an opportunity to ensure a person on the streets is linked to support that can help them away from homelessness.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> <https://phw.nhs.wales/files/aces/voices-of-those-with-lived-experiences-of-homelessness-and-adversity-in-wales-informing-prevention-and-response-2019/>

<sup>55</sup> Morris, N (2019) 'Scrap the Act' The Case for repealing the Vagrancy Act (1824). London: Crisis

<sup>56</sup> <https://phw.nhs.wales/files/aces/voices-of-those-with-lived-experiences-of-homelessness-and-adversity-in-wales-informing-prevention-and-response-2019/>

<sup>57</sup> [http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PRIDDocs.nsf/7c21215d6d0c613e80256f490030c05a/d488a3852491bc1d80257f370038919e/\\$FILE/ACE%20Report%20FINAL%20\(E\).pdf](http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PRIDDocs.nsf/7c21215d6d0c613e80256f490030c05a/d488a3852491bc1d80257f370038919e/$FILE/ACE%20Report%20FINAL%20(E).pdf)

<sup>58</sup> Sanders, B., and Albanese, F. (2017), An examination of the scale and impact of enforcement interventions on street homeless people in England and Wales, London: Crisis

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## 15 times

more likely to have committed violence against another person in the past 12 months.



## How trauma might present to police and local authority enforcement officers

The first step in a 'trauma-informed' response is to recognise the specific, individual personal circumstances that someone may have experienced before losing their home and while being homeless. This might have not just been on the street but also includes time sofa surfing and stays in temporary accommodation.

A traumatic incident is when a person experiences, witnesses, or in certain circumstances, hears about a (real or perceived) threat to their physical and/or their sense of psychological safety. It can also involve seeing others experiencing this threat. The person's response can involve great fear, horror and/or helplessness.<sup>59</sup>

People respond to traumas in different ways. Some trauma responses include self-preservation, but others might result in thoughts and feelings that bring about different responses. When threatened humans often respond, in the first place at least, instinctively and reflexively. Most people will have had an experience of responding to something perceived as threatening before they were actually consciously aware of the threat.<sup>60</sup>

Experiences of trauma, such as adverse childhood experiences, can present as a form of anti-social behaviour and result in people seeming to have difficulty managing their emotions, behaving impulsively and not considering the consequences of their actions. There may also be a reluctance to trust and engage with support or help that is offered and people may respond with anti-social or aggressive behaviour.

People may struggle to keep appointments, access and engage with services, and may be more exposed to exploitation especially if they have mental health or substance misuse issues, other health issues or a learning disability.

Psychologically informed approaches are intended to help understand where these behaviours may come from, and to be able to work more creatively and constructively with people. Housing and support solutions will only be found where there is input from wider public services and co-ordinated interventions from a range of partners.

In Shelter Cymru research (2018) nearly everyone sleeping rough reported having adverse childhood experiences.<sup>61</sup> People described being re-traumatised by negative experiences of interactions with police and local authority enforcement officers and reported feeling that they were treated in a way that led to them being less than human. Others mentioned they felt they were treated like 'scum'.

Enforcement activity by authorities included:

- One man was banned from the city centre on Christmas Eve, which meant he had to miss Christmas dinner provided by a charity and had nothing to eat on Christmas Day
- One woman told them that her tent and her belongings were confiscated, which included personal items such as her baby's hospital wristband, baby photos and her own birth certificate

- Another woman said that her tent had been cleared away by park rangers leaving her with no possessions apart from her pyjamas, thin coat and trainers.

## Importance of understanding trauma

Given the link between crime and people experiencing adversity and trauma, it is important that services understand mental health, addiction and vulnerability. This enables services to be 'trauma-informed' and can help with prevention work and the police's work to prevent crime, reduce harm and address disorder.<sup>62</sup>

Increasingly, police forces are undertaking training on trauma and the adverse childhood experiences that people may have experienced. When the justice system has flexibility and the tools needed to treat offending and crime as a public health issue rather than purely a criminal issue this can help lead to treatment rather than managing symptoms.<sup>63</sup>

59 <http://www.zoelodrick.co.uk/training/article-1>

60 <http://www.zoelodrick.co.uk/training/article-1>

61 <https://sheltercymru.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Trapped-on-the-Streets-Full-Report.pdf>, p19

62 Scottish Police Authority Board 2019, <http://www.spa.police.uk/assets/126884/441011/509407/511993/item4>

63 <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-08/Submission-from-the-early-action-together-programme.pdf>



### Pudsey's story

'People need help and housing, not being called a criminal.'

"I grew up in Scotland, but I was in and out of children's homes since I was ten. When I left care at fifteen, I didn't have anywhere to go, and that's when I first ended up on the streets.

The BID team [Business Improvement District] and the police were on me straight away when I got here. It was them who first served me the Vagrancy Act papers. Sometimes they give you a bit of advice about where to go, like soup kitchens and things, but otherwise nothing else.

Since coming to Blackpool I've now had thirteen charges under the Vagrancy Act, and I've also been taken to court twice for it. Getting the papers just made me angry. They just come

up and tell you to move, but I don't know where they expect you to go? Five of those warnings I was even asleep when they gave them to me, so how could that have been for begging? I just woke up to find it on my sleeping bag. 'Sitting in a public place gathering money for alms,' they called it.

Half the homeless people in town have been given Vagrancy Act papers now, and most of them have been fined about £100 and then given a banning order from the town centre. If they get caught coming back, they get done again and could go to jail, but that means all those people can't get into town to use the few local services there are for rough sleeping.

People need help and housing, not being called a criminal."

**Pudsey, Blackpool**

# How multi-agency partnerships can help to end homelessness

The latest evidence from across the UK and internationally shows that, in cases where people are forced to sleep rough, the best response is for swift action to help people away from the street. Partnership working and collaboration is key, involving outreach services that link a person to suitable housing and support. The best approaches are those which provide person-centred support and respond to local housing markets and the needs of the individual who is sleeping rough or begging, while recognising that positive engagement takes time.

Overleaf are some practice examples that police forces could use when engaging with people who are sleeping rough or begging. These will often be dependent on organisations working in partnership with local authorities and local agencies.

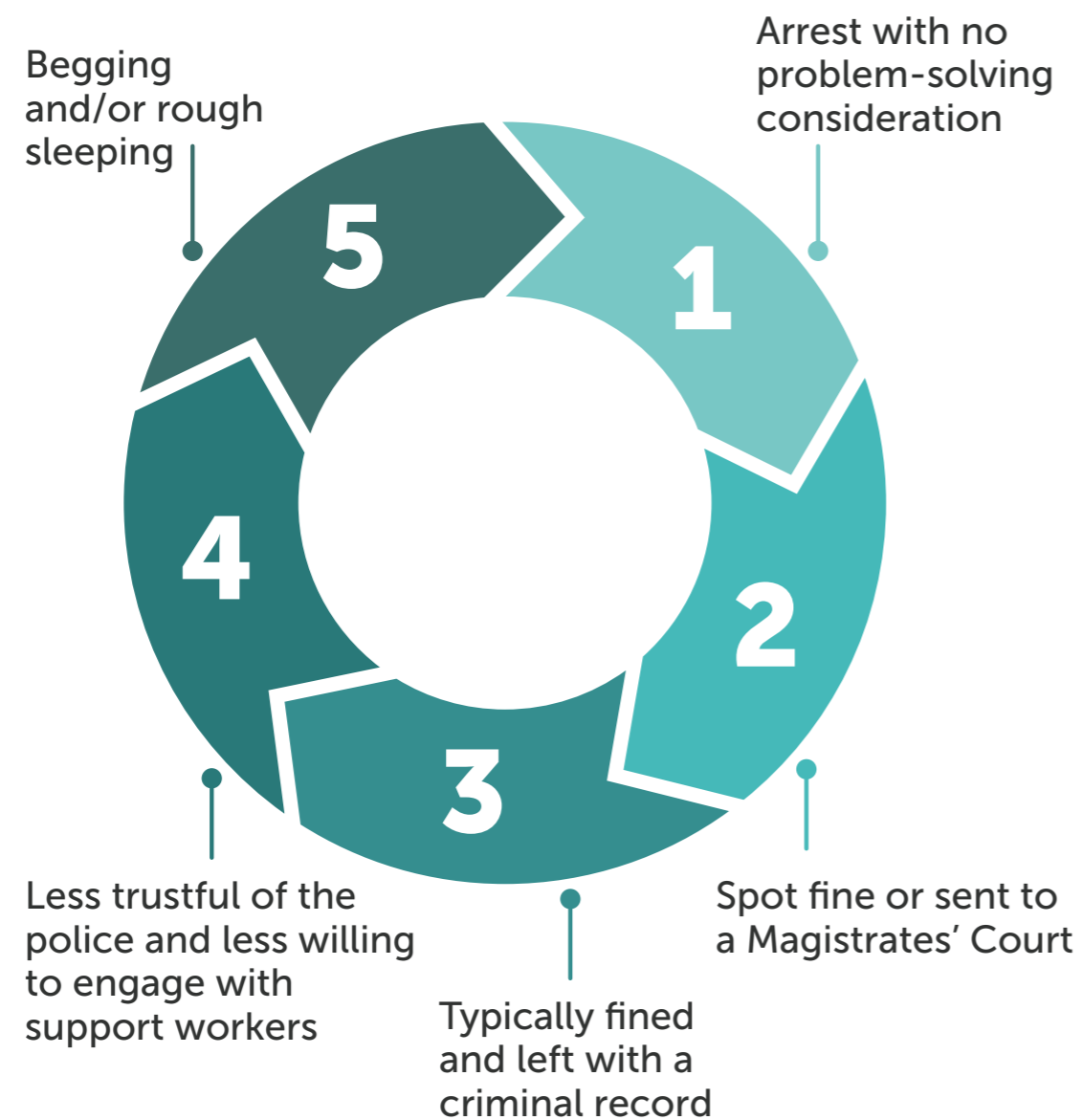
Some of these initiatives may already be in place in many localities and if this is the case, a review could be undertaken to establish whether they are trauma informed and effective in enabling people to access the support they need and reduce the need for enforcement.

The following sections present evidence and practice examples of the four areas listed in the diagram below.



# Working together to break the cycle

## Negative cycle



## Positive interventions



# 1. Police and local authority enforcement officers paired with outreach teams to identify and engage rough sleepers into support

## Outreach and engagement

With the number of people sleeping rough increasing in recent years, more people than ever need support to access appropriate services and housing. The way public services like the police and local authorities engage with people can make all the difference.

**Karl from Liverpool:** 'I try to explain to people the horrors of living on the streets, and how much difference it makes for someone to treat you like a human being. The best thing I can remember is silly little things like people saying good morning and asking if I was ok.'

A warm greeting, starting a conversation or just asking a personal question can make a difference and help officers get to know an individual. Many people sleeping rough have

complex needs and outreach services will take the time to get to know an individual, build trust and talk about the support and services that are available. Helping someone away from sleeping rough can take time, but the best outreach teams never give up on someone.

**"The process of outreach and engagement is an art, best described as a dance. Outreach workers take one step toward a potential client, not knowing what their response will be – will the client join in or walk away? Do they like to lead or follow? Every outreach worker has a different style and is better at some steps than others. To dance with grace, when the stakes are high, is the challenge for all of us."**<sup>64</sup>

64 To Dance With Grace: Outreach & Engagement To Persons On The Street, 1998 National Symposium on Homelessness Research

## Assertive outreach

Assertive outreach is the delivery of services to people who are homeless. It happens where ever they are and generally does not require them to present themselves to a particular place.

It works best when services are actively seeking people and are focused on helping to end a person's homelessness. It works with the most disengaged people who are sleeping rough and have complex support needs. The evidence shows effective assertive outreach has three main features:

- The primary aim is to end homelessness
- It needs to be person centred, include multidisciplinary support
- It is persistent and purposeful, but enforcement activity should only ever be used as a last resort and if genuine anti-social behaviour is also present.<sup>65</sup>

Understanding more about the principles of assertive outreach and how these are applied locally can help reduce the need for enforcement action and focus on more effective help that addresses the root causes of a person's situation.<sup>66</sup>

Working in this way can build relationships and trust that can help support people to move away from the streets, facilitate rapid rehousing into appropriate accommodation and access to support.

### Resources:

- Cymorth Cymru have developed a set of **Assertive Outreach Principles for Wales**<sup>67</sup>
- Changing Lives have an **Assertive Outreach Principles and Guide**<sup>68</sup>

65 [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238368/ending\\_rough\\_sleeping\\_what\\_works\\_2017.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238368/ending_rough_sleeping_what_works_2017.pdf)

66 [https://www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/files/8615/7130/0502/Assertive\\_Outreach\\_Principles\\_ENG\\_Final.pdf](https://www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/files/8615/7130/0502/Assertive_Outreach_Principles_ENG_Final.pdf)

67 [https://www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/files/8615/7130/0502/Assertive\\_Outreach\\_Principles\\_ENG\\_Final.pdf](https://www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/files/8615/7130/0502/Assertive_Outreach_Principles_ENG_Final.pdf)

68 <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Changing%20Lives%20Outreach%20Guidance%20and%20Templates.pdf>



## Practice examples: Police and services working together

### 1. StreetLink app/website

StreetLink can be used by the public and by public services to notify the local authority or outreach services about a person over the age of 18 that they have seen sleeping rough in England or Wales. Information is provided to help them find the individual and connect people to support:

<https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

### 2. Training to increase awareness and understanding of people sleeping rough

#### South Wales Police and The Wallich, a rough sleeping charity

The Wallich trained 40 Police Officers and PCSOs in Cardiff. At the end of the training officers reflected on what the training meant for their work. Reflections included:<sup>69</sup>

- To realise that everyone is unique and has an individual story
- Be on the same level as them when talking and try to remove the 'them and us' situation
- Educate each other and multi-agency work
- As police, we are here to help and often we can make things worse for those who are homeless
- To try and see the person and not the problem

<sup>69</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-06/Submission-to-the-justice-commission-from-the-wallich-centre%20.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.rsph.org.uk/about-us/news/police-officers-are-being-offered-extra-learning-support.html>

- We need to see potential in people who are facing homelessness and help them. Just be kind
- Be aware of the services available and what is on offer
- Dedicate specialist homeless officers
- We as police, would have less calls if we found the solution and then we stop the 'revolving door effect.' Let's get and keep people off the streets
- We need to show patience and be patient.

### 3. Training on vulnerability

#### Barnardo's Cymru and North Wales Police

Barnardo's Cymru has provided adverse childhood experience training to forces across Wales. Applying three different approaches to helping officers embed their learning: workshops, having a station presence and supporting speciality work:

#### Police Officers being offered extra learning support in Wales<sup>70</sup>

### 4. Piloting a whole-service approach to trauma support

#### Manchester City Council and Rockpool

Together both organisations are delivering trauma-informed training to test whether having a trauma-informed workforce across all organisations in

an area enables engagement on a deeper level with service users/people with lived experience.

The organisations involved in this pilot include Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, Police, Fire and Rescue, Youth Services, Voluntary and Community Sector, health services, health visitors and GPs, Social and Early Help services, substance misuse services, Mental Health services, Domestic Abuse services, Early Years and nurseries, schools and a college. The initiative is linked to the following strategies and partnerships:

- 'Our Manchester' Strategy<sup>71</sup>
- Manchester Safeguarding Partnership<sup>72</sup>
- Ace Aware and Trauma-Informed City<sup>73</sup>
- Rockpool.<sup>74</sup>

### 5. Better help for people in crisis

#### Police Scotland and Scotland Ayrshire Division

Police Scotland were dealing with an increasing number of calls from people in crisis and say that in order to handle these calls effectively, it was essential to have officers and staff who understand trauma-informed approaches to policing.

Ayrshire Division is moving towards a trauma-informed approach to policing and are providing training to all their

officers and staff. More information on trauma-informed approaches is on the Police Scotland Facebook page.<sup>75</sup>

#### Resources:

- Videos with officers discussing the trauma-informed approach to policing in Ayrshire.<sup>76</sup>

### 6. Criminal justice agencies helping to end rough sleeping

#### Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network

The network said: "We recognise that a sustainable solution will require the development of a consistent approach to sensitive enforcement by criminal justice agencies to support the ending of rough sleeping."<sup>77</sup> Initiatives planned include:

- Training developed and delivered by people with experience of homelessness to be rolled out across the force for new and existing staff
- Induction programme for new officers to be integrated at local borough level with individual centres.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>71</sup> <https://healthiermanchester.org/how-health-and-care-services-will-change/making-it-work/the-our-manchester-approach/>

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/resource/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces-resources-for-practitioners/>

<sup>73</sup> [https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019-11-12-ACES\\_Trauma-Informed\\_Strategy\\_2019-25.pdf](https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2019-11-12-ACES_Trauma-Informed_Strategy_2019-25.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> <https://rockpool.life/about-adverse-childhood-experiences/>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/AyrshirePoliceDivision/videos/trauma-informed-policing-chief-inspector-frew/252186745478420/>

<sup>76</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08L7cUa\\_ORM&list=UUtivGNq5jDK6\\_cTMC7IWPpg&index=77](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08L7cUa_ORM&list=UUtivGNq5jDK6_cTMC7IWPpg&index=77)

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1234/homeless-action-network-strategy.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1234/homeless-action-network-strategy.pdf>

## 2. Rough sleepers referred to support workers and housing options for a comprehensive assessment of needs

### Referrals for support and housing

Through joint training and getting to know local services, there will be an increased understanding and awareness of how to access and refer to outreach teams, day centres, local night shelters, direct access hostels and how to access local authority out of hours duty housing officers.

All areas should have provisions to prevent rough sleeping at any time of year, however the winter months often present the greatest risks to people's health. During periods of cold weather, the local authority homelessness teams and local outreach teams typically go out more often and will be able to provide a bed in temporary winter night shelter, bed and breakfast or an offer of immediate secure accommodation, such as through a Housing First project, if this provision is in place. It is vital that forces know the referral routes into these services.

### What police and local authority enforcement officers can do to help resolve issues

Multi-agency partnerships may provide increased opportunities to engage with people sleeping rough and or begging and those engaged in street-based activities, and people may be more likely to accept support.

English and Welsh governments have praised the joint working and collective efforts of all those involved in the recent coronavirus emergency responses. But these new partnerships and collaborations need to continue to develop so that we are able to provide sustainable housing solutions for everyone, alongside providing additional support to people to prevent future homelessness. However, in order to do this, we also need to address the systemic factors causing homelessness in the first place, such as housing supply, affordability, employment opportunities, inequalities in health and access to services.

It is important that any housing offer is partnered with person-centred support, this may need to be intensive at the commencement of a tenancy and include resettlement support to help set up the tenancy, bills etc. Ongoing support should be available throughout the tenancy to help deal with any issues that occur, especially if the tenancy becomes at risk. Support should then be provided to prevent repeat homelessness from occurring. Tenancy support is provided in all local authority areas and this may be through statutory or third sector services.

It may be that someone who is sleeping rough, begging or engaged in street-based activities already has a tenancy. However, there might be other pressures in their life that make it more difficult or even impossible to maintain the tenancy. For example, some former rough sleepers are victims of 'cuckooing' where their property is illegally occupied and made unsafe by drug dealers, etc. Support could then be put in place at this stage to prevent homelessness and offer support in other areas where it may be needed.



## Practice examples: Local knowledge and understanding

### 1. Local knowledge and links with local projects

Forces across England and Wales have widened their networks and formed links with local homelessness charities, faith-based organisations and projects supporting people experiencing homelessness and people who may be excluded from mainstream services. Developing relationships with specialist charities may have a positive impact on the way police are viewed and encourage those most vulnerable and excluded to build positive relationships and trust in police.<sup>79</sup>

Practical steps include:

- Regular visits by Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers to local day centres, night shelters and hostels, which helps to break down barriers, builds relationships with staff and residents, and improves partnership working.
- Using neighbourhood policing to get to know local people and problems, develop tailored solutions, and build trust in policing. While there are pressures to prioritise reactive and emergency work, a problem-solving approach in communities is central to the British model of policing by consent and is beneficial to policing.<sup>80</sup>
- Finding ways for public services, local police and local enforcement officers to increase their awareness

of local services and for there to be a collective understanding of how to signpost or refer into services. Information could be shared as part of local police and enforcement officers' inductions or as a joint training session, delivered by the local outreach team.

### 2. Police working more closely with support providers

#### **Humberside Police and Westbourne House Hostel**

Westbourne House Hostel's assistant manager and the local police community beat manager speak about the work they do:

#### Humberside Police working with residents and staff at Westbourne House Hostel<sup>81</sup>

### 3. Helping police build relationships with people on the street

#### **Cherwell District Council**

Some police officers and enforcement officers have small information cards, with a map and details of local homelessness services, places to have a meal, access to health care, washing facilities, street vets etc with access times. These can be given to people as part of a conversation.

Cards should be developed in partnership with police, local authorities and local services and could be maintained by a Street Vulnerability Multi-Agency meeting. The goal of the card should not just be to share general information but help build a relationship with a person and signpost them to services that can ultimately help them leave the street.

#### Cherwell District Council in North Oxfordshire has produced a guide.<sup>82</sup>

#### **Internationally**

Some US police departments require newly recruited officers to make contact with at least one homeless person per shift during field training. The purpose is to expose the new officers to issues surrounding homelessness, to ensure that they understand that the majority of people who sleep rough are not committing crimes, and to help them practise their communications and referral skills.<sup>83</sup>

#### International example of police responses to homelessness.<sup>84</sup>

79 <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-06/Submission-to-the-justice-commission-from-the-wallich-centre%20.pdf>

80 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, Policing for the Future 2018 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/515/515.pdf>

81 <https://www.humberside.police.uk/news/working-residents-and-staff-westbourne-house-hostel-hull>

82 <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/8265/homeless-pocket-guide-2018>

83 Critical Issues in Policing, Washington, D.C. Police Executive Research Forum 2018: Police Responses to Homelessness 2018 <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceResponseToHomelessness.pdf>

84 <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceResponseToHomelessness.pdf>

## Practice examples: Police working in partnership to help assess a person's needs

There have been many pilot schemes set up across the country in recent years to bring together local services to provide multidisciplinary outreach teams to reach out to those who are sleeping rough; offering help, support and accommodation offers as quickly as possible.

### 1. Inter-Agency Networks

#### Glasgow and Edinburgh

Through coordination, collaboration and networking, the Inter-Agency Networks brought focus on helping people sleeping rough and ensured mainstream services were in touch with people. The network is coordinated by the Simon Community and has partners from Police Scotland, day centres, addiction services, criminal justice, health, and housing.

This enabled multidisciplinary teams to take rapid action on shared knowledge about people of most concern. It is reported that the impact of the 'Winter Initiative' in 2017-18 and the network was described by some as a 'system change' for organisations in Edinburgh. [Winter Initiative Report](http://www.simonscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Views-from-the-Frontline_-The-2017_18-Winter-Initiative-Report.pdf).<sup>85</sup>

85 [http://www.simonscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Views-from-the-Frontline\\_-The-2017\\_18-Winter-Initiative-Report.pdf](http://www.simonscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Views-from-the-Frontline_-The-2017_18-Winter-Initiative-Report.pdf)

86 <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1234/homeless-action-network-strategy.pdf>

### 2. Multidisciplinary street outreach

#### Greater Manchester Police

Police are participating in multidisciplinary street outreach teams and are attending local voluntary sector and community projects.

[Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network Strategy](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1234/homeless-action-network-strategy.pdf).<sup>86</sup>

## Practice examples: Police public service centre and street triage

Prolonged periods of sleeping rough have a significant impact on someone's mental and physical health. The longer someone sleeps rough, the more likely it is they will develop additional mental and physical health needs, substance misuse issues and have contact with the criminal justice system. The more complex needs someone has, the more help they will need to move on from homelessness and rebuild their lives.

Several forces have established Police Street Triage teams, some of which are based within Public Service Centres, on patrol with frontline officers and paramedics or in custody suites. Mental health professionals and sometimes paramedics working collaboratively to ensure that all service users with health / mental health issues are effectively supported.

Utilising these resources when engaging with people who are sleeping rough can help people to access the support and services they need, keeping people away from the criminal justice system for being homeless, especially where no offences have been committed.

### 1. Outreach street triage

#### Shrewsbury and West Mercia Police

In 2016 West Mercia Police piloted an award-winning project to provide a multi-agency approach to rough sleeping. The Homeless Outreach Street Triage team (HOST) was

a combination of a plain clothes police officer, an outreach worker, a substance recovery worker, a mental health social worker, and a housing officer from the Council who visit people sleeping rough seven days a week, with street pastors assisting during weekends. Each agency involved committed to HOST has offered a designated day per week to cover. The aim was for a small group of two or three police officers to be attending every day. They built relationships and worked with individuals to get them the help and support they require as quickly as possible. It was recognised that just having a roof over your head is not enough, hence the multi-agency approach.<sup>87</sup> The initiative is included in the [West Mercia Police Equality and Diversity report 2017](https://www.westmercia.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/west-mercia/about-us/west-mercia-police-equality-diversity-report-2017.pdf).<sup>88</sup>

[West Mercia Police-award for Police, Housing officers and Shrewsbury Ark; working with people who were sleeping rough](https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2018/02/rough-sleepers-police-award/).<sup>89</sup>

### 2. Mental health triage service

#### Mid and west Wales

Dyfed-Powys police officers and Hywel Dda University Health Board personnel work side-by-side to help ensure those suffering mental health distress get the right support. Staff have access to information and specialist advice which can enable better decision-making. Resulting in the ability to provide a range of options available to police officers, as

87 Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Health and Well Being Board Meeting, <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s19164/10%20HWBB%20report%20-%20HOST%20-%202005.07.2018.pdf>

88 <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/west-mercia/about-us/west-mercia-police-equality-diversity-report-2017.pdf>

89 <https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2018/02/rough-sleepers-police-award/>



alternatives to detention for vulnerable individuals with mental health issues. The service provides better signposting and pathways into services for people following incidents.

**Dyfed Powys Police: Police and mental health teams**<sup>90</sup>

### 3. Street triage car

#### **Northamptonshire Police**

Dedicated frontline police officers working alongside a mental health professional. Mental health incidents are identified either through proactive observation of police incidents as they occur, or through requests for assistance from officers within the control room or at incidents where officers feel that mental health assessment and direction would be of benefit both to the police and the service user.

**Northamptonshire Police and NHS Police; Liaison and Triage**<sup>91</sup>

### 4. Street triage teams

#### **Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) partner with local police forces**

A North East NHS Trust has partnered with Cleveland and North Yorkshire Police and Durham Constabulary to make sure those in mental distress receive the right care, from the right people, as quickly as possible. Employing mental health professionals in dedicated street triage teams, the Trust is providing valuable support and guidance to police officers attending incidents involving those with mental health difficulties, learning disabilities or substance misuse problems. Where indicated, nurses are able to accompany officers to undertake immediate mental health assessments.

Working closely with secondary mental health services and other partner/support agencies, the teams are able to address people's individual needs; helping to reduce the number of unnecessary police detentions and hospital admissions. Street triage staff also deliver regular training sessions to constabulary staff, helping to raise mental health awareness.

### 5. Multi-agency command centres

#### **US police force example**

In order to coordinate and consolidate resources and improve responses. Several American states have brought together agencies who support people who are homeless to think through each type of call they may receive. The police then established a multi-agency command centre within its emergency communications facility. When calls involving homelessness are received, officers immediately triage them to determine which agency is best equipped to respond. Sometimes it is the police, but other times it may be another agency. This approach has the potential to improve the response to these calls, while preserving police resources for matters that require their attention.<sup>92</sup>

**International example of police responses to homelessness**<sup>93</sup>

### 6. Mental health outreach

In October 2019 it was announced by the the NHS that, in places where there are high numbers of rough sleeping, people will benefit from NHS mental health outreach.

The new services are part of co-ordinated efforts to ensure that people sleeping rough have better access to NHS mental health support – joining up care with existing outreach, accommodation, drug and alcohol and physical healthcare services. In each of these areas, outreach teams, NHS and local authority staff identify people sleeping rough and in need of help and support, facilitating access to GP services and then on to expert psychiatric help.

**England NHS – People sleeping rough 'hotspots' and NHS mental health outreach**<sup>94</sup>

90 <https://www.dyfed-powys.police.uk/en/newsroom/press-releases/a-police-and-health-project-helping-people-in-mental-distress-is-being-extended/>

91 <https://www.nhft.nhs.uk/police-liaison-triage>

92 Critical Issues in Policing, Washington, D.C. Police Executive Research Forum 2018: Police Responses to Homelessness 2018 <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceResponseToHomelessness.pdf>

93 <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceResponseToHomelessness.pdf>

94 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2019/10/rough-sleepers-in-homeless-hotspots-to-benefit-from-nhs-mental-health-outreach/>

## Practice examples: Support for specific groups of people

### 1. Women's projects

#### **The Wallich Cross Border Women's Project, South Wales**

The Cross-Border project works in partnership with three local authorities in South Wales. It offers accommodation and trauma-informed support. All the women supported have alcohol and/or substance misuse issues, in addition to other complex needs, including involvement with the criminal justice system.<sup>95</sup>

#### **Resources:**

- [Portchlight Kent – Hidden Female Homelessness](#)<sup>96</sup>
- [St Mungo's – Women and Rough Sleeping](#)<sup>97</sup>
- [Ministry of Justice – Police guidance on working with vulnerable women](#)<sup>98</sup>

### 2. LGBTQ projects

#### **The Albert Kennedy Trust**

Supporting LGBTQ+ young people in the UK who are facing or experiencing homelessness or living in a hostile environment. They can support people to stay safe during a crisis, source suitable accommodation and access specialist support.<sup>99</sup>

"A young person who had a difficult relationship with his family due to their sexuality, was referred to

our service by a concerned friend. At the time of contact the young person was making use of friends' offers to stay but when COVID-19 guidelines on lockdown measures were announced they found it difficult to secure offers. This resulted in the young person having to resort to sleeping rough.

A referral was made to the local council for assistance with emergency accommodation. The young person was referred to the outreach team and was advised that in order to be provided with emergency accommodation the young person would need to be verified on CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network, London). In addition to this, the young person also had a medical condition which meant prolonged rough sleeping would make it difficult to be compliant with medication and therefore, they could potentially also fall into a shielded group."

Albert Kennedy Trust highlight that young people do not rough sleep in the same manner as their adult counterparts and are more likely to be transient in their activity. Albert Kennedy Trust also find that young LGBTQ+ persons are also at higher risk of sexual exploitation, substances misuse and hate crimes when rough sleeping, and that they are less likely than their heterosexual counterparts to 'bed-down'.

"The young person expressed that they felt unsafe bedding down in one spot and so made agreements to stay awake in areas where the outreach team could locate them. This was communicated to the outreach teams however on multiple occasions, the outreach team arrived too late to verify that the young person was sleeping rough. Later in communication with the young person we discovered that the police had been moving them on from the agreed spots the young person would wait for the outreach team. This was communicated with the outreach team who informed us to instruct the young person to inform police officers they were waiting for an outreach team. We sent an email to the young person to show police officers, which would confirm that they were homeless and need to remain in a particular location to be verified by an outreach team to access accommodation. On two further occasions the young person was moved on by police despite showing our email and explaining their situation.

We raised this further with a local authority manager and interim accommodation was finally offered, providing the young person with an escape from sleeping rough."<sup>100</sup>

#### **Resources:**

- Stonewall Housing provide a [consultancy service to organisations](#)<sup>101</sup>
- Llamau provide [training to staff and organisations](#)<sup>102</sup>
- End Youth Homelessness Cymru, have produced a report – [Out On The Streets](#)<sup>103</sup>

### 3. Disability

The number of people experiencing homelessness who have a learning difficulty or disability is largely unknown, as they are often unrecognised or not disclosed. This may make it difficult for people to interact and communicate with others and if these are coupled with substance misuse or mental health issues, learning disabilities and difficulties are often missed.

#### **Resources:**

- Homeless Link have developed an [Autism and Homelessness briefing for front line staff](#)<sup>104</sup> and an [Autism and Homelessness Toolkit](#)<sup>105</sup>
- The Department of Health have produced a [Handbook for Professionals working in the criminal justice system working with offenders with disabilities](#)<sup>106</sup>

<sup>95</sup> <https://thewallich.com/services/cross-border-womens-project/>

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.porchlight.org.uk/news/kent-has-a-hidden-female-homelessness-crisis>

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.mungos.org/app/uploads/2018/10/Women-and-Rough-Sleeping-Report-2018.pdf>

<sup>98</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721190/police-guidance-on-working-with-vulnerable-women-web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721190/police-guidance-on-working-with-vulnerable-women-web.pdf)

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.akt.org.uk/what-we-do>

<sup>100</sup> Case study provided by Albert Kennedy Trust 2020

<sup>101</sup> <https://stonewallhousing.org/services/consultancy/>

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.llamau.org.uk/training>

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.llamau.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=1ab2fc66-c571-44f0-8ceb-2d1346f38303>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Autism%20%26%20HomelessnessOct%202015.pdf>

<sup>105</sup> [https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Autism\\_Homelessness\\_Toolkit.pdf](https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Autism_Homelessness_Toolkit.pdf)

<sup>106</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/216318/dh\\_124744.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216318/dh_124744.pdf)



#### 4. No recourse to public funds

Providing support and housing to people sleeping rough or begging if they have no recourse to public funds can be challenging. Services can support people to establish their current immigration status and identify what options they have to gain leave to remain, hardship support from the Home Office, support to help them return home, or help to find the right legal representation. It is essential that individuals access suitable immigration advice/representation to support them through these processes.

There are a small number of specialist advisers and accommodation providers that can house people with no recourse to public funds, such as; bed spaces in local hostels and night shelters that are not dependent on public funding and hosting and spare room networks, but this type of provision is not available in all areas.

Therefore, it is important to get to know what local services are available and where people can get their basic needs met, such as food, washing facilities and clothing, alongside where people may be able to access housing and legal advice.

**The No Accommodation Network – NACCOM** is an informal, UK-wide network of voluntary organisations who work to prevent destitution amongst people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants. The network provides legal advice, general advice and information, housing and accommodation.<sup>107</sup>

Examples of voluntary sector partners and the types of services provided across the UK include:

- **Share Tawe** Offers support, food and accommodation through volunteers in Swansea.<sup>108</sup>
- **Praxis** Can provide specialist advice and access housing or a hosting scheme, alongside advocacy, group work, ESOL classes and interpreting. They are also commissioned to provide specialist immigration advice and work with local authorities to improve services.<sup>109</sup>
- **Action Foundation** Provides supported accommodation in Tyne and Wear, by leasing properties from private landlords and subletting them free of charge. They also run a hosting scheme, recruiting and providing training to hosts and then matching them with people in need of accommodation.<sup>110</sup>

#### Resources:

- **No Recourse to Public Funds Network**<sup>111</sup>
- Homeless Link have produced – **guidance for supporting people with no recourse to public funds**<sup>112</sup>
- **Welsh Refugee Council**<sup>113</sup>
- **Refugee Council**<sup>114</sup>

<sup>107</sup> <https://nacom.org.uk/about/>

<sup>108</sup> <https://swansea.cityofsanctuary.org/share-tawe>

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.praxis.org.uk/>

<sup>110</sup> <https://actionfoundation.org.uk/>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/>

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Supporting%20people%20with%20NRPF%20July20.pdf>

<sup>113</sup> <https://wrc.wales/>

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/>

## 3. Immediate access to housing, and support for mental health and drug or alcohol-related addictions, alongside employment and training services

### Health needs

People who are sleeping rough experience some of the most severe health inequalities and report much poorer health than the general population. Many have co-occurring mental ill health, substance misuse and physical health needs.

People sleeping rough and people engaged in street-based activities face particular health issues associated with homelessness and face challenges in accessing mental, physical health and dental services.

Health services and local authorities have a number of tailored services that are intended to meet the specific needs of people sleeping rough, although provision varies across England and Wales.

We have seen how NHS staff and police work in partnership to support those experiencing mental health issues. Similarly, many rough sleeper and outreach teams work in partnership with health professionals to enable and increase access to health care and substance misuse services. Increased flexibility to use 'enhanced harm reduction' approaches will enable a public health approach to substance use.

Having an awareness of all the services that are available locally can help to ensure that the right support is provided at the right time, to people who are sleeping rough or engaged in street-based activities.

## Practice examples: Partnership working and multidisciplinary teams

### 1. Mental health out of hours 'Sanctuary'

**Dyfed Powys Police and Carmarthenshire County Council, Hywel Dda University Health Board**  
**The Twilight Sanctuary** is the first of its kind in Wales and offers a place of sanctuary for adults at risk of deteriorating mental health when other support-based services are closed. It offers practical and emotional support in a safe and welcoming environment.<sup>115</sup>

In partnership with Dyfed Powys Police and Carmarthenshire County Council, Hywel Dda University Health Board have commissioned and are working together with Mind and Hafal to run the service to provide support when people need it in Llanelli. The Twilight Sanctuary will offer sanctuary and support to people at risk of deteriorating mental health, providing an alternative venue to receive early access help.<sup>116</sup>

### 2. Medical and personal care to people who are homeless in hospital and on discharge

#### Pathway – England

The Pathway model offers medical and personal support to people who are homeless in hospital and within the community. Pathway is GP led and they bring experience and understanding of the need for providing care for people facing homelessness in the community. Training staff to enable patients to access the accommodation, care and support they need to recover when they leave hospital. Some Pathway teams also include Care Navigators who have personal experience of homelessness.<sup>117</sup>

#### Groundswell<sup>118</sup>

Groundswell provides support for people to have equal access to health services and promote good health. They do this through their partnership work with charities and through their **Homeless Health Peer Services**.<sup>119</sup>

#### Resources:

- **Public health approaches in policing: Discussion paper**<sup>120</sup>
- **Policing and Health Collaboration in England and Wales**<sup>121</sup>

### 3. Multidisciplinary teams

#### Cardiff Council, South Wales

A multidisciplinary team has been set up to support people who are sleeping rough and those who access emergency accommodation.

The multidisciplinary team includes; Adult Services, Substance Misuse intervention (including Rapid Access Prescribing Service), Mental Health Nurse and Social Worker, Primary Care NHS nurse, therapeutic outreach and counselling service, training / education and diversionary activities staff, homeless advocate and peer mentors. It is currently being expanded to include an Occupational Therapist and a Psychologist service as well as link workers from Police and Probation.

Based at the Housing Options Centre, the team provide immediate access to assessment, advice, support and harm reduction interventions to people who are sleeping rough.

Linked in to the **Cardiff Multi-disciplinary Team**,<sup>122</sup> the Council works alongside **The Wallich**<sup>123</sup> and **Salvation Army**<sup>124</sup> to provide a 7-day outreach service from early morning until night. This ensures ongoing support for anyone who continues to sleep rough and very early engagement with any person who starts to sleep out.

### 4. Helping people sleeping rough tackle substance misuse

#### Leicester – Day Centre No 5 - Multi-agency approach<sup>125</sup>

The centre is run by Inclusion Healthcare, a social enterprise commissioned by the Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to

provide primary healthcare services for people facing homelessness. Funding for the centre is provided by Leicester City Council (LCC) and by the local police and crime commissioner (PCC).

The centre has a focus on recovery and has a wet room where those with alcohol dependency issues can drink under supervised conditions to ensure safer drinking and creating an environment to engage people with treatment services.

Impact: The centre is now seeing around 150 people a month. A number of those just attend on an ad-hoc basis, but around 60 are visiting the centre a minimum of two to three times a week, some daily. Of those with a recognised substance misuse problem, 70 per cent are engaged with Turning Point, the local treatment provider.

### 5. Holistic drop-in service for street drinkers

#### Liverpool City Council and the Whitechapel Centre – Liverpool's Citysafe Partnership: Rehabilitation, Education, Support and Treatment (REST)<sup>126</sup>

The centre operates seven days a week and provides people facing homelessness with a safe and secure environment in which they can drink, but support is on offer at the same time. Addaction, a local drug and alcohol service provides substance use harm reduction advice and referrals on to mainstream substance misuse services and a psychologist from Mersey Care NHS Trust holds clinics one day a week, providing support and referrals to community mental health services, where necessary.

115 <http://www.llanelli-mind.org.uk/twilight-sanctuary/>

116 <http://www.hafal.org/2019/10/mental-health-twilight-sanctuary-launched-in-llanelli/>

117 <https://www.pathway.org.uk/>

118 <https://groundswell.org.uk/who-we-are/about-groundswell/>

119 <https://groundswell.org.uk/what-we-do/homeless-health-peer-advocacy/>

120 [https://cleph.com.au/application/files/7615/5917/9047/Public\\_Health\\_Approaches\\_in\\_Policing\\_2019\\_England.pdf](https://cleph.com.au/application/files/7615/5917/9047/Public_Health_Approaches_in_Policing_2019_England.pdf)

121 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/679391/Policing\\_Landscape\\_Review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/679391/Policing_Landscape_Review.pdf)

122 [https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Housing/rough-sleeping/what-we-are-doing/Pages/default.aspx#anchor\\_2](https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Housing/rough-sleeping/what-we-are-doing/Pages/default.aspx#anchor_2)

123 <https://thewallich.com/services/rough-sleepers-team-cardiff/#:~:text=Cardiff%20Rough%20Sleepers%20Intervention%20Team,are%20vulnerably%20housed%20within%20Cardiff.>

124 <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/homelessness/additional-services>

125 <https://www.local.gov.uk/leicester-day-centre-helps-rough-sleepers-tackle-substance-misuse>

126 <https://www.local.gov.uk/liverpool-city-council-providing-holistic-drop-service-street-drinkers>



## Practice examples: Training and employment

People sleeping rough, particularly those with high support needs, face huge challenges in gaining employment. In many cases employment, or moves towards employment, may only be realised when a level of stability has been achieved in other areas of life, such as housing.<sup>127</sup>

In 2010 St Mungo's homelessness charity reported that over half of their clients could not read and write to a functional level; 50 per cent said their lack of self-confidence was holding them back; and three-quarters had some form of mental health condition. 80 per cent of their clients said that work was one of their goals.<sup>128</sup>

Recent reforms to the benefit system are causing homelessness and making it harder for people experiencing homelessness to get back on their feet. Many people experiencing homelessness want to work but it is difficult to hold down a job without a stable roof over your head. However, many people do see working as the best way out of homelessness.

### 1. Challenging assumptions about homelessness and employment

#### **Crisis**<sup>129</sup>

Crisis provide a range of services throughout the country, services that can help people through their whole journey from sleeping rough through to learning basic skills and gain

volunteering, training and employment opportunities. Providing employment support alongside tailored help to address health, wellbeing, and other issues such as access to benefits, enables people to move quickly and successfully out of homelessness.<sup>130</sup>

### 2. Support for ex-offenders, practitioners and employers

#### **Nacro**

Nacro are a social justice charity who can provide advice, information and support to individuals, in prison or in the community. They are able to provide support to individuals, employers and practitioners regarding ex-offenders accessing learning, training and employment opportunities. In addition, they can provide support in relation to housing, health and justice to prevent and reduce crime and the risk of reoffending.<sup>131</sup>

### 3. Reintegrating ex-offenders into the community

#### **The Wallich, Wales – Building Opportunities, Skills and Success for ex-offenders (BOSS) project**

The BOSS project aims to reintegrate ex-offenders into their communities by giving people the skills, qualifications, confidence and support they need to gain employment or set up their own business. The Wallich recognise that the issues of homelessness and criminal behaviour are linked as a

criminal record and time spent in prison can cause people to lose their job and their home. Time spent away from the workplace and repeated rejection from employers can cause a loss of confidence that prevents ex-offenders from returning to work. BOSS will help reduce the strain on communities and community services by helping individuals regain control of their lives and move away from a reliance on benefits.<sup>132</sup>

127 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7698/CBP-7698.pdf>

128 <https://www.mungos.org/app/uploads/2017/07/St-Mungo%E2%80%99s-Work-Matters-report.pdf> p2

129 <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/benefits-and-employment/>

130 [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20620/crisis\\_skylight\\_evaluation-report\\_final\\_2017.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20620/crisis_skylight_evaluation-report_final_2017.pdf)

131 <https://www.nacro.org.uk/>

132 <https://thewallich.com/services/boss/>

## Practice examples: More effective multi-agency work

Many local authorities operate processes to bring together the partners working in an area. These include 'street vulnerability' and 'rough sleeping multi-agency' meetings or 'multi-agency risk assessment committees'.

Many were first developed to deal with reoccurring anti-social behaviour in local areas and meet fortnightly or monthly. Multi-agency attendance should include relevant agencies who are able to provide the support that people need. Members of the groups include police, local authority housing officers, other local authority officers (including enforcement officers), outreach teams, Department of Work and Pensions staff, substance misuse teams, NHS representatives, mental health services, and third sector agencies that can provide additional support and activities.

Multi-agency meetings should be a forum to understand the needs of people who are sleeping rough and/or begging. The most effective meetings have effective terms of references and are 'person-centred', that is they look to understand the needs of people sleeping rough and/or begging. This includes finding out someone's housing situation and whether they might be more exposed to risks or behaviours that may lead to criminal enforcement. Focus on trauma-informed engagement and offering solutions to suit individuals' needs enables people to access support and housing. Ultimately this means they are helped to move away from sleeping rough and street-based activities.

133 [https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Task%26Targeting\\_toolkit.pdf](https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Task%26Targeting_toolkit.pdf)

134 <https://stpetrocs.org.uk/>

### 1. Multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) or Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) projects

These aim to improve the safeguarding response for children and vulnerable adults through better information sharing and high quality and timely safeguarding responses. A number of these initiatives are already in place across England and Wales.

### 2. Toolkit for multi-agency meetings

**Homeless Link** offers a toolkit that includes case studies and offers guidance on [how to set up multi-agency meetings](#).<sup>133</sup>

### 3. Joint working between police and support agency networks

#### Devon & Cornwall Police and St Petrocs

In Plymouth there is a network of support services available for people who are sleeping rough and police work with outreach teams, share information and discuss challenges and the projects that all services are working on.<sup>134</sup>

*"I know the Neighbourhood Team in Truro have a good relationship with St Petrocs and attend weekly meetings to offer advice and support to clients etc. In Cornwall we also work closely with the Drug Alcohol Action Team on joint*

initiatives. Occasionally, we might experience incidents of aggressive begging, which attract a number of calls to the police, but this is unusual. We certainly view arrest for vagrancy offences as a last resort and they are very rare".<sup>135</sup>

*"Also, once a week, we run a 'Crew with Cops' where various agencies come and walk the streets of the city centre with us – Mental Health, Drink, Drugs, Council, Homeless Charities etc and we approach as a team any issues we encounter on the patch."<sup>136</sup>*

### 4. Co-producing solutions to tackle homelessness

#### Manchester Homelessness Partnership – Cityco and the Street Support Network

This partnership brings together people with lived experience of homelessness, the police, local authority, third sector, local businesses, universities and local community members. They have a website which provides a wealth of information for all, but most importantly places people at the centre of all they have produced. Providing practical advice and information for anyone who may find themselves homeless or having nowhere to go.

They also have a business support network and have co-produced a guide, with those who have experienced homelessness. 'Sharing Spaces' is for city centre organisations and provides guidance 'How to work with your colleagues and with people who may be homeless near your premises to provide safety and support for everyone'.

<https://streetsupport.net/>

135 Quote from Police Commander in Plymouth

136 Quote from a Sergeant from Plymouth Police Force

137 <https://cityco.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/MHP-storefront-engagement-guideline.pdf>

138 <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-local-authority-support-for-rough-sleepers-html>

139 <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-local-authority-support-for-rough-sleepers-html>

140 [https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/116649790/SARs\\_and\\_Homelessness\\_HSCWRU\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/116649790/SARs_and_Homelessness_HSCWRU_Report_2019.pdf)

#### Resource:

- [Manchester Homelessness Partnership – Storefront Engagement Guide](#)<sup>137</sup>

### 5. Co-ordination during the pandemic

#### Welsh local councils and public service partners

As part of the Welsh plan to tackle COVID-19 the Welsh Government asked every local authority to establish centralised rough sleeping co-ordination cells, which included relevant health and third sector providers and other partners. Each cell was asked to plan and manage the accommodation and support offered, holding a central registry of staff; co-ordinating supplies and equipment; oversight of responses and co-ordinating information and advice to the most exposed to the risk of the virus.<sup>138</sup> Across Wales in the first months of the pandemic more than 2,200 people sleeping rough or in inadequate accommodation were helped into safer emergency accommodation by the work of the cells.<sup>139</sup>

### 6. Helping keep people who are homeless safe

Evidence from 14 adult safeguarding reviews where homelessness was a factor found that there can be reluctance to view sleeping rough as a safeguarding matter, particularly in relation to self-neglect. Instead there is evidence that agencies view it mainly as a housing matter when assessing a person's care and support needs.<sup>140</sup>



In England, the Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018) said that Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) are rarely used in the case of people sleeping rough. However, the strategy says that Safeguarding Adult Boards should conduct a review when a person who sleeps rough dies or is seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected. This is particularly when there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult. Lessons learned from these reviews can lead to improvements in local systems and services.<sup>141</sup>

141 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf)

## 4. Permanent accommodation with ongoing holistic support to maintain a tenancy

A review for Crisis of what works to end rough sleeping found that there were key themes in the approaches that were successful in supporting people move away from the streets.<sup>142</sup>

Recognising that people who are sleeping rough are individuals and have diverse and different needs. Early interventions provide an opportunity to carry out a full assessment of need. The longer someone stays out the greater the risk is to them becoming trapped on the streets.

Accommodation offers may take different forms such as: emergency accommodation or supported accommodation that can be provided on a short-term basis until permanent housing is found. Long-term supported accommodation can provide housing alongside intensive support for people needing specialist care and support may be most suited to people with long-term health needs who are unable to live independently.<sup>143</sup>

Offers of permanent accommodation could be provided through the social or private rented sector and should be matched with resettlement support to help set up and manage their tenancy.

For example, this may include access to furniture, budgeting support, help to ensure that housing costs and utilities are paid, and practical support to set up connections within the community like registering with a GP and dentist, and then ongoing tenancy support to help maintain their tenancy. There should also be processes in place to identify and engage tenants who could struggle to maintain their tenancy without support.

This housing-led approach should be taken and offers of permanent accommodation should be person centred, packaged with the ongoing support to meet individual need. Person-centred support offers choice, and is dependent on partnership working and links to local services that can provide access to support and specialist services, such as mental health or substance use support. This means that cross-sector collaboration, partnership working, and strategic commissioning is required

Being housing-led, and able to offer rapid access to settled housing, includes the use of the Housing First approach.

142 Mackie, P., Johnsen, S. and Wood, J. (2017), Ending rough sleeping: what works? An international

143 [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/239951/everybody\\_in\\_how\\_to\\_end\\_homelessness\\_in\\_great\\_britain\\_2018.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/239951/everybody_in_how_to_end_homelessness_in_great_britain_2018.pdf)

## Practice examples: Housing First

Housing First is an evidence-based approach to successfully support people who have histories of long-term or repeat homelessness alongside multiple and complex needs, which may include; mental, physical or emotional health needs, drug and/or alcohol dependency, involvement with the criminal justice system, and experience of domestic abuse. The majority of services are often not designed to support individuals with multiple and complex needs and Housing First has been shown to be effective in supporting people break the cycle of instability.

The evidence says Housing First has been “proven to be highly effective” to support people who police officers are likely to engage with, including people with co-occurring substance use and/or mental health problems.<sup>144</sup>

Housing First is based on some clear principles:

- Housing is a human right – prioritises unconditional access to housing
- Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed
- Housing and treatment support are separated
- Individuals have choice and control – over type, location etc of housing and about engagement with support
- The service is person-centred – based on an individual’s strengths, goals and aspirations

- Based on an active engagement approach – without coercion
- A harm reduction approach is used with an aim to reduce harm and promote recovery

There are no conditions around ‘housing readiness’ before providing someone with a home and once a stable home is secured, intensive unconditional personalised support and case management takes place, for as long as is required.

Housing First successfully ends the homelessness of people who are offered it, with tenancy sustainment rates of between 80-90% typical for the model.

The comprehensive nature of Housing First support is proven to improve outcomes across a range of other health and social care needs in addition to reducing anti-social and criminal behaviour and decreasing ineffective service use. Some providers have secured funding from statutory sources such as Clinical Commissioning Groups in England (CCGs), Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Public Health as a result.<sup>145</sup>

Among a minority of homeless people, with high and complex needs, contact rates with the criminal justice system can be high, which generates significant costs. There is some evidence that Housing First can radically reduce rates of offending and of contact with Police and Courts, producing potentially significant savings.<sup>146</sup>

144 Mackie, P., Johnsen, S., and Wood, J. (2017) Ending rough sleeping: what works? An international

145 <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Making%20Housing%20First%20Effective.pdf>

146 [https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/The%20cost%20effectiveness%20of%20Housing%20First%20in%20England\\_March%202019\\_0.pdf](https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/The%20cost%20effectiveness%20of%20Housing%20First%20in%20England_March%202019_0.pdf)

### 1. Housing First helping women

#### **Threshold Housing First, Manchester**

In 2015 this pilot project in Manchester started to offer a specialist form of Housing First, targeted at women who were homeless and had a history of offending. The women using Threshold Housing First had experienced trauma in their lives and the service provided a wide range of support, including personalised intensive case management and housing-related support.

33 women used the Threshold Housing First between April 2015 and April 2017 and 67 per cent of the referrals came through a criminal justice-related service. An evaluation of the service said:

**“Women who were in sustained contact with Threshold Housing First appeared to show a marked reduction in convictions and offending behaviour, compared to the patterns of conviction they reported prior to engaging with the service. Only four women were either returned to prison and/or committed an offence, during the period for which they were supported by Threshold Housing First.”<sup>147</sup>**

#### **Resources:**

- Homeless Link – [Housing First Life Stories](#)<sup>148</sup>
- Homeless Link – [Housing First – Impact in the Community](#)<sup>149</sup>
- The Wallich – [Housing First Report – Wales](#)<sup>150</sup>

147 [https://www.york.ac.uk/media/chp/documents/Threshold Housing First Evaluation Report - FINAL \(14-3-18\).pdf](https://www.york.ac.uk/media/chp/documents/Threshold%20Housing%20First%20Evaluation%20Report%20-%20FINAL%20(14-3-18).pdf)

148 <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/life-stories>

149 [https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Housing%20First%20and%20its%20impact%20in%20the%20community\\_Sep19\\_0.pdf](https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Housing%20First%20and%20its%20impact%20in%20the%20community_Sep19_0.pdf)

150 [https://thewallich.com/app/uploads/2019/11/HousingFirst\\_Report.pdf](https://thewallich.com/app/uploads/2019/11/HousingFirst_Report.pdf)



## Practice examples: Alternatives to enforcement activity

Where local police are asked to respond to homelessness and rough sleeping, it is of course vital that they consider the needs of communities, residents and businesses in the round. However, criminalisation is not the most appropriate response in all circumstances, as it does not tackle the problems people have, and there is evidence that it can also push people further from the help they need.<sup>151</sup> Access to support and housing should be the main priority.

### 1. Reducing anti-social behaviour and enabling access to services

#### **Wrexham, North Wales – Community Care Collaborative: Multi-agency access hub**<sup>152</sup>

In 2016 a 'Gold Command' task force was developed to deal with the ongoing community safety concerns of the public and to provide support to services. The project ran for 2 years and was regarded as being successful in reducing anti-social behaviour, a reduction in New Psychoactive Substances use amongst a cohort of individuals, improved public and business perception and improving the health and wellbeing of users.

One of the key successes highlighted was the development of the Community Care Collaborative Hub. Where people experiencing homelessness access advice multiple

services under one roof and as a result places less demands on mainstream public services.

#### **Impact**

Anecdotal evidence from North Wales Police suggests that there has been a 42 per cent reduction in criminal activity with the core group of repeat Hub attenders.<sup>153</sup>

The Community Care Hub has also been visited by other police forces who were experiencing similar issues in their localities. **Stoke-on-Trent Police visit Wrexham Community Care Hub**<sup>154</sup>

### 2. Liaison and diversion services

People can be diverted (away from the criminal justice system) at any stage in the police and justice systems, including prevention before people are even arrested, at the point of arrest, while decisions are being made in the justice system, or before, during and after custody or community sentences.<sup>155</sup> 'Diversion' happens towards health and social (care) services to meet people's needs and can mean diversion out of or within the police and justice systems, so that it does not simply mean 'letting someone off'.<sup>156</sup> Liaison and diversionary services link with people at the early stages of the criminal system pathway. They aim to identify vulnerabilities in people earlier

which reduces the likelihood that people will reach a crisis-point and helps to ensure the right support can be put in place from the start.<sup>157</sup>

The roll-out of NHS England commissioned Liaison and Diversion services, aimed to achieve 100 per cent coverage across England by March 2020.<sup>158</sup>

#### **NHS commissioning of Liaison and Diversion schemes in England**<sup>159</sup>

#### **Resources:**

- **NHS England – Liaison and Diversion Service Specification 2019**<sup>160</sup>

In Wales, the Together for Mental Health Deliver Plan 2019-2020 identifies the need to reduce the number of people in mental health crisis detained in police cells as a place of safety.<sup>161</sup> Progress relating to this is identified in the development of street triage schemes and the 'Twilight Sanctuary Scheme' South Wales.

### 3. Early intervention to divert people away from criminal justice system, and to address health and social inequalities.

#### **Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) – Liaison and Diversion Team**

Delivered in partnership with those who have lived experience – The Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Team work with the police within

Police custody, Magistrates Court, Crown Court and in the community. They provide early intervention services, improve the liaison between agencies, and address health and social inequalities in order to appropriately divert people away from the criminal justice system.

The team have embedded lived experience into the structure of the service. The Liaison and Diversion team includes staff with a range of lived experience, peer mentors and support workers, which is more than any other Liaison and Diversion team in the country. The team work in partnership with other local agencies such as; the Changing Futures Together, The Centre for Voluntary Action, Shelter and Anawim, a local women's centre.<sup>162</sup>

### 4. Diversion from custody to place of safety or to accident and emergency

#### **Avon and Wiltshire NHS and Police – Mental Health Partnership**

This service works in conjunction with all emergency services and will offer advice and support to professionals and individuals who may be experiencing mental health difficulties. The service has senior mental health practitioners who work to find the least restrictive means of support whilst making best use of emergency services' time, this may result in diversion away from custody, place of safety or accident and emergency.<sup>163</sup>

151 [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240604/cr0220\\_vagrancyact\\_report\\_aw\\_web.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240604/cr0220_vagrancyact_report_aw_web.pdf)

152 <https://ccc-wales.org/community-care-hub/>

153 <https://ccc-wales.org/our-impact/>

154 <https://www.voicesofstoke.org.uk/2018/11/02/visit-wrexham-nps-taskforce-community-hub/>

155 Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (2009), Diversion – a better way for criminal justice and mental health. SCMH: London. <http://www.ohrn.nhs.uk/resource/policy/DiversionSCMH.pdf>

156 College of Policing (2016), Mental health and the criminal justice system, accessed 18 April 2019

157 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/health-just/liason-and-diversion/about/>

158 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/health-just/liason-and-diversion/about/>

159 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/health-just/liason-and-diversion/about/>

160 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/national-liason-and-diversion-service-specification-2019.pdf>

161 <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/together-for-mental-health-delivery-plan-2019-to-2022.pdf>

162 <https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/secure-care-and-offender-health/criminal-justice-liason-and-diversion-team/>

163 <http://www.awp.nhs.uk/services/community/street-triage-service/>

## 5. Whole system approach to provide an alternative to the criminal justice system

### **Gwent and South Wales – Early Intervention Diversion Scheme – Llamau**<sup>164</sup>

**Future4** is a partnership between G4S, Safelives, Include and Llamau offering early intervention diversion for young people 18–25, and a whole system approach for women involved with the criminal justice system across Gwent and South Wales.

This scheme provides young people and women alternative options to the criminal justice system through intensive one-to-one support to address the root causes of their offending, and a range of tailored educational and awareness-raising programmes.

## 6. Alternatives to arrest

Some forces have introduced projects which offer deferred prosecution schemes, to those who are eligible. They also offer alternatives to immediate arrest and charge.

Some deliver offender management-style programmes that are primarily set up to reduce instances of anti-social behaviour, ‘low-level’ crime and to reduce the number of victims of crime.

However, best practice would be not to use enforcement or arrest anyone for sleeping rough, begging or engaging in street-based activities where no criminal activity has taken place. Person-centred and trauma-informed approaches should be made with offers of support, signposting and referrals.

<sup>164</sup> <https://www.llamau.org.uk/>

<sup>165</sup> <https://www.durham-pcc.gov.uk/News-and-Events/News-Archive/2019/oct-dec/Global-award-for-pioneering-Checkpoint-offender-programme.aspx>

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.northwales-pcc.gov.uk/en/Advice/Checkpoint-Cymru.aspx>

## 7. Support to reduce victims of crime and reoffending

### **Durham Constabulary – Offender Management Programme – ‘Checkpoint’**

In 2015 Durham Constabulary set up a programme to reduce the number of victims of crime in an approach to cut reoffending. They implemented a four-month offender management programme which is bespoke to the individual, giving people the opportunity to tackle underlying issues such as mental health and substance misuse issues. It aims to improve the life chances and provide access to health-based interventions.

Since 2016, Checkpoint has formed part of a PhD study between Durham Constabulary and Cambridge University. Trial results show that the reoffending rate for those who complete Checkpoint is 16 per cent less than those who were dealt with by other traditional criminal justice methods.<sup>165</sup>

## 8. Support to reduce offending and avoid prosecution

### **North Wales Police – Offender Management Programme – Check Point Cymru**<sup>166</sup>

North Wales Police have also implemented a similar scheme called ‘Check Point Cymru’ which will offer guidance and support to minor offenders which will give them a chance to avoid prosecution and a criminal record. Offenders are given the option to sign a similar contract, pledging to accept help from rehabilitation services. They will be supervised by navigators, some of whom have previously worked in substance misuse projects, probation and mental health services. If they break their contract they will be

charged with the original offence, but the hope is that this scheme will help to keep minor offenders out of the criminal justice system.

### **Police Professional.com article about new crime reduction programme to be rolled out in Wales**<sup>167</sup>

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.policeprofessional.com/news/pioneering-crime-reduction-programme-to-be-rolled-out-in-wales/>



## Practice examples: Deferred enforcement

### 1. Support to reduce homelessness and begging

#### Essex Police – Operation Luscombe – Traffic Light System initiative

Essex Police have a Town Centre Proactive Team who tackle homelessness and begging through working with local partner organisations. Initially set up in 2018 by the City of London Police, followed by additional pilot projects in Essex – Operation Luscombe takes a staged approach to dealing with begging at every point of police intervention or enforcement. People are initially invited to attend an intervention hub which is held every week. At the hub, people can access support with housing, health and welfare, benefits, finances, addiction and substance misuse issues. The priority being that those who need help and support, will receive it.

The Operation Luscombe traffic light escalation route is based on an initial sighting of an individual seen begging. In these instances, an invitation to attend the hub is provided; positive engagement (green), should the individual be seen begging again they will be issued a Community Protection Warning (Amber), followed by a Community Protection Notice (Red) and are then arrestable if the red ticket is breached (Blue).

The National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Anti-Social Behaviour and Homelessness was keen for Essex to pilot this scheme before recommending this to forces and local authorities as a suggested partnership approach to reducing homelessness across England and Wales, where possible.

Contact: [Hayley.langmead@essex.police.uk](mailto:Hayley.langmead@essex.police.uk)

### 2. Support to reduce begging and associated anti-social behaviour

#### Manchester GMP, Manchester City Council and partner agencies – Multi Agency Street Engagement Hub

The Street Engagement Hub 'model' is an assertive but holistic partnership approach facilitated by Greater Manchester Police and Manchester City Council. It aims to proactively engage individuals with the right services and address their underlying support needs, ultimately, to reduce begging and the associated anti-social behaviour in Manchester City Centre.

Police and council officers refer people known to be begging to the Hub, where they have access to a wide range of services provided by partners including voluntary and community sector organisations. Working together assistance and support includes; first aid, access to health care services, access to substance misuse services, support for mental health, dedicated services for women, help with benefits, opportunity to sell the Big Issue, hepatitis C testing and treatment and referral to the A Bed Every Night (ABEN) scheme which provides safe accommodation for those sleeping rough.

The benefits of the Hub are that it is designed to reduce and where possible remove barriers that may make it challenging to access services. Processes are accelerated such as same-day prescriptions to help people manage their heroin addiction. Addressing needs in this way can prevent people from entering or furthering their journeys into the criminal justice system.

The project started as a pilot in November 2019 and 64 people attended weekly sessions in the first 6 weeks.<sup>168</sup>

The Hub team is currently developing a resource to provide details of outcomes, case studies and guidance to help others establish a similar Street Engagement Hub approach.

[Manchester Government information about the Street Engagement Hub pilot](#)<sup>169</sup>

168 [https://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/8355/innovative\\_pilot\\_scheme\\_to\\_support\\_people\\_out\\_of\\_begging\\_in\\_manchester\\_city\\_centre](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/8355/innovative_pilot_scheme_to_support_people_out_of_begging_in_manchester_city_centre)

169 [https://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/8355/innovative\\_pilot\\_scheme\\_to\\_support\\_people\\_out\\_of\\_begging\\_in\\_manchester\\_city\\_centre](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/8355/innovative_pilot_scheme_to_support_people_out_of_begging_in_manchester_city_centre)

## Practice examples: Criminal justice support services

### 1. Support to safeguard communities and reduce offending

#### **Essex – Open Road Criminal justice support services**

Working in partnership with criminal justice partners, including the police, Essex Community Rehabilitation Company and the Probation Service. The project is aimed at safeguarding communities and reducing offending. Working with men and women who are involved in the criminal justice system and their families, if appropriate. Providing support to address the issues which cause or may cause them to offend. Volunteer workers, mentors and peers play an important role in the delivery of support and are trained and supported to meet the individual needs of people accessing their range of specialist services.

A street drinkers project has been set up in partnership with Essex police, the council anti-social behaviour team, the council zone manager and other organisations. The idea of this project is to engage, assess and signpost people experiencing homelessness into treatment and accommodation.

Appropriate Adult service, providing support and safeguarding the rights, welfare and participation of children and vulnerable adults who are detained and or being interviewed by the police.<sup>170</sup>

170 <https://www.openroad.org.uk/Pages/Category/criminal-justice-services>

## Practice examples: 24 / 7 Project

### 1. Assertive support for criminal behaviours and to help reduce hospital admissions

#### **Derby – Derby City Mission – Proactive Engagement Enforcement Project**<sup>171</sup>

The Police and Crime Commissioner's Office are working in partnership with Public Health England, Derby Homes and East Midlands Ambulance Service.

Recognising that perpetrators of crime and anti-social behaviour can also be vulnerable and in need of support, has led to the development of a new project, 'Safe Space', which assertively supports people with criminal behaviours. The aim is to encourage people to engage with services, to find housing or cease street activity.

Overnight provision is available for clients who are identified by police and ambulance services. The police and ambulance services hold a "green card", so that if they encounter someone who may have taken drugs or alcohol and do not need emergency assistance or to have enforcement measures taken against them, they can access 'the space' to rest during the day or overnight. This reduces the need for immediate enforcement measures and as they have an onsite paramedic who can address health needs, so it also prevents the need for hospital admissions.

Many individuals reported that the 'enforcement' element, from the police and probationary services, was essential in helping people engage with the project in the first place. They were then more willing to work with drug programmes, housing agencies and mental health providers.<sup>172</sup>

171 <https://www.derbycitymission.org.uk/safe-space>

172 <https://www.derbyshire.police.uk/news/derbyshire/news/safer-neighbourhood-news/south/2019/april/homelessness-partnership-wins-national-award/>



# Closing comments

During the coronavirus pandemic we have seen communities, government, statutory and third sector organisations and other public services work together to make sure some of the most exposed people at risk of the outbreak were helped into emergency accommodation. We need to continue to work together, with a sense of urgency to find solutions, to make sure this progress continues.

Criminalising some of society's most exposed members reflects poorly on the way society treats people who have experienced poverty and trauma. It also reminds us that we are not doing what works to end begging and rough sleeping. People experiencing one of the most visible and extreme forms of homelessness must have support and housing to move away from the streets for good.<sup>173</sup>

This guide aims to offer the best current evidence on ending rough sleeping and/or begging, and specific examples of police forces and local authorities working well with other services to achieve this.

The practice examples highlighted in this guide demonstrate what can be achieved when we work collaboratively and create partnerships that meet the needs of the people we support. This approach alongside other models of working such as assertive outreach, Housing First and housing-led approaches, will in turn help support both English and Welsh governments aims to end rough sleeping.

The evidence shows that to address the root causes of anti-social behaviour, linked to rough sleeping and/or begging, there is a need for trauma-informed approaches within policing and the criminal justice system. These approaches take into account what has happened to people who are currently sleeping rough, begging or engaged in street-based activities, and it means taking a problem-solving approach.

In these cases, an enforcement approach is not likely to address the root causes and should only be used as a last resort where there is immediate risk. This involves police building relationships and connecting with people, rather than identifying people by their housing status or situation and working well with other services that can provide the support a person needs.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach, each person is unique, and have their own histories. However, it is vital to use trauma-informed training and practices to recognise and understand how previous adverse childhood experiences and traumatic events in adult life may present in people's behaviour and thinking.

Multi-agency partnership working, a good understanding of local resources and developing relationships with local services will help to more effectively link people who are rough sleeping and/or begging to the right, individualised support and housing. Better use of this approach could result

in fewer people coming into contact with the police and criminal justice services in the first place.

The National Police Chiefs' Council's Policing Vision 2025 says that they will "support multi-agency neighbourhood projects that build more cohesive communities and solve local problems – recognising that it will often not be realistic for the police to play the central role".<sup>174</sup>

Many of the practice examples included in this document were initially set up by forces or with Police and Crime Commissioner involvement but are now operated with a low level of direct police involvement, freeing up police time and resources to focus on other issues. Across the country we are already seeing the increase of multi-disciplinary teams and services coming together to pool funding, knowledge and expertise and the benefits to individuals and communities are evident.

Recognising that what affects one of us affects all of us; when some people are struggling, it hurts everyone. Being homeless or at risk of becoming makes it hard to take part in society and to thrive. Making sure that everyone has safe, stable housing will benefit us all by creating stronger and more productive communities.

As examples of new practice and evidence come to light, we will update and republish this guide. In order for the guide to be a practical and useful document, it would be greatly appreciated if details of any new initiatives that are piloted or embedded into services that provided support to people who are sleeping rough, begging or engaged in street-based activities across England or Wales, could be shared with the Crisis Best Practice Team.

If you would like to let us know about any new initiatives or if you have any questions regarding the content of this guide please contact us at:

**[Bestpractice@crisis.org.uk](mailto:Bestpractice@crisis.org.uk)**

173 Morris, N (2019) 'Scrap the Act' The Case for repealing the Vagrancy Act (1824). London: Crisis

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## About Crisis

Crisis is the national charity for homeless people. We are committed to ending homelessness. Every day we see the devastating impact homelessness has on people's lives. Every year we work side by side with thousands of homeless people, to help them rebuild their lives and leave homelessness behind for good. Through our pioneering research into the causes and consequences of homelessness and the solutions to it, we know what it will take to end it.

Together with others who share our resolve, we bring our knowledge, experience and determination to campaign for the changes that will solve the homelessness crisis once and for all. We know that together we can end homelessness.

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Together  
we will end  
homelessness