

**Brighton & Hove
Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016**

Draft Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016

*Making sure no-one has the need to sleep
rough in Brighton & Hove by 2020*



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

About this Draft Strategy

This draft strategy details our proposed approach to making sure that no-one has the need to sleep rough in Brighton & Hove by 2020.

The Rough Sleeping Strategy is being developed in phases to give stakeholders opportunity to help shape the city's priorities and future action:

- 1. Position Paper (Nov/Dec 2015):** this was published in November 2015 and summarised the city's current approach to rough sleeping. The Paper was used as the basis for consultation in December 2015. Consultation included a Summit that brought together a range of stakeholders including councillors, the council, NHS, Police, third sector advocates, service providers and business community, relevant professional experts and service user representatives to review the city's approach to rough sleeping.
- 2. Draft Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016 (Mar/Apr 2016):** building on the Position Paper and options developed in the summit. We wish to consult on the draft strategy and particularly welcome contributions from those who are, or have been, sleeping rough. The results of this consultation will help shape the final strategy.
- 3. Final Strategy (July 2016):** stakeholders will be encouraged to formally sign-up to the vision, aims and objectives of the strategy to ensure a unified and consistent approach across the city.
- 4. Implementation 2016/17:** Delivery of the city's strategy and remodelling or redesigning services where necessary.

To comment on this draft strategy, please visit the Council's Consultation Portal at <http://consult.brighton-hove.gov.uk/portal>. You can also write to us as Housing Strategy Team, Brighton & Hove City Council, 4th Floor Bartholomew House, Bartholomew Square, Brighton BN1 1JE or housing.strategy@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Comments on this initial stage are welcome between 16 March and 17 April 2016.

Introduction from the Lead Member for Rough Sleeping

The issue of people sleeping rough has become more acute with a visibly increased presence on the streets. Most importantly, this impacts on the individual's life chances, the street is a very vulnerable place to be, but it also affects the city's reputation and adds costs to public services and business.

Homelessness and rough sleeping could happen to many of us with little warning, from the loss of a job or a relationship breakdown for example. These difficult times can be compounded if people have other needs such as mental health, addiction and other vulnerabilities.

The city's current approach to rough sleeping is being re-assessed in partnership with all groups and organisations providing services, the wider community and with commissioners. We have used the thoughts and ideas of many partners shared at our Rough Sleeping summit and earlier consultation, plus research with those who are sleeping rough or have previously slept rough, to develop this draft strategic plan which shows how we can come together as a city to improve lives. We need to make sure we combine our efforts with a joint sense of energy and purpose to focus on supporting people to move forward with their lives, regain their health and find secure housing.

If the city does not reduce rough sleeping there will be:

- More health problems and early deaths
- More suffering and hardship
- Crisis pressure on the Police, hospital accident and emergency and other services
- Crime and anti-social behaviour associated with rough sleeping and street drinking
- Increased costs to the local authority, Police and NHS
- Reputation damage as a caring city
- Tourism impact from street begging

I hope that all the partners across the city who work with people sleeping rough will endorse the final Rough Sleeping Strategy expected (add month), therefore I very much welcome your thoughts on this draft. Please help us make sure that we have identified the correct priorities and actions to deliver our vision "*To make sure no-one has the need to sleep rough in Brighton & Hove by 2020.*"



Councillor Clare Moonan
Lead Member for Rough Sleeping

Contents

About this Draft Strategy	2
Introduction from the Lead Member for Rough Sleeping	3
1. The City’s Strategy	6
The City’s Vision	6
Strategic Principle: Working together, a partnership	6
The City’s Strategic Priorities	7
Responding to the Position Paper Consultation	8
2. Rough Sleeping in Brighton & Hove	10
What do we mean by People Sleeping Rough?	10
The City’s Challenge	10
Local Inequalities	11
Local Causes of Rough Sleeping	12
Rough Sleeping Amongst Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* People	12
Predicted Future Need	13
3. The City’s Connected Approach.....	14
Housing Strategy 2015 & Homeless Strategy 2014	14
Housing Related Support Commissioning Strategy 2015	14
Brighton & Hove Better Care Plan	15
Housing Related Support Cost Benefit Analysis	15
Resourcing the Strategy	16
Priority 1: Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping	17
Goal 1: Develop a consistent citywide approach to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping	18
Goal 2: Improve housing options for single person households.....	18
Strategic Action Plan: Priority 1: Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping	19
Priority 2: Rapid Assessment and Reconnection.....	21
Goal 3: Provide rapid assessment, support planning and effective reconnection	22
Goal 4: Target people sleeping rough with complex needs to ensure there is an integrated plan to move people into accommodation	23

Goal 5: Ensure services are sensitive to the needs of all vulnerable groups including LGBT* people, young, older, women and ex-service personnel	24
Strategic Action Plan: Priority 2: Rapid Assessment and Reconnection	25
Priority 3: Improving Health.....	27
Goal 6: Improve outcomes by delivering integrated primary care led health and social care services that are accessible to homeless people and support them to regain their independence.....	27
Goal 7: Ensure those on the streets have access to emergency shelter during extreme weather	29
Strategic Action Plan: Priority 3: Improving Health.....	29
Priority 4: A Safe City	31
Goal 8: Focus on managing risks, harm and promoting appropriate behaviour	31
Goal 9: Promote alternatives to discourage begging	32
Strategic Action Plan: Priority 4: A Safe City.....	33
Priority 5: Pathways to Independence	35
Goal 10: Have a flexible accommodation pathway that responds to changing needs	35
Goal 11: Develop bespoke supported housing options where appropriate	36
Goal 12: Ensure timely move-on to independent accommodation	36
Strategic Action Plan: Priority 5: Pathways to Independence	37
How to Respond to the Consultation.....	39

1. The City's Strategy

The City's Vision

People sleeping rough die younger than the general population¹ yet the cost of preventing rough sleeping or supporting someone back into independence is much less than the cost to the individual and society than a life on the streets². Our strategy vision is:

“To make sure no-one has the need to sleep rough in Brighton & Hove by 2020”

Strategic Principle: Working together, a partnership

Within these priorities there is an underlying principle that, as a city, whether service commissioner, provider, community group, or individual with the desire to help, **we need to work together** to provide a consistent message and response to rough sleeping to support people to turn a corner and improve their lives.

Rough sleeping and the impact of the wider street population affect everybody in Brighton & Hove. People sleeping rough die younger, suffer ill health and are more vulnerable to violence than those in the wider street population (who may be housed). It impacts on businesses, residents and tourists through shoplifting, aggressive begging, street drinking and other anti-social behaviour. These place additional demands on the council, police and health services.

Fundamentally, however, seeing people sleeping rough fosters the desire to help, whether from those providing services, those giving their spare time or those giving donations of food, clothing and other items to help those in need.

The city's strategy needs to harness this expertise, energy and goodwill to enable all those with a stake in the city to work together and deliver our shared vision in partnership:

- Street Outreach Services (St. Mungo's)
- Brighton Housing Trust (including First Base Day Centre)
- Brighton YMCA
- St John Ambulance
- Community and Voluntary Sector
- Faith based groups
- Churches Winter Emergency Shelters
- Pavilions Drug and Alcohol Services
- Private landlords

¹ Homelessness Kills, Crisis, 2012

² Research into the Financial Benefits of the Supporting People Programme, DCLG, 2009

- YMCA DownsLink Group
- Stopover (Impact Initiatives)
- Sanctuary Housing (The Foyer)
- Night Stop Plus
- Clocktower Sanctuary
- Emmaus
- Sussex Armed Forces Network
- British Legion
- Help for Veterans
- Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC)
- NHS organisations including Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust, Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals Trust, South East Coast Ambulance Service, Sussex Community Trust
- Sussex Police (Street Community Neighbourhood Police Team)
- Sussex Homeless Outreach, Reconnection and Engagement (SHORE) Partnership
- Homeless Link
- People with experience of sleeping rough
- The residents and visitors of Brighton, Hove, Portslade and Sussex

A constructive and meaningful dialogue is needed with those groups working in the city to support people sleeping rough who are not connected to the city's formal partnership structures. This will help all groups collectively understand what they want to achieve and make sure this good will and our combined efforts are not keeping people on the streets, but are focussed on getting people off the streets.

A set of five partnership **Homeless Strategy Working Groups** are tasked with developing action plans to implement the priorities of the Homeless Strategy 2014. These are focussed on the Integrated Support Pathway; Work & Learning; Youth Homelessness; Homeless Prevention; and Day & Street Services. Alongside the development of this strategy, these working groups are being reviewed to develop stronger links with health and other support services to encourage the shared ownership of actions which relate to improving services and improving the outcomes of service users. This model will include wider representation from service users. The review will be complete in March 2016 and implemented by March 2017.

The City's Strategic Priorities

To help us come together as a city and deliver the strategic vision, we have focussed our strategy on five priority areas:

1. **Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping** – to provide a consistent message about housing options that helps services prevent homelessness and moves people away from sleeping rough

2. **Rapid Assessment and Reconnection** – outreach to assess the needs of people sleeping rough to plan support, and where appropriate, reconnect people with friends, families and support networks, before they are fully immersed in street life
3. **Improving Health** – to ensure people sleeping rough are supported by health and social care services that help them to regain their independence
4. **A Safe City** – making sure people sleeping rough, residents and visitors are safe and free from intimidation
5. **Pathways to Independence** – to support people sleeping rough into regaining their independence

Responding to the Position Paper Consultation

The findings from the consultation and engagement carried out in December 2015 have helped to develop this draft strategy.

Methodology

A Position Paper was produced that summarised the city's current approach to rough sleeping and existing plans as well as highlighting the challenges we face. This included the draft vision and priorities for the new strategy and was the basis of the initial scoping consultation. This paper was emailed to all councillors, MPs and all stakeholders invited to the summit.

During the consultation, a stakeholder summit was held which had 78 professionals attend, and there was online consultation through the council's consultation portal which received 36 detailed submissions covering all aspects of our proposals. The council's website, social media and press engagement was used to promote the consultation.

Summary of Findings

Those responding to the consultation recognised that homelessness and rough sleeping could happen to many of us with little warning, such as arising from the loss of a job or a relationship breakdown. These difficult times are compounded when other factors such as mental health, drug and alcohol, and other support needs may be present.

There was overwhelming support for the proposed vision and priorities of the strategy, with many suggestions for improvements to the way we work. Many respondents highlighted the significant challenges faced by the strategy from the fundamental issues arising from the shortage of high quality affordable housing and budget pressures. As these matters are picked up in plans such as the Housing Strategy 2015, Homelessness Strategy 2014 and the CCG Annual Operating Plan, this strategy has not replicated the actions needs to address these.

As a result of the consultation, there have been a number of changes to the initial priorities for the city's strategy suggested by the Position Paper:

- **Street Triage** and **Reconnection** have been merged into a new priority on **Rapid Assessment and Reconnection** which is developing Multi-Agency Plan's for people sleeping rough, where professionals work together with clients to agree the most effective course of action.
- **Managing the Street Communities** received criticism, particularly as people sleeping rough are more likely to be the victims of crime and around half of those in the city's street communities are not sleeping rough. There were also opposing views on the balance between support and enforcement. This priority has been rewritten to focus on making Brighton & Hove **A Safe City** – for rough sleepers, residents, businesses and tourists – and recognises that a life on the streets is not appropriate and should not be supported
- **Working with the City** has been removed as a priority as it was very clear that partnership working needs to underpin the whole strategy rather than be a separate element. We recognise that not a single element of our strategy is achievable without the combined efforts of all those living and working in the city. **A Partnership Approach** is now the strategic principle of this strategy and underpins all of the work we do.

Other responses to the consultation highlighted the need for the strategy to take into account the specialist needs of particular groups who may be more vulnerable and require a slightly different approach, such as young people, women and LGBT* people.

The detailed consultation responses were shared with those responsible for the priorities within the strategy to develop the goals and strategic actions presented in this document. A transcript of these responses is contained in **Consultation Report 1: Position Paper**, available at: [inset web address where it will go online](#)

Consultation Questions 1: Revised Priorities and Principle

1.1 Do you support the city's revised strategic priorities?

1.2 Please tell us about anything you would like to change in the city's priorities and principle

2. Rough Sleeping in Brighton & Hove

What do we mean by People Sleeping Rough?

This strategy is not just about those living and sleeping on the city's streets, but all those, predominantly single people, who are homeless where there is not likely to be a statutory housing responsibility.

For the purposes of the strategy, people sleeping rough have been defined as:

- People sleeping rough within Brighton & Hove
- Squatters who were previously or are at risk of sleeping rough
- Sofa surfers who were previously or are at risk of sleeping rough
- Those living in motor vehicles (not including Travellers)
- Those living in tents (not including campers, protesters or Travellers)
- Those currently supported in hostels who were previously sleeping rough
- All others considered at risk of rough sleeping

The City's Challenge

People sleeping rough are a transient population and the city's street services work with more than 1,000 cases each year, 20 every week. Around a third of these relate to people being seen more than once (in 2014/15 there were 1,129 cases involving 775 people). In November 2015, a snapshot of a single night estimated there were 78 people sleeping rough in Brighton & Hove:

People living on the streets	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Street service cases (year)	588	732	1,163	1,066	1,129
Official street count (people on a single night)	14 (Nov'10)	36 (Nov'11)	43 (Nov'12)	50 (Nov'13)	41 (Nov'14)
Street estimate (people on a single night) ³	x	76 (Nov'11)	90 (Mar'13)	132 (Mar'14)	78 (Nov'15)

There are concerns that numbers could increase further over the next year with the natural draw of Brighton & Hove as the place to be, the impact of welfare reforms and the high cost of accessing and sustaining accommodation in the city's private rented sector.

³ The Rough Sleeper Estimate is a different methodology from the official count and records the number of rough sleepers known to services in the city on a particular date.

As of the January 2016, the city has 272 hostel beds and 25 mental health hostel beds which are full and has a waiting list of 197 clients, 82 of which are considered a high priority.

Information is not available for many of the hidden homeless in our city that may be living in squats, sleeping on sofas, and staying with friends and family. Nationally one study has shown that of 437 single homeless individuals, 62% were hidden homeless and a quarter had never accessed any accommodation provided by a homeless or housing organisation.⁴

Local Inequalities

Rough sleeping is not a lifestyle choice, but often driven out of desperation, poverty and ill health. Police, prisons and health service report high levels of service need caused by rough sleeping:

- People sleeping rough are more likely to be the victim of crime and also more likely to commit crimes
- The City's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment⁵ highlights a high prevalence of mental and physical ill-health and drug and alcohol dependency amongst people sleeping rough. Other common problems include physical trauma (especially foot trauma), skin problems, respiratory illness and infections (including hepatitis).
- Nationally, it is estimated that the use of inpatient hospital care by people who are sleeping rough or living in insecure accommodation (such as hostels) is eight times higher than in the general population aged 16-64
- The average age of death for a homeless person nationally is estimated to be 47 years old compared to 77 for the general population

The rough sleeping and single homeless population is not representative of the wider city with the 2014/15 Rough Sleeper Annual Report showing that of the 1,129 cases (involving 775 people):

- 83% were male; 17% were female
- 12% (136 cases) were aged 17-25; 7% (83 cases) were over 55
- 81% (917 cases) indicated that they were UK nationals
- 19% (212 cases) were not from the UK with the largest group from central or eastern Europe (86 cases, a 50% increase from this region on 2013/14)
- 39% (438 cases) had a local connection. Where known, the main reasons given for rough sleeping amongst those with a local connection in 2014/15 were: eviction from hostel or temporary accommodation (31%); abandoning own accommodation (13%); relationship breakdown (13%); prison release (12%), left rehab (11%). However, this does not identify the underlying cause, just the most recent trigger. For example, those evicted from hostels were already homeless.

⁴ Crisis, K Reeve with E Batty, The Hidden Truth about Homelessness – Experiences of Single Homelessness in England, May 2011

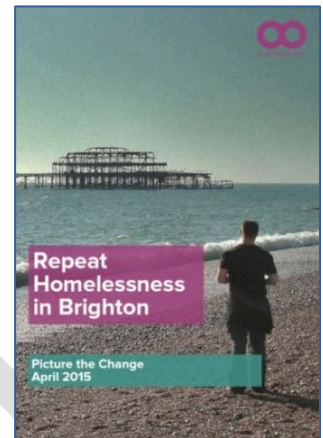
⁵ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2014: Rough Sleeping and Single Homeless: <http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/sites/bhconnected/files/jsna-6.4.3-Rough-sleepers2.pdf>

Local Causes of Rough Sleeping

Homeless Link carried out a qualitative research project in partnership with the Coordinated Agency Interventions to End Rough Sleeping (CAIERS) group, who work with people sleeping rough in Brighton & Hove⁶. The research was based on 29 in-depth interviews with clients using the city's homeless services 2014.

The research identified that the causes of homelessness and repeat homelessness are divided into two main areas:

- Structural - which included poor and unsuitable housing, insecurity in the private rented sector, transitioning/leaving accommodation or institutions (especially prison) and loss of employment; and
- Personal reasons - which included mental health issues, experience of trauma, relationship breakdown, and fleeing domestic violence or abuse.



There is a strong pull for people coming and returning to the city because they consider the city to be a place of diversity and acceptance. Many people had happy memories of Brighton & Hove, which stemmed from childhood or previous relationships. While people were positive about the homelessness services available, they were more likely to talk about how much they liked the town rather than its services.

There was a lack of understanding about local connection policies in Brighton & Hove. Many people travelled back to the city on the basis that they had previously held a local connection, only to find out that they were no longer eligible.

Some of those who had been helped to reconnect and move, either by the local authority or support services had returned to Brighton & Hove because they had been unable to access the support they needed. For others, the pull of Brighton & Hove meant that they were prepared to remain homeless if this meant remaining local to the area.

The recommendations made by this research have been used to help shape the strategy.

Rough Sleeping Amongst Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* People

The Stonewall Housing Finding Safe Spaces⁷ project was commissioned by the Homelessness Transition Fund to understand the experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT*) people who have been street homeless.

⁶ Repeat Homelessness in Brighton, Homeless Link, 2015:

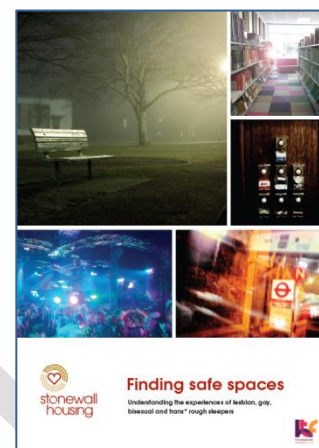
<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Picture%20the%20Change.Repeat%20Homelessness%20in%20Brighton.pdf>

⁷ Finding Safe Spaces: Understanding the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans* rough sleepers, Stonewall Housing, 2014: <http://www.stonewallhousing.org/>

Stonewall Housing spoke directly with LGBT* people who had experienced, or were experiencing, rough sleeping during summer 2014 in Manchester, Brighton and east London.

Whilst there were a wide range of reasons for rough sleeping amongst this group, the research found that more often than not, rough sleeping was related to their sexual orientation or gender identity, having a detrimental and often irreversible effect on their support systems of people such as after coming out to friends or family.

Stonewall Housing research with LGBT* people sleeping rough in the city found that many did not feel safe in hostels or on the streets. Drugs, alcohol, sex work or sex in exchange for accommodation was used as a way to secure a place to sleep, despite the great risk to safety as well as to their mental, physical and sexual health.



The research made a number of recommendations and Brighton & Hove City Council has committed (as part of the Trans Scrutiny Report) to reviewing these for the Rough Sleeping Strategy. These have been included in the strategic actions listed under the five strategy priorities.

Predicted Future Need

The impact of the Welfare Reform Bill is still being felt with the introduction of the benefit cap (to be reduced further to £20,000 in 2016), changes to Disability Living Allowance, reductions in Housing Benefit (particularly for young people), proposed reductions on tax credits and the introduction of Universal Credit.

Combined with high and rising property prices in Brighton & Hove, it is predicted that these changes will increase the number of individuals unable to sustain their accommodation in the coming year placing them at an increased risk of rough sleeping, and putting more pressure on services at a time of decreasing funding.

3. The City's Connected Approach

Housing Strategy 2015 & Homeless Strategy 2014

The Housing Strategy 2015⁸ is a key stand alone chapter of the city's Community Strategy⁹, and through the strategy:

"We want Brighton & Hove to be an inclusive city with affordable, high quality, housing that supports a thriving economy by offering security, promoting health and wellbeing and reduces its impact on the environment. We want to help bring about integrated communities in a society that values everyone to recognise and tackle the inequality faced by families, the poor and the vulnerable."

The Housing Strategy 2015 incorporates the priorities of the Homelessness Strategy 2014¹⁰ to prevent homelessness through early intervention, and the timely provision of advice and support. When homelessness is unavoidable, there is a need to ensure that people receive appropriate housing, care and support, with a clear pathway towards living independently.

The Homeless Strategy 2014 has five strategic objectives:

1. Provide housing and support solutions that tackle homelessness and promote the health and well-being of vulnerable adults
2. Provide 'whole families' housing and support solutions that tackle homelessness and promote the well-being of families and young people.
3. Develop access to settled homes
4. Reduce inequality and tackle homelessness amongst our communities of interest
5. Provide integrated housing, employment and support solutions as a platform for economic inclusion

Housing Related Support Commissioning Strategy 2015

Accommodation and support services for single homeless people are provided by the Housing Related Support team in Brighton & Hove City Council's Adult Services (Adult Social Care). These services aim to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping amongst vulnerable people and provide support to help individuals move towards or maintain independent living.

⁸ Housing Strategy 2015: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/Housing%20Strategy%202015%20%28FULL%20COUNCIL%20FINAL%29.pdf>

⁹ Brighton & Hove Community Strategy: <http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/strategy/strategy>

¹⁰ Homelessness Strategy 2014-19: [http://present.brightonhove.gov.uk/Published/C00000709/M00005185/AI00040396/\\$HomelessStrategy2014CommitteeVersion.docx.pdf](http://present.brightonhove.gov.uk/Published/C00000709/M00005185/AI00040396/$HomelessStrategy2014CommitteeVersion.docx.pdf)

The team is redrafting service specifications to ensure services are flexible. This is to provide a more personalised response to need, reducing dependency, avoiding duplication with other services across the city and meeting local priorities such as reducing admissions to more intensive services, as well as in response to budget reductions.

Those with the most complex needs, who receive a range of services, will be supported into independence where this is achievable or will have a suitable service in place to support them to maintain accommodation and prevent homelessness. A focus will also be on people who have been in homeless services for some time to offer them sustainable support and accommodation packages.

Brighton & Hove Better Care Plan

The Brighton & Hove Better Care Plan describes how services for our frail and vulnerable population will be improved to help them stay healthy and well, and will be more pro-active and preventative, and promote independence.

In Brighton & Hove improving health and care outcomes for homeless people has been identified as a priority. A Homeless Integrated Health & Care Board was established in 2014 with the vision:

“To improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people by providing integrated and responsive services that place people at the centre of their own care, promote independence and support them to fulfil their potential.”

The Board includes representatives from BHCC (adult social care, housing and public health), the CCG and NHS Trusts, a GP, community and voluntary sector, Sussex Police and service user representation. The Board has developed an integrated health and care model with a multi disciplinary team approach focussing on the single homeless people in the city that will be implemented in 2016/17.

Housing Related Support Cost Benefit Analysis

In 2009, the Department of Communities and Local Government commissioned Capgemini to produce a cost benefit analysis of housing related support services¹¹. In Brighton & Hove the local cost benefit analysis in 2013 showed savings of £4.90 for every £1 spent on housing related support services for single homeless clients. The study found the financial benefits of housing related support to be:

- Costs relating to housing and homelessness are reduced, because the risks of sleeping rough and failure to move into settled accommodation are reduced
- Health service costs are reduced through improvements in the general health of clients. These result in fewer admissions to Accident and Emergency, lower use

¹¹ Research into the Financial Benefits of the Supporting People Programme, Department of Communities and Local Government 2009

of GP and community mental health services, and fewer admissions to hospital for physical and mental health problems

- Health and social services costs are reduced because of a lower incidence of drug and alcohol problems
- Crime costs are reduced as clients are given advice to help them avoid burglary and street crime, and through reductions in their own re-offending

They also found non-financial benefits which included

- Improved quality of life for the individual including greater independence, decreased vulnerability, improved health, and greater choice of options on where and how to live
- Greater stability, allowing single homeless people to deal with other issues in their lives, such as substance abuse, unemployment, mental health problems, offending and behavioural problems
- Decreased fear of crime
- Easier access to appropriate services
- Improved involvement in the community (benefiting both the individual and society)

Resourcing the Strategy

The council is facing significant budget reductions which have seen £77m saved in recent years and a further £68m needing to be saved by 2020. This represents around 30% of the council's non-school funding and means that all services require a radical rethink to determine what services, and how they could operate, are possible within the reducing amount of available resources. Similarly, financial pressures are affecting health services, the police and the community and voluntary sector. This is at the same time as high housing costs, welfare reform and an ageing population are increasing demands for services.

The budget for Housing Related Support and Better Care linked to rough sleeping services was £4.8m for 2015/16 (£4.2m Housing Related Support and £0.6m Better Care in partnership with the NHS). The Community and Voluntary Sector is estimated to contribute many more millions from other funding sources and in-kind support such as through volunteering.

In addition to expenditure on services to prevent rough sleeping and support people back to independence, the Police, criminal justice system and NHS spend significant sums of money on dealing with the impacts of crime, poor health and substance misuse attributable to people sleeping rough.

Priority 1: Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

To provide a consistent message about housing options that helps services prevent homelessness and moves people away from sleeping rough

As a city, we need to manage people's expectations about the availability of housing. Brighton & Hove is an expensive place to live and at the same time wages are relatively low making housing affordability a challenge for many. There are approximately, 23,000 households on the housing register, with 1,500 in temporary accommodation and only around 700 properties becoming available each year.

Average rents are above housing benefit limits putting them out of reach of those not working. In September 2015, just two shared properties were available to rent in Brighton & Hove on rightmove.co.uk within the local housing allowance limit for single people under 35 and, for those aged 35 or above, 14 properties were available within the 1 bedroom limit available, mainly bedsits and studio flats.¹²

Many single homeless households do not fall into a priority need category and hence there is no statutory duty for the council to provide housing under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. For those where there is not a housing duty, the chance of someone being offered social housing is remote because of the extremely high demand against a very small supply.

The Homelessness Strategy 2014 seeks to link into a broader 'prevention agenda' to provide advice and assistance to any resident in danger of losing their home. We want to minimise rough sleeping for those who we cannot provide accommodation for and to look at the wider impacts homelessness can have, such as deterioration in mental health, risk of suicide, substance misuse, offending and increased hospital admission. This also minimises the impact on more costly crisis services provided by the council and health services.

To prevent homelessness, the city will:

- Goal 1: Develop a consistent citywide approach to housing, health, care and other support to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Goal 2: Improve housing options for single person households

¹² Brighton & Hove Housing Market Reports: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/housing-market-reports#RentLHA>

Goal 1: Develop a consistent citywide approach to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping

Brighton & Hove is fortunate in that it has a caring and tolerant population and many people want to help people sleeping rough through supporting charitable work or personal donations. As a city, we want to make sure that all those seeking to help rough sleepers are doing so in a way that leads to sustainable solutions that help encourage people to engage with services to move away from rough sleeping.

Success in preventing homelessness and entrenchment depends on all service providers promoting the same consistent message, a single offer of support focussed on minimising the risk of those getting into crisis and spending time on the streets.

To make sure this happens, all of the city's organisations working with homelessness will be brought together to develop a **Multi-Agency Protocol**. This will build on the strengths of existing partnerships that have developed new ways of working with the street population, tackle health inequalities and prevent repeat homelessness as well as removing duplication through multiple assessments by different providers.

Goal 2: Improve housing options for single person households

The city has a strong record in **preventing homelessness** or finding alternative accommodation where it has not been possible to sustain people's accommodation. Services provide advice and assistance, to those where there is not a statutory housing duty, on how to sustain their accommodation including their legal rights to remain in occupation. This often allows people some time to find an alternative home.

A new service called **Community Connections**, provided by Southdown, will help people to stay in their accommodation by working with landlords and agencies to prevent eviction. A range of support services will be provided including wellbeing and mental health, and practical help to support people settle and sustain new tenancies.

Many landlords do not accept tenants on benefits, and those at risk of homelessness are less likely to have a deposit, advance rent, fees or a guarantor. Even if a home is available, there is a gap in providing people with start up cost for private sector tenancies. The current rent deposit assistance is aimed at preventing homelessness where there is a statutory duty to assist. Any change to this requires funding and resources before this could be extended to people where there was no statutory duty.

The council works with a wide range of agencies such as **Brighton Housing Trust** and the **YMCA DownsLink Group** to sustain accommodation or source alternatives. Incentives and support for private landlords will help increase the supply of low cost rented housing without high set up costs or guarantors. Landlords will often keep good tenants at lower rent rather than maximise rental values to unknown tenants. The council also works with the prison service and probation to source accommodation for people leaving the criminal justice system who are at particular risk of rough sleeping.

Joint work with health and social care through the **Pathway Plus** project supports people leaving hospital to prevent them from being discharged onto the street.

The city needs to be open to innovative solutions to provide temporary affordable homes for single people and utilise initiatives, such as the credit union to provide a way for people to save money to cover the costs of moving on if the need arises. More affordable homes can be found in other parts of the country which may require people to make difficult choices about where they live.

Strategic Action Plan: Priority 1: Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
Goal 1	Develop a consistent citywide approach to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping		
Develop a Multi-Agency Protocol for Brighton & Hove	June 2016 (to include data sharing agreement)	To be developed within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services & St. Mungo's
All partners (commissioned and non-commissioned) sign the Multi-Agency Protocol	Signed as part of Strategy approval in July 2016	All partner commitment to the Plan will help utilise resources more effectively	All partners
Ensure the Plan is promoted and understood by staff, volunteers and residents	Roll out communications from June 2016	Communications Plan to be developed and costed (eg training, work shadowing, publicity etc)	BHCC Communications & St. Mungo's
Ensure a rolling communications programme on reducing rough sleeping that engages the general public	Roll out communications from June 2016	Media Campaign to be developed and costed	BHCC Communications & BHCC Adult Services
All partners to be aware of the housing market and benefit rates	Circulate B&H Housing Market Reports to partners	Reports already produced and publically available	BHCC Housing & BHCC Adult Services
Goal 2	Improve housing options for single person households		
Publicise where to go for assistance and to seek help at an early stage	Incorporate into the Multi-Agency Protocol	Within existing resources	BHCC Housing

Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
Develop an easy referral mechanism so that other professionals can direct clients to housing advice	Review use of information prescriptions for housing advice	Within existing resources	BHCC Housing
Allow flexibility for those with complex needs when making nominations to supported accommodation	Incorporate into the Multi-Agency Protocol	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services
Ensure those ready for general needs accommodation are supported to manage their tenancy	Incorporate into the Multi-Agency Protocol	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services & Third Sector
Investigate creative solutions to increase accommodation options (such as lodgers)	March 2017	Subject to options developed	BHCC Adult Services & BHCC Housing
Improve access to housing information to raise awareness affordable housing options locally and in other parts of the country	IT approach to be developed	Within existing resources	BHCC Housing

Consultation Questions 2: Priority 1: Prevent Homelessness

- 2.1 Do you agree with the approach to this priority?
- 2.2 How successful do you think this approach will be? (On a scale of 1-10, 10 is best)
- 2.3 What do you think the city could change or do better to achieve this priority?

Priority 2: Rapid Assessment and Reconnection

Outreach to assess the needs of people sleeping rough to plan support, and where appropriate, reconnect people with friends, families and support networks, before they are fully immersed in street life

If someone finds themselves faced with the prospect of sleeping on the streets, it is essential that services engage with them as quickly as possible to get people at risk off the streets and prevent additional health and wellbeing needs developing.

The Rough Sleepers Street Services and Relocation Team Annual Report 2014/15 found that around 61% of rough sleeping cases involved people who did not have a local connection to Brighton & Hove. Around a quarter were from London and the wider South East, 19% from abroad, with the remainder from the rest of the UK.

Reconnecting people with safe and stable support networks such as friends, families and services from where they came from can bring about a sustainable move away from street life. We recognise that this is not appropriate in all cases, particularly if someone has fled abuse or in some instances where there may be overriding health needs.

Different approaches within a shared Multi-Agency Protocol are required to effectively respond to the needs of different groups of people sleeping rough. The Protocol needs to quickly get new arrivals away from the streets; to develop sustainable plans for those who keep returning to street life; to get a commitment from organisations to holistically support chronic entrenched cases; and to deliver solutions for those with no recourse to public funds. Through assessment, each person sleeping rough will have their own Multi-Agency Plan, their single offer under the Protocol.

To provide rapid outreach and assessment, the city will:

- Goal 3: Provide rapid assessment, support planning and effective reconnection
- Goal 4: Target people sleeping rough with complex needs to ensure there is an integrated plan to move people into accommodation
- Goal 5: Ensure services are sensitive to the needs of all vulnerable groups including LGBT* people, young, older, women and ex-service personnel

Goal 3: Provide rapid assessment, support planning and effective reconnection

To enable service providers to assess the needs of people sleeping rough in a stable environment we will set up a permanent **Assessment Centre**. It is recognised that this process may take time, particularly with those with more complex needs, and to prevent the client returning to the streets in the interim, the centre will have a number of **temporary (sit-up) beds**.

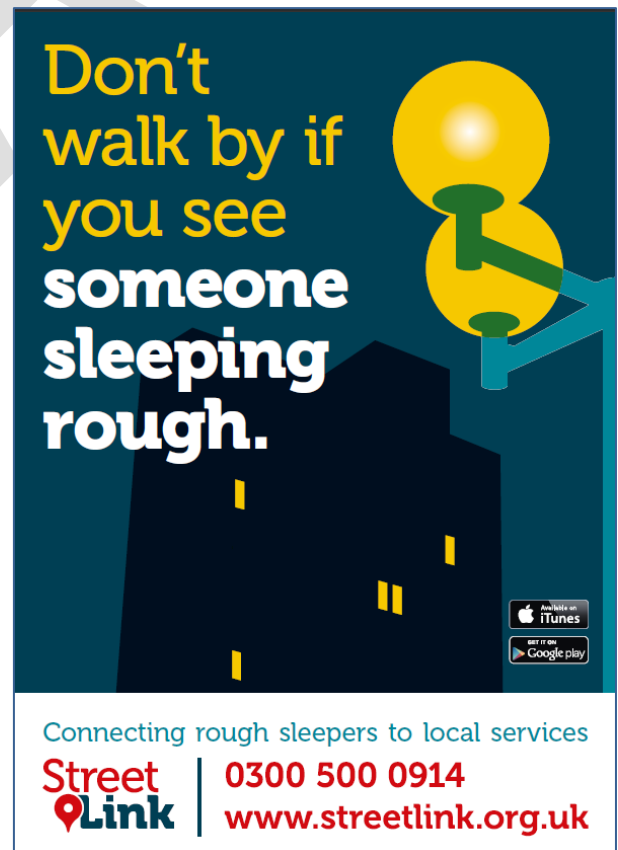
The centre will allow professionals across a range of disciplines to work with clients to develop a **Multi-Agency Plan** with that person. The Plan will outline who is responsible for co-ordinating that person's professional care, which services are working with the client and what support is to be provided. A key part of this Plan is to outline the housing and support options available to the client to help them make an informed choice about their future.

The citywide rough sleeper contract has recently been awarded to St Mungo's by the council. This started in September 2015 through their **Street Outreach Service (SOS)** to provide a rapid response with assertive outreach to people sleeping rough. This works through diversion and signposting, comprehensive assessment of individuals needs, reconnecting people sleeping rough to their place of origin in a structured way, and assisting people from homelessness into settled accommodation.

New **SOS Rapid Response Outreach Case Workers** receive the StreetLink alerts to provide a fast service to clients that are new to the city or have returned to the city after a period of being housed. Individuals without a local connection can be helped to reconnect to an area where they are entitled to support with accommodation.

StreetLink - is a website, mobile app and phone line which allows members of the public to send an alert with information about the location of someone sleeping rough.

Once this alert is received, StreetLink will pass the information to St Mungo's Street Outreach Service to engage with the person sleeping rough. By providing a means to act when they see someone sleeping rough, StreetLink allows the local community to be part of the solution to homelessness.

A poster with a dark blue background. On the left, a silhouette of a building with yellow windows. On the right, a stylized street lamp with a yellow globe and a green post. The text 'Don't walk by if you see someone sleeping rough.' is written in yellow and white. At the bottom, there are logos for 'Available on iTunes' and 'GET IT ON Google play'. Below the poster, the text 'Connecting rough sleepers to local services' is in light blue. The 'StreetLink' logo is in red and white, followed by the phone number '0300 500 0914' and the website 'www.streetlink.org.uk' in red.

Don't walk by if you see someone sleeping rough.

Available on iTunes
GET IT ON Google play

Connecting rough sleepers to local services
StreetLink | 0300 500 0914
www.streetlink.org.uk

As part of the St. Mungo's service, **No Second Night Out** targets those new to rough sleeping and offers them an alternative to a second night on the streets. This helps them move off the streets before they become entrenched. Sussex local authorities and their partners have come together to form the **Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection & Engagement (SHORE)** partnership to implement the No Second Night Out principles in Sussex to help those reconnect across the region.

In 2012/13, when delivered by the Crime Reduction Initiative, this project supported 76 individuals in Brighton & Hove, and in 2014/15 this had more than doubled to 174.

Supported housing is generally only available to those with a local connection^{13, 14} to Brighton & Hove. Reconnection is only used when a robust assessment of an individual's needs and accommodation history has been made and needs to provide the individual with a genuine route away from rough sleeping or they may return to the streets. This strategy recognises that this is not appropriate in all cases, particularly if someone has fled abuse or in some instances where there may be overriding health needs. **First Base Day Centre** and **Project Antifreeze** reconnect clients that access their day centres which has seen the reconnection rate increase.

Goal 4: Target people sleeping rough with complex needs to ensure there is an integrated plan to move people into accommodation

It can be a challenge to engage those with complex needs in a chaotic street environment, and have a meaningful dialogue about needs and support requirements.

To provide a more stable environment for assessing needs, the city has piloted an **Emergency Assessment Centre** that operated every few weeks through the night. This highlighted the need for space with temporary beds for rough sleepers to be assessed by a range of services.

A **Housing First** service has been developed for people with complex needs and expanding the use of personal budget and personalised support plans and St. Mungo's is developing a **Multi-Agency Plan** to target work around people who are entrenched in rough sleeping to move them into the most appropriate accommodation for their needs.

¹³ Local Connection: The statutory definition of local connection is heavily shaped by case law stemming from the Housing Act 1996, Part 7, Section 199(1) which provides that a person has a local connection with the district of a housing authority if he or she has a connection with it: i) because he or she is, or was in the past, normally resident there, and that residence was of his or her own choice; or ii) because he or she is employed there; or iii) because of family associations there; or iv) because of any special circumstances. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/section/199>

¹⁴ The current Allocations Policy is under review in 2016

Goal 5: Ensure services are sensitive to the needs of all vulnerable groups including LGBT* people, young, older, women and ex-service personnel

Figures estimate that approximately 17% of rough sleepers are women. **Homeless Link**¹⁵ found that, rather than sleep on the streets, many, especially women, described staying out of sight and moving around because they felt vulnerable. Many had been or knew someone who had been a victim of violence and/or abuse, including robbery, intimidation and rape. Supported housing needs to be sensitive to the needs of women, particularly those who may be fleeing domestic violence.

Young people under 25 are one of the fastest growing groups of people sleeping rough. Consultation as part of developing this strategy has highlighted that some services may not feel accessible to younger people where processes and procedures can seem off putting. Through the **Young People's Accommodation and Support Pathway**¹⁶, use of advocates such as **The Clocktower Sanctuary**, and dedicated accommodation at the new **Housing First** service, young people are being helped to access the support they need.

The **Stonewall Housing Finding Safe Spaces**¹⁷ project spoke directly with LGBT* people who had experienced, or were experiencing, rough sleeping during summer 2014 in Manchester, Brighton and east London and found that many did not feel safe in hostels or on the streets. Drugs, alcohol, sex work or sex in exchange for accommodation was used as a way to secure a place to sleep, despite the great risk to safety as well as to their mental, physical and sexual health. The research made a number of recommendations and Brighton & Hove City Council has committed (as part of the **Trans* Scrutiny Report**¹⁸) to reviewing these recommendations for the Rough Sleeping Strategy:

1. Ask people about their sexual orientation and gender identity in an appropriate and consistent way.
2. Never make assumptions on how someone defines their gender identity of sexual orientation.
3. Be consistent in how you ask questions relating to gender identity and sexual orientation.

¹⁵ Repeat Homelessness in Brighton, Homeless Link, 2015:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Picture%20the%20Change.Repeat%20Homelessness%20in%20Brighton.pdf>

¹⁶ Brighton & Hove Young People's Accommodation and Support Pathway:

http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwja-egwvb3KAhUECBoKHenQB4MQFggmMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fpresent.brighton-hove.gov.uk%2Fpublished%2FC00000709%2FM00004769%2FAI00036300%2F%242013091614474_9_004725_0018502_HousingandSupportforYoungPeopleJointCommissioningStrategyFinalSept.docA.ps.pdf&usq=AFQjCNHg8aH3tU49dEAJCP5SvnfCMhsQzw&sig2=C0kbD4PnxllyUurlwkGJGQ

¹⁷ Finding Safe Spaces: Understanding the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans* rough sleepers, Stonewall Housing, 2014: <http://www.stonewallhousing.org/>

¹⁸ Trans Equality Scrutiny Panel: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/trans-equality-scrutiny-panel-2013>

4. Be able to provide safe spaces for LGBT* rough sleepers using your services and working with your staff.
5. Know how many LGBT* people are experiencing rough sleeping in the area you work and are using your service.
6. Be very clear about the long term harmful impacts of rough sleepers not being able to talk about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.
7. Make sure the first point of contact is trained with a clear awareness around LGBT* people's needs and experiences as rough sleepers.
8. For all LGBT* organisations, who carry out needs assessments for support, to ask their service users about the security of their housing.
9. A change in the verification protocol to fit the experiences of LGBT* people.

Strategic Action Plan: Priority 2: Rapid Assessment and Reconnection

Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
Goal 3 Provide rapid assessment, support planning and effective reconnection for those new to rough sleeping			
Set up a permanent assessment centre(s) with temporary (sit-up) beds	Operational March 2017	Resource allocation as part of service recommissioning in 2016	BHCC Adult Services
Develop integrated joint assessments and support planning across housing, care and health	All clients to have their own Multi-Agency Plan. Pilot late 2016 to go live March 2017	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services & St. Mungo's
Sharing of client information across all partner organisations to ensure a consistent approach and improve interventions / outcomes	March 2017	Multi-agency IT system being investigated	BHCC Adult Services
Have direct access to temporary, emergency and supported housing options for No Second Night Out	Incorporate into Multi-Agency Protocol	Social housing demand exceeds supply	BHCC Adult Services & BHCC Housing
Work with providers and charities to ensure safe and sustainable reconnections	Memorandum of Understanding to be developed relating to good practice	Resource allocation as part of service recommissioning in 2016	BHCC Adult Services & SHORE
Goal 4 Target people sleeping rough with complex needs to ensure there is an integrated plan to move people into accommodation			
Provide temporary beds for those with complex needs to ensure engagement before reconnection assessment	Set up a permanent assessment centre(s) with temporary (sit-up) beds by March 2017	Resource allocation as part of service recommissioning in 2016	BHCC Adult Services

Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
Develop integrated joint assessments and support planning across housing, care and health	Pilot late 2016 to go live March 2017	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services BHCC Housing BHCC Public Health CCG
Implement a scheme to target those entrenched / complex rough sleepers based on bespoke responses to individual needs through a multi agency response	Scheme late 2016	Part of integrated joint assessments and support planning pilot Possibly some resource implication regarding accommodation options	BHCC Adult Services & BHCC Housing
Goal 5	Ensure services are sensitive to the needs of all vulnerable groups including LGBT* people, young, older, women and ex service personnel		
Ensure providers implement recommendations of Stonewall Housing LGBT* report	Include recommendations in Multi-Agency Protocol	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services BHCC Housing St. Mungo's
Consult women and other groups about delivery of service which best meet their needs	Develop women only accommodation provision	Commissioning by March 2017	BHCC Adult Services
Continue to develop the Young People's Accommodation and Support Pathway	Young people's bed spaces in the Housing First Jan 2016 (complete)	As per the 2013 Joint Commissioning Plan	BHCC Adult Services BHCC Housing BHCC Children's Services
Ensure Care Act assessments are carried out for older and frail people sleeping rough	Include in integrated joint assessments across housing, care and health March 2017	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services
Maintain our commitments to ex-Armed Forces personnel through the Armed Forces Covenant	Monitoring and reporting of rough sleeping amongst ex-forces personnel	Regular liaison between BHCC and Armed Forces Network to agree appropriate action when necessary	BHCC Adult Services & Armed Forces Network

Consultation Questions 3: Priority 2: Rapid Assessment & Reconnection

- 3.1 Do you agree with the approach to this priority?
- 3.2 How successful do you think this approach will be? (On a scale of 1-10, 10 is best)
- 3.3 What do you think the city could change or do better to achieve this priority?

Priority 3: Improving Health

To ensure people sleeping rough are supported by health and social care services that help them to regain their independence

Local research^{19,20} has highlighted the multiple disadvantages faced by the homeless, including mental and physical health issues, drug and alcohol misuse and experience of violence and abuse while sleeping rough. Physical and mental health issues can increase people's risk of homelessness, including rough sleeping, and can also be a critical factor preventing their recovery from this situation. In turn, rough sleeping presents very high risks and often leads to further deterioration in individuals' health and wellbeing.

To improve health, the city will:

- Goal 6: Improve outcomes by delivering integrated primary care led health and social care services that are accessible to homeless people and support them to regain their independence
- Goal 7: Ensure those on the streets have access to emergency shelter during extreme weather

Goal 6: Improve outcomes by delivering integrated primary care led health and social care services that are accessible to homeless people and support them to regain their independence

Homeless people have often relied on unplanned care such as accident and emergency services. National evidence and best practice²¹ has demonstrated the benefits of adopting a more proactive approach to improve health and support recovery from homelessness.

In 2014, an **Integrated Health & Care Board**, including representatives of housing, social care, the third sector, public health, the NHS CCG, NHS Trusts, GPs, police and other services was set up to improve services for homeless people, as part of the Brighton & Hove Better Care Plan led by the Health & Wellbeing Board.

¹⁹ Brighton & Hove Homeless Health Needs Audit, 2014: <http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/sites/bhconnected/files/Brighton%20and%20Hove%20Homeless%20Health%20Needs%20Audit%20FINAL.pdf>

²⁰ Repeat Homelessness in Brighton, Homeless Link, 2015:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Picture%20the%20Change.Repeat%20Homelessness%20in%20Brighton.pdf>

²¹ The Faculty for Homeless and Inclusion Health (2013) Standards for commissioners and service providers Version 2.0 The Faculty for Homeless and Inclusion Health <http://www.pathway.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Standards-for-commissioners-providers-v2.0-INTERACTIVE.pdf>

In Brighton & Hove, homeless patients can register at any of the 44 GP practices in the city. The city has a specialist GP practice for those who are homeless and not registered with a GP. In 2016/17, a new model of care agreed by the Integrated Health & Care Board will be rolled out, which includes proposals to base the model around a primary care hub providing enhanced and specialist GP provision.

In addition, a number of pilot projects have been implemented between 2014 and 2016 including:

- **Pathway Plus** - this service provides specialist care and discharge planning for homeless patients in Royal Sussex Community Hospital delivered through GP in-reach, nursing, engagement workers and community transport.
- **Hostels Collaborative Project** - since 2013 Sussex Community NHS Trust has provided a specialist multi-disciplinary team to in-reach into the city's homeless hostel residents. Since November 2015, the team has been piloting ways to meet the needs of the rough sleeping population, working closely with established services, including the St Mungo's Street Outreach Service.
- **Mental Health Homeless Team** - this Sussex Partnership NHS Trust service has provided a service to street homeless and those in emergency accommodation. A pilot of mental health in-reach to hostel residents is being delivered from October 2015 to October 2016.
- **Complex Homeless Multidisciplinary Team meetings** - primary care led fortnightly meetings were established in June 2015. The team identify the homeless people who will most benefit from coordinated proactive management, including those rough sleeping. Initial evaluation of the impact of this way of working has been very positive.

Other key services for health and wellbeing include:

- **First Base Day Centre** – offers a range of services to support people who are sleeping rough or insecurely housed in the city, including health lifestyles, sexual health and employment and skills projects and access to other health services including St John Ambulance and oral hygienists.
- **Substance Misuse Services** – the Pavilions service begun in April 2015 with a focus on Dual Diagnosis. Substance misuse staff work collaboratively with Mental Health services in numerous locations to improve engagement and access to both mental health and substance misuse services for people with complex needs.

In 2015 the Integrated Health & Care Board agreed a model for improving services locally based on a Hub and Spoke model to provide a proactive and integrated model of care. This incorporates the learning from the pilot projects and includes:

- **A primary care led hub with a multidisciplinary outreach team delivering services in a number of settings (or 'spokes') in the city.** This will include outreach to street settings where appropriate, as well as day centres accessed by those rough sleeping.

- Enhanced primary care service for homeless people.
- Hospital in reach to support care and discharge planning.
- Proactive engagement model to support homeless people to access primary and community healthcare services and support care plans.

This new model will make a significant improvement in the accessibility and effectiveness of health and social care services for the homeless, including those rough sleeping. Delivery of the model will be aligned with homeless services, such as the St Mungo's Street Outreach Service, so that health services are part of the city wide integrated approach to support people rough sleeping. In addition, **hostel provision** and **mental health supported accommodation services** are being remodelled to include a strong focus on supporting health and wellbeing.

Goal 7: Ensure those on the streets have access to emergency shelter during extreme weather

The **Severe Weather Emergency Provision** ensures that people sleeping rough are housed when there is extreme cold or storms forecast. The protocols and provision will be reviewed in 2016 to ensure that the provision is aligned with the new model for providing health and social care.

Strategic Action Plan: Priority 3: Improving Health

Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
Goal 6	To improve outcomes by delivering integrated primary care led health and social care services that are accessible to homeless people and support them to regain their independence		
Commission new integrated health and social care model for homeless	April 2016 – March 2017	CCG business case funding	Brighton & Hove CCG BHCC Adult Services BHCC Public Health
Review access to, and support for, assessment of rough sleepers under the Mental Capacity Act and Care Act to ensure that access is timely and supported by clear protocols and staff training	December 2016	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services
Improve access to support through increased flexibility and responsiveness in service delivery (increased outreach settings, holistic assessment and regular review of care) and ensure staff are trained and skilled to	April 2017	Targets to be developed and included in contracts and service plans	NHS BHCC CVS providers

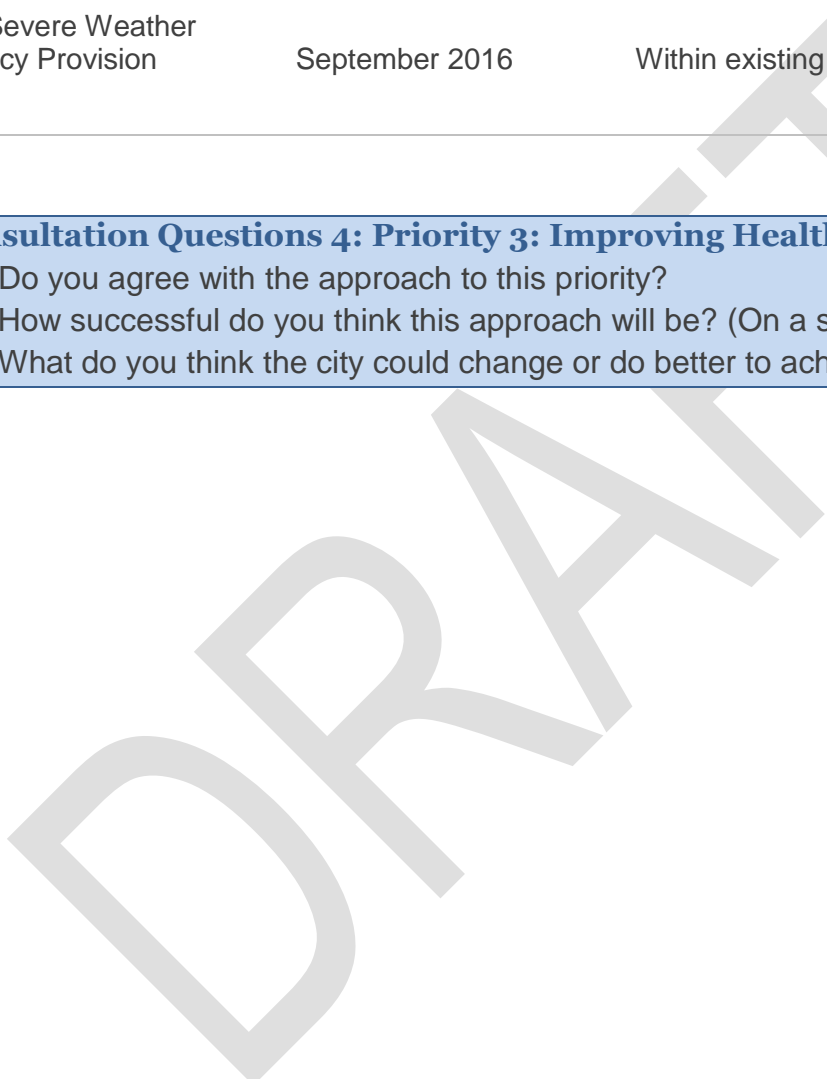
Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
deliver this model of care			
Ensure substance misuse services are aligned with the new service model	March 2017	Public Health commissioned service	BHCC Public Health and Pavilions
Goal 7 Ensure those on the streets have access to emergency shelter during extreme weather			
Review Severe Weather Emergency Provision protocols	September 2016	Within existing resources	BHC Adult Services

Consultation Questions 4: Priority 3: Improving Health

4.1 Do you agree with the approach to this priority?

4.2 How successful do you think this approach will be? (On a scale of 1-10, 10 is best)

4.3 What do you think the city could change or do better to achieve this priority?



Priority 4: A Safe City

Making sure people sleeping rough, residents and visitors are safe and free from intimidation

People sleeping rough are more likely to be the victim of crime than the general population. 10 people sleeping rough have been murdered in the city during the past 13 years. Homeless Link²² found that, rather than sleep on the streets, many, especially women, described staying out of sight and moving around because they felt vulnerable. Many had been or knew someone who had been a victim of violence and/or abuse, including robbery, intimidation and rape.

Whilst the street population is often associated to crime and anti-social behaviour, it is estimated that only half of those on the streets are sleeping rough, with the other half housed. The street population is a diverse collection of groups and can be defined as people having one or more of the following attributes: rough sleeping; street drinking / begging; antisocial behaviour; insecurely housed (e.g. hostel or temporary accommodation) and spending a high level of time in street based activities, which may have a negative impact on other members of the public.

Brighton & Hove is a popular city with a significant street population. Many have multiple and complex needs and have moved in and out of homelessness for many years. Individuals who end up rough sleeping quickly become entrenched in a street lifestyle and this can be difficult to change. A proportionate response is required that encourages those in the street communities to seek the support they require and also takes action to prevent anti-social behaviour.

To help make sure people sleeping rough, residents and visitors are safe and free from intimidation, the city will:

- Goal 8: Focus on managing risks, harm and promoting appropriate behaviour
- Goal 9: Promote alternatives to discourage begging

Goal 8: Focus on managing risks, harm and promoting appropriate behaviour

Whilst enforcement action to tackle street anti-social behaviour has a wide range of positive impacts, if not managed properly it risks a number of negative impacts:

- Whilst the use of enforcement action can result in some people choosing to engage with support services, others can disengage and see services as being in opposition.

²² Repeat Homelessness in Brighton, Homeless Link, 2015:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Picture%20the%20Change.Repeat%20Homelessness%20in%20Brighton.pdf>

- Moving people on can resolve an immediate issue in one location, but is likely to result in people sleeping rough elsewhere, often still within the city area.
- Enforcement can have a damaging effect on people's wellbeing because it may further reduce their already limited options. It rarely resolves the underlying issues or causes of someone needing to sleep rough.
- Enforcement can generate media interest or community opposition. Equally, inaction can generate complaints, community opposition and media interest.
- It can take a long time to enforce legal action and this can potentially cost a significant amount; even then outcomes are likely to have a short term impact.

A focus on the needs and complexity of the individual is more likely to result in an effective solution and sustainable move away from street life. Through the **Substance Misuse Service**, the Equinox Drug and Alcohol Outreach Team provide outreach and engagement, working with street drinkers and drug users to support people into treatment and reduce their street presence.

The police have **Dispersal Powers** and can require groups likely to be engaged in causing harassment, alarm or distress or be in the locality of crime or disorder to leave an area for up to 48 hours. The decision must have regard to the European Convention on Human Rights which provide for the right for lawful freedom of expression and freedom of assembly where there is no anti-social behaviour.

The council, police and support services have developed an **Engagement and Move-On Protocol** in relation to tents and encampments. The city council and its partners work to remove tents and other structures where there is a detrimental effect on the wider community, where they pose a community safety or public health risk or where the encampment is preventing the lawful use of council land. The council is working with the police on the potential use of **Public Spaces Protection Order's** (PSPO) to protect some of the city's sensitive sites and higher profile locations to help deal with particular nuisance or problems. To issue a PSPO, the behaviour must be having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the community, it must be persistent or continuing and it must be unreasonable.

Goal 9: Promote alternatives to discourage begging

It is an offence to beg in a public place under Section 3 of the Vagrancy Act 1824. Whilst it is an offence to beg, it has been suggested that some lucrative begging spots in the city can net hundreds of pounds a week for those individuals. Such spots see competition between 'professional' beggars and the local street population with the money often used to buy drugs²³.

²³ The Argus, 2 May 2012:

http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/9681166.On_patrol_with_the_head_of_Brighton_s_anti_begging_squad/

The generosity of local people and tourists may provide limited help to those in need and solutions are needed that offers alternatives for those who wish to help such as by donating to one of the charities supporting the strategy in helping people move away from the streets. Donations can be made to support a range of practical activities in Brighton & Hove such as by providing:

- a Rent Deposit Scheme to help move people from the streets into accommodation
- start-up funding for a sit up bed service to bring people off the streets and assess their needs

Strategic Action Plan: Priority 4: A Safe City

Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
Goal 8	Focus on managing risks, harm and promoting appropriate behaviour		
Work with support agencies to ensure they are not inadvertently encouraging people to spend excessive time on the street	Number of agencies who had a formal briefing	Capacity to brief, planned rolling programme	Adult Social care Council Housing Communities Team Third Sector
Support to encourage the street community not to meet in groups and disperse to safer lower impact locations	Reduced ASB reported perpetrated against, and by, street community people	Encouraging reporting to get an accurate assessment of impact	Sussex Police BHCC Community Safety Team
Support people into appropriate treatment services where possible as an alternative to enforcement	Number of street community people accessing treatment	Identify those most at risk and harm	BHCC Public Health
When necessary and proportionate, use place based enforcement to protect the public realm and reduce risk and harm to people	Reduced ASB reported perpetrated against, and by, street community people	PSPO, dispersal powers, move on protocol	Sussex Police BHCC Community Safety Team
Take robust enforcement action where necessary to reduce the risk and harm caused to people	Reduced ASB reported perpetrated against, and by, street community people	Identify those causing the most risk and harm and through the High Impact Case Forum	Sussex Police BHCC Community Safety Team
Use tenancy/residency enforcement action where appropriate to manage behaviour on the street	Sussex Police Council Community Safety Team	Specialist officer and legal officer time. Court costs	BHCC Housing BHCC Adult Services
Goal 9	Promote alternatives to discourage street life and begging		

Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
Promote alternatives to giving to beggars focussed on helping people move away from street life	Use communications to sustain and embed alternative giving in the public psyche	Council Communications team capacity	BHCC Communications Team
Take robust enforcement/disruption action against persistent or intimidating begging	Number of convictions for begging	Police/support services co-ordinated directed patrols Use Vagrancy Act to prosecute beggars	Sussex Police

Consultation Questions 5: Priority 4: A Safe City

- 5.1 Do you agree with the approach to this priority?
- 5.2 How successful do you think this approach will be? (On a scale of 1-10, 10 is best)
- 5.3 What do you think the city could change or do better to achieve this priority?

DRAFT

Priority 5: Pathways to Independence

To support people sleeping rough into regaining their independence

Simply putting a roof over someone's head does not resolve their housing needs. Physical health, mental health and substance misuse needs, and re-engagement with society through social skills, leisure activities, education and employment is needed to make sure the person is able to maintain accommodation and an active and engaged role in their community.

Homeless Link²⁴ found that there were particular barriers associated with the environment in hostel accommodation while trying to work, or if they were recovering from issues with alcohol or substance misuse. Other people spoke about the negative impact that living in hostel accommodation had on their health and wellbeing.

A further challenge is the lack of suitable and affordable alternative accommodation for people who have formerly slept rough to move on from hostels to more appropriate supported accommodation or independence. The move to independence frees up valuable supported accommodation for other service users in need.

To support people sleeping rough into regaining their independence through effective treatment and life skills training, the city will:

- Goal 10: Have a flexible accommodation pathway that responds to changing needs
- Goal 11: Develop bespoke supported accommodation options where appropriate
- Goal 12: Ensure timely move-on to independent accommodation

Goal 10: Have a flexible accommodation pathway that responds to changing needs

The **Integrated Support Pathway (ISP)** was set up in 2007 as a way of providing supported accommodation for single homeless people, people sleeping rough and ex offenders who require support. The intention of the Pathway was to move people from the streets, through a pathway of services with reducing support which would help them to develop greater independence and eventually move to independent living.

²⁴ Repeat Homelessness in Brighton, Homeless Link, 2015:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Picture%20the%20Change.Repeat%20Homelessness%20in%20Brighton.pdf>

The Pathway is being remodelled in partnership across housing, social care, public health, children's services and the CCG. The aim is to ensure it meets needs, is flexible, services are personalised and asset based and fills identified gaps in provision. A Psychologically Informed Environment approach will make sure day-to-day running of hostels has been consciously designed to take into account the psychological and emotional needs of the service users recognising the emotional trauma that may cause, or arise from, an individual becoming homeless. To meet a gap in service provision, the council will be establishing a women only accommodation service for those with complex needs.

Work and Learning and **Peer Support** services are being remodelled and recommissioned. These support individuals' with literacy and numeracy, and accessing voluntary and paid work and also train people with experience of homelessness to support people who are on their recovery journey.

Goal 11: Develop bespoke supported housing options where appropriate

The council will make sure it takes advantage of opportunities to bid for funds to develop supported accommodation services which meet local needs. In December 2015, Brighton & Hove City Council was awarded government funding from the Homes & Communities Agency to develop new supported housing for older single homeless people with physical disabilities who are currently living in hostel accommodation. Not only will this meet their needs more effectively in more suitable surroundings, it will free up hostel space for others in need.

Housing First is a new service to offer secure long term, self contained homes with intensive support to individuals who have multiple complex needs and a history of repeatedly losing accommodation, and/or are unable to live in hostels. A pilot ran for almost two years and was evaluated as a success by the University of York. The pilot has been converted into a permanent service run by St. Mungo's. This is the first Housing First project known to offer some spaces specifically for young people.

Goal 12: Ensure timely move-on to independent accommodation

High costs in the private rented sector, with average rents above local housing allowance limits, mean few affordable properties become available. When they do, landlords may not accept tenants on benefits and those who have slept rough are less likely to have a deposit, advance rent, fees or a guarantor. A wide range of agencies such as **Brighton Housing Trust** and the **YMCA DownsLink Group** work to sustain accommodation or source alternatives however, the challenge is great.

Social housing is scarce with demand far in excess of supply and generally only available to those in priority need such as those with children or disabilities. This excludes most single homeless people; however, it is recognised that there may be complex cases where social housing may be an appropriate move-on solution.

More affordable homes can be found in other parts of the country which will require people to make difficult choices about where they live. Other services need to be aware of these pressures and deliver the same consistent message if we are to change perceptions and expectations.

The city needs to consider innovative solutions to provide temporary affordable homes for single people and utilise initiatives such as the credit union to provide a way for people to save money to cover the costs of moving on if the need arises.

Strategic Action Plan: Priority 5: Pathways to Independence

Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
Goal 10	Have a flexible accommodation pathway that responds to changing needs		
Remodel and recommission supported accommodation within the integrated support pathway	Remodel and recommission 2016, mobilise 2017	Within reduced budget	BHCC Adult Services
Ensure hostel accommodation is safe, a suitable quality, and supports wellbeing	Introduction of Psychologically Informed Environments in all hostels by March 2017	Will be done as part of retendering within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services
Consult women and other groups about delivery of service which best meet their needs	Develop women only accommodation provision	Commissioning by March 2017	BHCC Adult Services
Review Homeless Strategy Working Groups	Review to be complete March 2016 and implemented by March 2017	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services BHCC Housing
Recommission Peer Support services	By March 2017	Within reduced budget	BHCC Adult Services
Commission Work and Learning services	By June 2017	Within reduced budget	BHCC Adult Services
Encourage social enterprise solutions between the Third Sector and business community that provide work and learning opportunities for service users	To be discussed as part of consultation	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services Third Sector Business Community

Strategic Action	Target	Resource Implication	Lead Partner
Goal 11 Develop bespoke supported housing options where appropriate			
Deliver new supported scheme for older people with complex needs	Accommodation to be sourced and developed March 2017	Government funding awarded December 2015	BHCC Housing
Commission Housing First accommodation with units for young people	Contract live January 2016 (action complete)	New service funded within existing commissioning budgets	BHCC Adult Services
Consult women and other groups about delivery of service which best meet their needs	Develop women only accommodation provision	Commissioning by March 2017	BHCC Adult Services
Goal 12 Ensure timely move on to independent accommodation			
Ensure all those on the pathway to independence have a move-on plan developed at an early stage	Incorporated as part of the new model tender March 2017	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services
Work with third sector and landlords to source secure accommodation suitable for single people	Target to be developed in 2016	Within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services BHCC Housing Third Sector
Improve access to social housing where appropriate to meet needs of those ready	Allocations Policy Review in progress 2016	Social housing demand exceeds supply	BHCC Adult Services & BHCC Housing
Ensure the Multi-Agency Protocol highlights the regions housing affordability challenge	June 2016	To be developed within existing resources	BHCC Adult Services & St. Mungo's
Investigate creative solutions to increase accommodation options (such as lodgers)	March 2017	Subject to options developed	BHCC Adult Services & BHCC Housing

Consultation Questions:

- 6.1 Do you agree with the approach to this priority?
- 6.2 How successful do you think this approach will be? (On a scale of 1-10, 10 is best)
- 6.3 What do you think the city could change or do better to achieve this priority?

How to Respond to the Consultation

Consultation Questions 7: Final thoughts

- 7.1 Now you have read the proposals, how successful overall do you think the city's strategy, priorities and approach will be? (On a scale of 1-10, 10 is best)
- 7.2 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the city's approach to make sure no-one has the need to sleep rough in Brighton & Hove by 2020?

To comment on this draft strategy, please visit the Council's Consultation Portal at <http://consult.brighton-hove.gov.uk/portal>

You can also write to us as:

Housing Strategy Team
Brighton & Hove City Council
4th Floor Bartholomew House
Bartholomew Square
Brighton BN1 1JE

Email: housing.strategy@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Comments on this draft strategy are welcome between 16 March and 17 April 2016.

It is very important that the strategy is built on a firm understanding of the experiences of all those affected by rough sleeping. In addition to the valuable research done locally with people sleeping rough by Homeless Link and Stonewall Housing, we will particularly seek and welcome contributions from those with experiences of rough sleeping to share.

We will use the feedback from this consultation to finalise the strategy for approval in summer 2016.

Housing Strategy Team

Brighton & Hove City Council
4th Floor Bartholomew House
Bartholomew Square, Brighton, BN1 1JE

t: 01273 293055

e: housing.strategy@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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