

City of Portsmouth

**'Street Homelessness and
Rough Sleeping Partnership
Strategy'**

2018 – 2023

Version 1.1

Introducing the Strategy - Cllr Darren Sanders

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to read this strategy, a first for this city.

More and more people sleep on the streets of this great city and many others. That is unacceptable in this day and age, yet the truth is that the reasons for this are many and complex, defying the traditional 'one size fits all' response the public sector has.

Whether it is the veteran who cannot cope after the horrors of battle or the child asked to leave their family home because their parents want their bedroom as an office, every person who sleeps rough is different. What unites them is the human cost of doing so, for instance dying on average 30 years younger than the rest of the population - a shocking waste of human life.

The last few years have seen major efforts to try and deal with rough sleeping. We have seen a the Portsmouth City Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Partnership Group examining the issue in detail. This work has done a lot to try and deal with the issues. There are also many, many voluntary groups that do a fantastic job dealing directly with those who happen to sleep rough. Everyone involved with it must be applauded.

The situation we face now requires more comprehensive work, of which this strategy is the starting point. It has two overarching themes. The first is treating every person who happens to sleep rough as part of our community, not part of the problem; an individual, not a number.

The second is to accept that the Council's role is to enable others to do the job, rather than pretending it has all the answers. That is why this strategy is unusual. It is the start of a dialogue, albeit one based on listening to what we have been told. Dealing with such a complex matter requires a co-ordinated approach that means groups and individuals - including politicians - putting aside differences and working together on an equal footing to create a better life for this group of people.

There will be ideas in here some people will not like. For instance, it is not equating people who need our help with professional street beggars who prey on people's natural humanity. They must and will be dealt with; here is the wrong place to do it. That is not to say we will not tackle issues of antisocial behaviour, but doing so must form part of a balanced package of measures consistent with the 'Prevention, Intervention, Recovery' approach in the Government's 2018 Rough Sleeper Strategy.

Key suggestions include:

- **Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only.** This recognises that the increasingly diverse nature of the people who happen to sleep rough in our city requires support as well as accommodation, especially those who wish to 'move on' We wish to consult on this.
- **Changing services away from traditional public sector models to personalised plans** that focus on the needs of individuals and identify the most appropriate support for them
- **Improving the quality of accommodation**, including exploring 'safe houses', enabling those who wish to move on live in places that avoid substance misuse

- **Exploring an 'alternative giving campaign'** to encourage people to focus their generosity at groups that help people who happen to sleep rough, including exploring using the money given to enable individuals to improve their lives
- **Encourage the public sector and private companies to utilise or buy buildings to accommodate those who happen to sleep rough and explore providing employment opportunities for them**
- **Get the Council, other statutory partners and voluntary groups and people who happen to sleep rough to work together to deliver this approach** and encourage a 'City Conversation' to help develop it
- **Build on the Government's idea of navigators** - a concept first devised here in Portsmouth - beyond people who merely highlight services to ones who can develop the relationships that are so vital to getting many people who sleep rough to engage

This is not a complete list of the points in this document. They do, though, point to an approach that balances support, opportunity and hope to ensure no-one is left behind.

I would like to thank many people for putting together this strategy. You have helped shape the thinking in this initial strategy document. Thank you.

Cllr Darren Sanders

Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness
Portsmouth City Council

Introduction

Portsmouth, like many other Local Authority areas, has seen an increase in street homelessness and rough sleeping. There has been a significant increase in the number of homeless people congregating within the city, and often in areas where they are highly visible and potentially vulnerable in the City Centre, Central Southsea and areas within the night-time economy.

The common perception is that those who happen to sleep rough are all beggars. Though some are, the truth is that most are not. Anyone can end up sleeping rough. Tackling it is complex and needs to consider many factors. One response does not fit all. Every person who ends up on the streets has a story to tell as to why they are there. In every case the story is different, they are part of our community. Our response must reflect that reality.

Rough sleeping can damage a person's physical and mental health. Many experience issues with mental and physical health, and substance misuse problems as a result of the conditions in which they live.

This strategy - the first our city has produced - is the starting point in reversing that in a comprehensive way. It will offer a general approach, the context within which it operates, some pointers on what to do and what happens next.

Much has happened in Portsmouth, particularly attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and the 'Everyone In' government directive of March 2020. This directive provided the opportunity to, initially, expand our night bed accommodation provision and then to develop this into a rough sleeping accommodation and support pathway. Considering this, and the recognition that there needs to be greater synergy between this strategy and the Homelessness Strategy, we have updated the operational elements of this strategy to reflect the current offer to those who are or who are at risk of rough sleeping. This strategy will therefore function as an interim strategy, whilst work is undertaken to, firstly, review homelessness across the city and then to produce a newly formed homelessness and rough sleeping strategy for the city.

Whilst the current Homelessness Strategy runs until the end of 2023, the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy had an end date of 2020. In addition, there have been a number of operational changes to the services that rough sleepers can access in the city. This has been recognised within this update document.

Context

In Portsmouth we believe that nobody should be sleeping on the streets and with appropriate support everybody can live a happier and healthier life.

The Council and other statutory bodies in our city do this within a context set out in law and Governmental strategy and policy.

1. The Law

There are several laws that cover street homelessness and rough sleeping. They matter because those who happen to do those things fall outside the groups councils must give priority to under the Housing Act 1996.

Generally, the Public Service Equality Duty (Equality) Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. However, local authorities are under no obligation to produce strategies like this.

There is also legislation that deals specifically with homelessness. The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced the power for Local Authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for those households that do not meet any of the categories for priority needs under the 1996 Act and where their homelessness would be unintentional. This is the case in Portsmouth.

The focus on preventing homelessness has been further cemented through the new Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), which began to be implemented in Portsmouth on 1 April 2018.

The new Act seeks to address some of the problems with the current Acts, particularly in relation to single homelessness, through earlier intervention, prevention, appropriate assessment of needs and the development of individualised plans. Key elements include:

- A change to the definition of a person who is 'threatened' with homelessness to people likely to become homeless within 56 days. Previously this was 28 days
- The local authority must take 'reasonable steps' to help such avoid becoming homeless. This includes providing free information and advice on preventing homelessness and securing accommodation if homeless or threatened with it
- Local authorities designing services that meet the needs of those at increased risk of becoming homeless, such as care leavers, those leaving prison, hospital or the armed forces, victims of domestic abuse, and those with mental health problems
- A duty on local authorities to assess eligible applicants who are or at risk of becoming homeless and agree the actions to be taken through the development of a personalised plan of action, irrespective of their priority need status.
- Local authorities taking reasonable steps to help all eligible applicants secure accommodation for at least six months.
- All applicants must cooperate with local authority attempts to comply with their duties. Local authorities can serve notice on applicants it considers have deliberately and unreasonably refused to cooperate.

Taskforce was held setting out the need to work together across Government to reduce rough sleeping.

In August 2018, the Government announced its rough sleeping strategy. It established three aims: prevention, intervention and recovery. This has been supported through the multiple opportunities to apply for funding and the council has been successful in obtaining funding to support rough sleeping. A further application will be made for funding April 2022 - March 2025.

- Helping key groups, such as care leavers with complex needs and those leaving prison
- Reviewing laws such as the Vagrancy Act to reduce discrimination against those who sleep rough
- Funding homelessness workers, bed spaces and 'navigators' to help people through the system
- Money for those with mental health and substance misuse issues who sleep rough
- A new supply of homes outside London for people who sleep rough and those who are ready to move on from hostels or refuges and might need additional support
- Flexible support funding to help over 5,000 people at risk of rough sleeping, over the next two years, to sustain their tenancies in homes across the housing sector.

Portsmouth's approach is similar in many ways and, later, this strategy will explain how we want to seek what the Government has to offer.

3. The Local Position

The last few years has seen an increased focus on tackling street homelessness. The Council created a Homelessness Champion in former Cllr Paul Godier and a cross-party working group that produced a report to Cabinet in June 2017. Its recommendations have been or are being carried out. In addition, there was a workshop dealing with the issue of rough sleeping. The idea of a strategy on this matter is one of the products of that session.

The Day Service within the Rough Sleeping Hub, is open seven days a week and offers individuals who are experiencing rough sleeping a place to shower, do laundry, receive support and advice around their housing and health needs. Employment advice is also offered.

Within the Rough Sleeping Hub where the day service is held, there are 2 'no second night out beds.' The purpose of this provision is to offer a bed to prevent any person spending a second night on the streets. The service provider works alongside Housing Needs Advice and support (HNAS) to carry out a holistic assessment of the individual's needs.

An independent Supported Housing Assessor (ISHA) progresses the assessment collaboratively with HNAS to understand whether the Rough Sleeping Pathway would be the right accommodation option.

Staff at the Rough Sleeping Hub will also work with individuals to reconnect them to their last settled accommodation or local connection area, if appropriate.

Portsmouth City Council has created a Rough Sleeping Pathway, utilising funding from the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). 3 buildings were procured, and renovations were completed to build a pathway of accommodation with 24 hours support for people who are rough sleeping or at risk of Rough Sleeping.

The 3 buildings are as follows;

The Registry, St Michael's Rd, Portsmouth PO1 2EE

- High Support
- 41 self-contained rooms with ensuite bathing facilities.
- Shared cooking facilities
- Staff on site 24/7
- 2 welfare checks carried out to each room daily

Kingsway House, Elm Grove, Southsea, PO5 1LR

- Medium Support
- 9 flats containing 45 rooms with shared kitchen and bathrooms inside each flat.
- The Rough Sleeping Hub is based on the ground floor of Kingsway House
- Staff on site 24/7
- 2 welfare checks carried out to each room daily

155-157 Elm Grove, Portsmouth, PO5 1LJ

- Low support
- 5 flats containing 19 rooms with shared kitchen and bathrooms inside each flat.
- 1 welfare check carried out daily
- Staff are based directly across the road

4. The issues we face in Portsmouth

The last rough sleeping count, conducted in November 2021, showed there were 24 rough sleepers in Portsmouth. This is a reduction on previous years with 29 recorded rough sleepers recorded in November 2020 and 26 in November 2019.

Whilst the number of people sleeping on the streets is stable and slowly reducing, there are 45 people who are in the Target priority group (TPG).

This group is formed with DLUHC. This number is a reflection of Rough Sleepers who have spent:

- 2 or more months on the sleeping rough street on the last 12 months
- 1 or more day on sleeping on the streets in 2020 and 2019

Given that each person is different, there will be as many issues faced as there are people who happen to sleep rough. However, some general trends do emerge.

- a. Some do not engage with services. This is the most challenging group and, for obvious reasons, the hardest to reach. There are, though, many reasons for this, such as: a sense that the level and quality of current services do not offer what they want; people

who had substance misuse issues fearing that engaging means meeting people who will tempt them back into the old ways; losing a job - often in the unregulated economy - that pushes them back on the streets.

- b. We need a distinct path for people who wish to 'move on'. This group of people want to leave the streets behind but need relevant accommodation and assistance in getting jobs and help in resuming a conventional life.
- c. Services need co-ordination and work best when people who happen to sleep rough are involved in creating them. Too many groups in the city do great work, but in an unco-ordinated way. A coherent approach means statutory and voluntary groups working together and - following the example of places like Manchester - involving people who do or did sleep rough in the services on offer.
- d. Giving people an outlet for their common decency. Many people give money to beggars - professional and otherwise - when the law and experience show this is not the best way. Professional street beggars play on this. We want to harness people's desire to help in a way that in the medium-and long-term, can help those on the streets break the cycle, perhaps through a central repository for funds to be devolved to homeless charities.
This is particularly true for adults with complex needs and those who misuse substances. A recent Public Health England report on this describes the correlation between the use of substances and begging. It is difficult to disaggregate these two things and further work is needed to understand this.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homeless-adults-with-complex-needs-evidence-review>
What is clearer is that the link between poor outcomes and adverse childhood experiences (especially exposure to domestic abuse/violence and substance use/mental health problems in a carer/parent) is very strong and we need to do work around that.
- e. We need to tackle the reasons why antisocial behaviour involving people who happen to sleep rough occurs. Many people who sleep rough face emotional and sometimes physical abuse. Those who do not also complain about issues such as street drinking by people they believe do. We need to look at the causes of this, as well as deal properly with the symptoms.

Our vision

Working together to end rough sleeping in our city. Building partnerships to understand the path to rough sleeping, creating innovative person-centred solutions to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Vision Statement

Portsmouth's city vision works in parallel with the Rough Sleeping Vision as a city that believes its community, in collaboration, equality, respect and innovation.

We recognise that for various reasons some people will end up on the streets and this is where multi-agency partners will work closely together to identify them, assess their individual needs and work to bring them off the streets as quickly as possible. Access to a self-managed space with support from health, social care, and housing will be available for all. An adaptable and flexible housing solution should be sought taking a holistic approach with the person at the centre. For many this will be through an established pathway model, that will lead to a self-sustained tenancy, however alternative options will be available for those who cannot enter the pathway.

Whilst an accommodation offer will be made available to all there may be occasions when individuals do not wish to leave street homelessness or are not ready to engage. Support will be available to help them live a safe and secure lifestyle which avoids antisocial behaviour and keeps the door open for leaving that lifestyle when they are ready to do so.

Our approach will be engagement led with outreach services engaging individuals identifying as homeless, understanding their needs. Being homeless is not a crime, but some activities undertaken by street homeless individuals may be. For those that use the streets as a place for crime and anti-social behaviour, multi-agency partners will work vigorously to minimise and remove that behaviour for the protection of those most vulnerable as well as the public. We want to build on work being completed that identifies and prevents root causes of homelessness. This is achievable only when major agencies, stakeholders and individuals work together to tackle causes of trauma in a person's life which impact on future chances of stability and may lead to them sleeping on the streets.

Where a preventative approach does not work, and a person becomes at risk of rough sleeping, the role of multi-agency partners will be to work together to identify the person and remove all possible barriers to enable their life to get back on track. Agencies will have robust information sharing channels and step forward in finding solutions. For the Housing Needs, Advice and Support this will include helping individuals to find and sustain a home before they need sleep rough by offering financial incentives to landlords, and support to enter the private rented sector and sustain a tenancy.

The voluntary sector plays a pivotal role in supporting current and ex-rough sleepers providing advice, guidance, food and other essentials when a person needs it without prejudice. Voluntary sectors act as an insight to this communities needs working on barriers which prevents a person from accessing support when they are ready to engage.

Whatever route off the street is taken, it is vital to help that individual to minimise the chances of returning to the street. Therefore, addressing physical and mental health, substance abuse

and general lifestyle choices are all a vital part of the pathway. Support offers will also incorporate life-long learning opportunities and employment support.

As a City, across neighbourhoods, communities, organisations, sectors and businesses, we will all take responsibility to work to prevent and relieve rough sleeping. This has been at the heart of the Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Partnership board which will continue to be a forum and model which leads on change.

Everyone will have the opportunity to succeed, with differences in need respected, making sure everyone feels included and safe. We are ambitious and action-oriented, welcoming new ideas and embracing changes that improve people's lives.

Our approach

As a city, we must do all we can to stop street homelessness and rough sleeping. This strategy outlines some ways in which this can be done. It works on some basic principles:

1. **Services for people who happen to sleep rough or are street homeless must be built around that person.** Too often people - especially those with mental health or substance misuse issues - fall through the cracks. Building relationships to ensure engagement is crucial.
2. **The Council cannot and should not do this alone.** It requires a partnership between it, other statutory bodies and the many voluntary groups who do such great work in helping people who happen to be street homeless.

The service on offer must be co-ordinated. There are several statutory and voluntary agencies but to date their services have largely been unconnected which leads to fragmentation and duplication of cost and effort. This strategy aims to provide a co-ordinated approach to rough sleeping and to ensure that all services work together to minimise duplication and maximise resource and expertise. To that end, some local authorities have introduced an accreditation scheme for voluntary homeless/rough sleeping charities and this should be considered in Portsmouth. We are working with 'Project Bridge', a partnership arrangement between Public Sector and Voluntary Sector services, to help us understand the need better. Better data sharing mechanisms will help co-ordination too.

3. **'Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only'.** Housing First is a specific, licensed approach - trialled in the United States - that gives people with complex needs who sleep rough a home. Support can be provided via 'assertive engagement', but is not inherent in the package. The Government is piloting this in parts of England, just as parts of the United States are moving away from it.

Our approach is different in some ways. It meets the increasingly diverse nature of those who happen to sleep rough and reflects the approach of putting the individual, not the process, first. As it is different to Housing First, we must give it a different name. 'Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only' balances the need for a home - especially for people who wish to move on - with offering the ongoing tailored support so many need and want upfront, not as an add-on.

4. **We must help homeless veterans.** Every Local Authority including Portsmouth has an Armed Forces Covenant and signed Covenant pledges. We need to do all we can to make sure that members of the Armed Forces Community are taken into consideration in developing our plans.

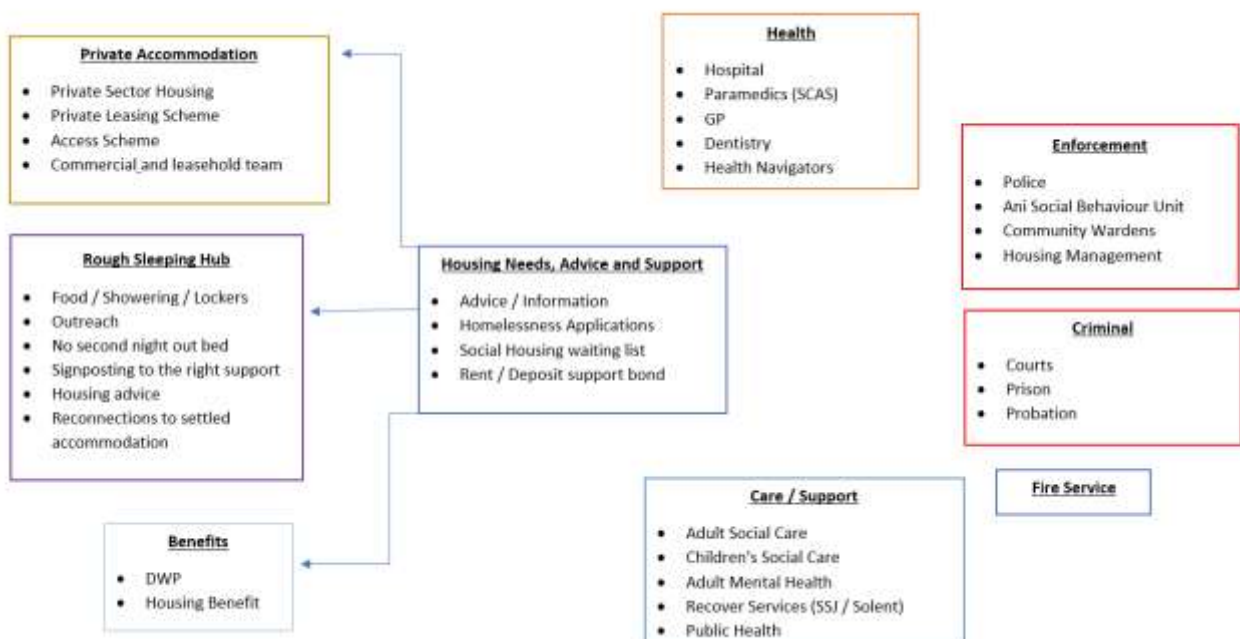
Who are the services?

In Portsmouth there are many partners with direct or indirect links to this issue. The list below highlights some of them: There is a need for all services to work together around the needs of everyone.

- Local Authority Property and Housing Services
- Public Health
- Adult Social Care
- Hampshire Constabulary
- Probation Services
- Commissioned homelessness support focussed services
- Children's Services
- Educational establishments
- Voluntary services including faith groups
- Safer Portsmouth Partnership
- Health & Wellbeing Board

Figure 1 (below) provides a visual of the existing relationships between these statutory services, in respect of rough sleeping:

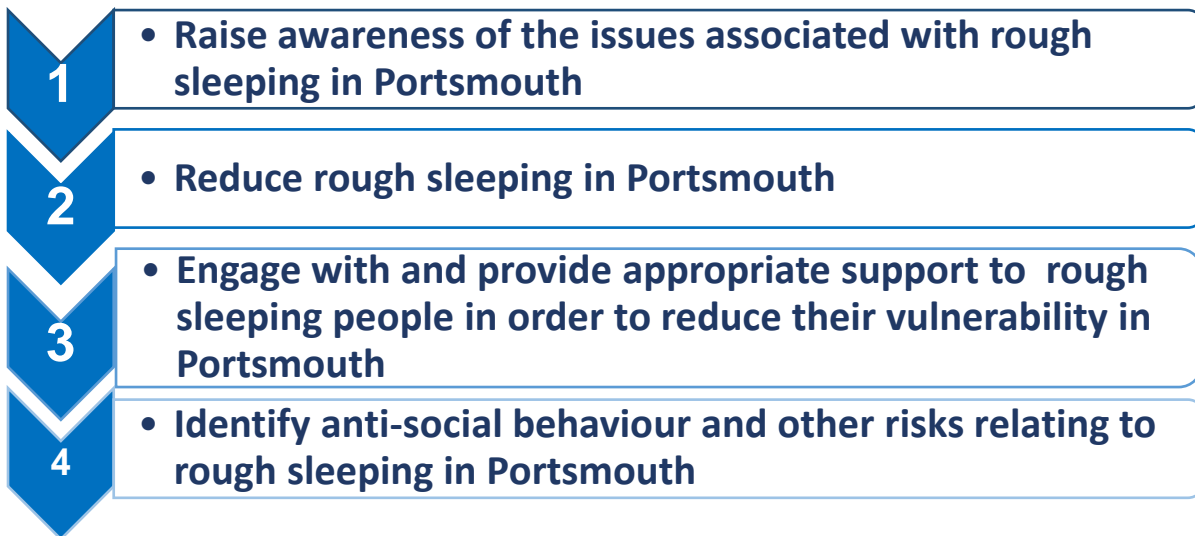
Statutory Provision



How will we achieve the Vision?

a. Strategic objectives

Working together, we will:



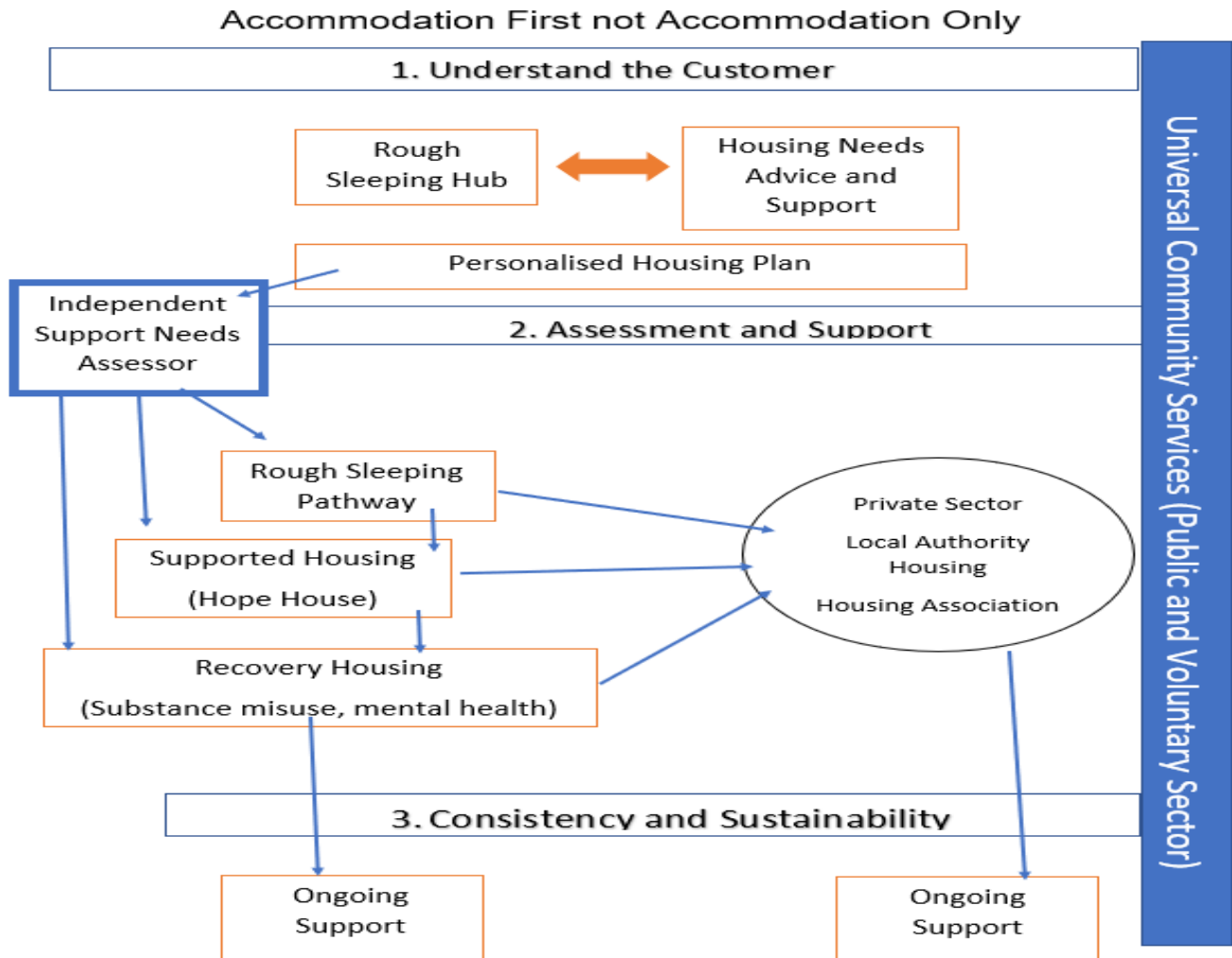
Accommodation First Not Accommodation Only (Fig. 2 below)

In addition to our own learning, the proposed 'Accommodation First, Not Accommodation Only' model builds on some of the emerging learning from the evidence-based model, Housing First.

The principles of 'Accommodation First, Not Accommodation Only' are:

- Getting somewhere to live isn't the end of the support needed; for many residents it is the beginning
- Starting support with having somewhere to live offers the safety and stability needed to develop a support plan that will help address other issues/make changes
- Offering support that goes 'beyond the four walls' to help people, where needed, to positively engage within the community in which they reside

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of this model. It sets out the steps that matter to the individual in being supported to move from the streets and into settled accommodation.



The purpose of this model is also to recognise and reinforce how essential the co-ordination between this strategy, the Homelessness Reduction Act and the Adult Supported Housing Pathway is in offering an effective and sustainable framework to meet the needs of people facing the risk of or who end up sleeping on the streets. This model also, importantly, highlights that securing accommodation is, for some, just one aspect of a larger support network that may be required (additional support might include mental health needs, substance use, debt management, finding employment) to prevent individuals finding themselves struggling to sustain accommodation due to gaps in support available and facing the risk of repeating this process time and time again.

The Portsmouth Homeless Day Service, which offers Outreach would be used as an entry point into settled accommodation. Individuals would be invited to complete a personalised housing plan which would consider any support needs. Once the needs have been identified the personalised housing plan would be used to engage with relevant services. Once the personalised housing plan has been established it will be the responsibility of the individual and the services to progress this into settled accommodation.

The connection between the Day Service, and the Council's Housing Options Department is pivotal to the success of this model. Following the successful transition into settled accommodation, support will continue for as long as is necessary via floating support or outreach.

Our implementation plan will align to each of the four strategic objectives and actions that will be considered by signatories to the strategy. The actions need to be owned either by a single agency, in partnership or between wider stakeholders.

We also need urgently to map what is currently being done to support people sleeping rough in Portsmouth. At present we do not fully understand the complex, diverse and uncoordinated support network that already exists in the city.

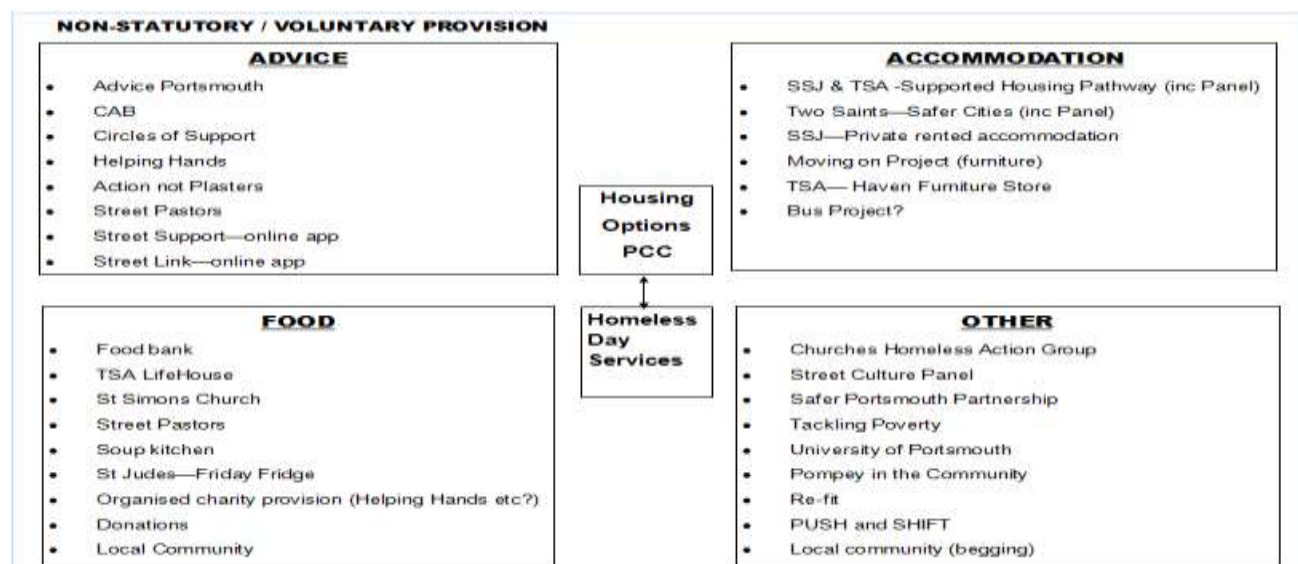


Figure 3

Figure 3 (above) depicts the emerging learning that has identified this as a network of support that sits beyond the local authority's advice and support function.

We would propose that consideration is given to the following in the further development of this strategy:

- Annual training for frontline professionals & partners, as well as ongoing Continuous Professional Development awareness sessions, including the services available.
- Prevention of homelessness through PCC Housing identifying people & their needs through existing Personalised Housing Plans. Early support and intervention before evictions are implemented; incorporating advice around debt, money management & other common issues which can lead to tenancy action; benefits; etc.
- Increasing the availability of good quality, affordable, private rented accommodation. The administration is committed to encouraging private landlords to charge a Living Rent and expanding the rent deposit scheme. These could assist persons with the money required to find private sector housing.
- Increasing the availability and provision of temporary including hostel space, ensuring it is plentiful and readily available in the interim whilst more long-term permanent accommodation is sought.
- Multi-agency / third sector engagement & drop-in clinics; effective outreach and engagement services in partnership with charity agencies such as Salvation Army and

Society of St. James, which would include health & dental services, mental health, substance misuse, learning links to support education skills & assist employability.

- Targeted stakeholder action days / activity to identify & support the most vulnerable homeless people in Portsmouth. Due to the numbers involved, this would ensure partners & stakeholders focus on the most vulnerable / complex needs cohort, whilst general engagement would also support the homeless & help us to develop the risk picture. Also, consider the implementation of a Vulnerable Person's Panel.
- Consider the creation of a dedicated Street Engagement Team. We should consider funding a team which could consist of police, community wardens, housing options and outreach services to work with the most vulnerable.
- Ensure effective partnership and information sharing takes place, we should consider creating a Stakeholder Action Group to meet on a bi-monthly basis. This would include key stakeholders: police, local authority, local councillor, CPS rep, local authority housing providers, housing options, community wardens, outreach services, substance misuse and Mental Health services along with representatives from the temporary and shelter accommodation providers. This would enable effective management of information sharing and accountability of partners in vulnerability management.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, proper work is done to tackle the causes and symptoms of antisocial behaviour involving people who happen to sleep rough. Examples could include: clamping down on the sale of 'super-strength' alcohol; navigating people to relevant services; providing more activities during the day. Dealing with professional street beggars is essential but, as these people are not homeless, this is not relevant to a strategy on street homelessness. This could be done through an 'ASB expert' who acts as a liaison between statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Additionally, we need to consider toilet provisions & additional street cleaning as well as needle exchanges in areas being frequented by rough sleepers in order to manage risk to those individuals as well as the residual public health risks to the general community.
- Raise awareness of how the public can support a strategy around "Small change equals Big Change" programme to encourage practical alternatives to giving money to beggars
- Facilitate awareness raising sessions in schools, colleges and the University of Portsmouth so that students can understand the vulnerability of street homeless people.
- Explore facilities for daytime use by rough sleepers. Facilities to include practical support in addition to information, advice and guidance around housing and health needs. Currently the Portsmouth Homeless Day Service offers support to individuals who are rough sleepers and provides facilities to enable washing of clothes and personal hygiene, support around health-based needs and advice and support regarding housing. The opening hours are limited.
- Consider the development of a 'Rough Sleeper's Charter' where all interested parties give consensus to a set of principles. This could be facilitated via an annual 'City Conversation' of the type envisaged in the 2017 Homelessness Working group report.
- Research around homelessness and being part of the rough sleeping community should be considered. Individuals with experience of rough sleeping are a valuable asset in understanding the issues encountered by people who are street homeless.

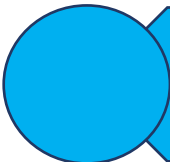
What outcomes are we seeking to achieve?



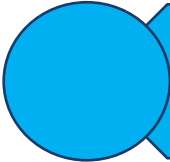
Fewer rough sleepers in annual street homeless count



Reduction in Street related anti-social behaviours



Increase in use of night bed provision and appropriate 'move on' routes to settled accommodation



Successful media campaigns to offer the public the opportunity to make 'informed choices'

Governance & Accountability

This strategy sets out the overarching vision and strategic objectives for tackling street homelessness in Portsmouth. Successful delivery is dependent upon the statutory agencies, partners and other stakeholders delivering the agreed implementation plan at an operational level.

That means the city's elected representatives working across party, as well as with statutory and voluntary partners, to ensure the strategy's success.

This has resulted in the creation of the Portsmouth City Rough Sleeping & Homelessness Partnership Group

Independently chaired, this group provides scrutiny, support and guidance for the Strategy and for partners to commit resources to support its aims. Membership includes:

- Cabinet members who have a responsibility for Housing and Preventing Homelessness, Environment & Community Safety and Health and Wellbeing
- Representatives from all political groups of Portsmouth City Council
- Voluntary Sector partners chosen on an annual rotating basis from the Big Conversation event

- Statutory partners including the Police, Adult Social Care and providers of services for people with mental and physical health issues
- Individuals who have experienced rough sleeping

Conclusion and next steps

We accept that we have set ourselves challenging and ambitious objectives. However, we are committed to achieving the outcomes described in this strategy. The human cost of vulnerable people rough sleeping on our streets is not acceptable. As a city we think we have a responsibility to support these people and ensure that they are supported to find and sustain safe, settled accommodation.

This strategy sets out a model to achieve this, the Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only model is a start in understanding the circumstances of each individual via a personalised plan and then drawing on resources available to support the individual. We recognise that there is much to do and this work is complex. We also recognise that that wider support from health care, mental health services and drug and alcohol services is pivotal to the success of supporting individuals.

We recognise that there are gaps in our knowledge and with our data and we need to improve our understanding of individuals who are experiencing rough sleeping and we will be continuing to work with partners to address this.

This document is an operation refresh of the document first published in 2018. It will be combined with the Homelessness strategy to make a single strategy, which will be published during or before 2023.

Appendix

Draft Implementation Plan

In developing the draft implementation plan, these are the actions we are currently taking and will continue to take until the full review and new Homelessness and rough Sleeping strategy is approved

SO1

• **Raise awareness of the issues associated with rough sleeping in Portsmouth**

- Develop a Communication Strategy using Social Media, PCC Flagship and other media channels to highlight the risk and vulnerabilities of people who are rough sleepers. This will enable the residents, businesses and others to find out how they can support the strategy.
- Learn from outcomes and recommended interventions from the Complex Case Review led by the Safer Portsmouth Partnership. Use learning and recommendations to inform changes to processes.
- Understand and source the type of accommodation that is required and work with partner agencies to identify opportunities, especially for those who wish to 'move on'. Utilise relationships with registered social landlords to see what accommodation options are available.
- Work with health-based services to understand the ongoing challenges of addiction and the impact. Utilise understanding to look at barriers and how these can be overcome as a partnership.
- The reasons for rough sleeping are complex and individual circumstances and decisions made by rough sleepers are not fully understood. Awareness raising needs to take place in City Schools, Colleges and with the University of Portsmouth to enlighten services.

- Residents of Portsmouth should be empowered to make an informed choice before giving money to people who live on the streets. The voluntary sector, including faith-based groups, should be encouraged to donate to a central fund which could be divided amongst accredited voluntary organisations.
- Work with local businesses to understand the impact of rough sleepers on their businesses.
- Host 'Conversation' events to build on the goodwill of Portsmouth residents and co-ordinate a collective response.

SO2 • Reduce rough sleeping in Portsmouth

- Portsmouth Homeless Advice Hub, Understand its purpose, need and demand from homeless people as well as its responsibility to the community.
- Continue to develop the work in the Rough Sleeping pathway understanding what support is needed to support individuals to secure long term sustainable accommodation

Work with the public and private sectors to encourage job opportunities for people who wish to 'move on' from sleeping rough. Explore whether the alternative giving project could help subsidise wages or training

- Build up relationships with through a dedicated Street Homeless Support Team, building on the work of organisations in the voluntary sector. These would offer an enhanced relationship.
- Day time activities - consider use of Community Centres and other public spaces. Work with providers and partners to encourage people to take part in daytime activities.
- Explore providing dedicated support and advice for key groups, such as veterans and people who have just left prison.

SO3

• Engage with and provide appropriate support to rough sleeping people in order to reduce their vulnerability in Portsmouth

- Data Sharing - Gaining a full understanding of individuals and the cohort to enable more effective commissioning.
- Street Support App - This app seeks to keep individuals informed of all support available across the city.
- Accreditation of Voluntary Groups linking with City Priorities
- City Conversation - This concerns informing residents about the issue and seeking views and opinions of the whole community/public.

SO4

• Identify anti-social behaviour and other risks relating to homeless people in Portsmouth

- We need a balanced approach to enforcing antisocial behaviour conducted to and by those who happen to sleep rough. This will be done through Portsmouth's partnership approach to persistent begging and anti-social behaviour by homeless people including those with complex needs.
- Hampshire Constabulary's neighbourhood policing teams, Portsmouth City Council's community and high street wardens and other partners including the Crown Prosecution Service have agreed a joint approach in order to manage these incidents in a consistent and proportionate way.
- Hampshire Constabulary has also agreed to take the lead in initial enforcement and evidence gathering, with Portsmouth City Council taking the lead in subsequent enforcement through the civil courts.

Enforcement needs to run alongside active encouragement to people to engage with services. The PCC Street Warden Service who have been operational since January 2018 have been engaging with rough sleepers and other partners to offer support to individuals who are sleeping rough. This service could act as navigators as well as enforcers.

- PCC is pivotal in the enforcement strategy, particularly in decisions to pursue offenders through the civil court. It will take all steps necessary to deal with any antisocial behaviour that arises, recognising that it is a symptom of wider issues, not the cause.