Devon Rough Sleeper Project: End of Year Report

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1. Introduction

In December 2010 Devon County was awarded £200,000 by The Department of Communities and Local Government to specifically target single homeless (non priority) people. Half the money went on improving access to the private rented sector and the other half to enhance the existing rough sleeper services throughout the county.

A proposal was written and agreed by DHOP in early 2011, it offered a menu of interventions to local authorities regarding rough sleeping, grouped into 3 types of intervention with each authority negotiating priorities with the local service provider.

2. Project Aims and Objectives

Mapping

- To effectively map the number of people rough sleeping in Devon
- To identify where rough sleeping has increased due to cuts in Supporting People, changes to housing benefit payments and other economic conditions
- To better understand the nature of rough sleeping in the rural districts of Devon; numbers, location, assessment of needs
- To arrive at a baseline number of rough sleepers by the first 6 months of the project

Capacity Building

- To identify community/ church groups offering support to people who are rough sleeping and assess their skills, competencies and where appropriate offer training and support
- Offer training to relevant statutory and non statutory services raising awareness of rough sleeping and associated issues
- Develop new community networks to help identify rough sleepers and effectively signpost them to services that can assist them
• Work collaboratively with the district authorities and communities to devise more flexible accommodation options

**Direct Service provision**

• To offer a range of interventions to people who are rough sleeping, including reconnection, access to emergency accommodation and use of individualised budgets

• Where appropriate working with districts to ensure that single, non priority people experiencing homelessness are prevented from having to sleep rough

3. **Service Delivery**

Each of the 5 existing outreach services formed a partnership with a neighbouring district without any outreach provision in order to assist them in scoping the extent of rough sleeping, map existing services and offer advice around possible interventions etc.

• The Street Homeless Outreach Team (Exeter) partner East Devon

• North Devon Rough Sleeper Service partner Mid Devon

• Plymouth Access to Housing (PATH) partner Teignbridge

• Shekinah Mission (Torbay) partner South Hams

• Barnstaple Poverty Action Group (BPAG, Torridge partner West Devon

As Devon is a large geographical area which is mostly rural it was felt that even with the partnerships between outreach teams and districts it would still be difficult to scope the extent of rough sleeping, so it was agreed to explore the use of implement a 24-hour phone line that members of the public could use to phone and report someone rough sleeping in their area. This idea was taken from the Street Rescue scheme run by Thames Reach in London (and is also used as part of London’s No Second Night Out initiative.

It was agreed that the project would be overseen by a steering committee comprising of the 5 outreach services (mentioned above), representatives from Torridge District Council and Exeter City Council, Homeless Link and NHS Devon. This group has met monthly to oversee the project and now includes representatives’ from Cornwall.

4. **Budget Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street Homeless Outreach Team</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Devon Rough Sleeper Service</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth Access to Housing</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shekinah Mission</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Breakdown by Area

Each area was asked to produce a brief report on how their initial £15,000 was spent and what outputs and outcomes were achieved. In order to clearly show what resources had been used in each area, the information has been divided into the different Local Authority areas.

Although there were agreed overarching aims and objectives, each area was keen to respond to presenting need as they deemed appropriate. This has been useful for the purpose of the ‘pilot’ as it gives an opportunity to assess which interventions have proved to be the most effective and should shape future service delivery.

5. Shekinah: Torbay and South Hams

Identified Aims of the Pilot:

- Map number of rough sleepers in Torbay and South Hams
- Work with and educate voluntary and front line services re: rough sleeping and support available; local churches, Salvation Army, Street Pastors, Police
- Develop support for services and information sharing intelligence
- Work with South Hams and Torbay Housing Services re: flexible housing options and delivery
- Develop range of engagement tools – Use of Individual Budgets
- Identify prevention techniques and share good practice

Outputs: (Torbay)

- Additional outreach provision
- Increased partnership working with the street pastors, The Haven drop – in service, Police, Social Services, Housing and ‘Redeeming Our Communities’
Involving current rough sleepers in hostel activities and day trips to encourage and maintain engagement

Outcomes: (Torbay)

- 27 people accommodated: 10 at the hostel, 2 with friends, 13 in the Private Rented Sector
- 6 people reconnected

Outputs: (South Hams)

- Engaged with local drop – in centre and helped to put some basic policies and procedures in place
- Have engaged with Addaction and rethink
- Attended the South Hams and West Devon Home Strategy event, met with the Housing Team and have attended South Hams Homelessness Forum meetings
- Have undertaken outreach in the very rural areas
- Have met with local floating support service (Carr-Gomm) and agreed direct referrals

Outcomes: (South Hams)

- In the process of accommodating 3 people with support from South Hams District Council
- 1 person accommodated from the street who was rough sleeping in Totnes

Budget Breakdown

Torbay

- Additional hours of outreach support per week
- Individual Budgets – have bought clothing, mobile phone
- Travel – Torbay outreach and meetings
- Client Food and Drink
- Reconnection for non-priority rough sleepers

South Hams

- Staffing hours
- Stationery for drop-in service
Mobile Phone use
Travel
Client Food and Drink (Christmas presents and dog supplies)
Individual Budgets

Expenditure to date: £7,055.42 – for both South Hams and Torbay

6. **Street Homeless Outreach Team – Exeter and East Devon**

The £15,000 awarded to The Street Homeless Outreach Team in Exeter has been used to develop and run an outreach Service in East Devon.

East Devon District Council and Exeter Shot agreed to work together to pilot an outreach service in the East Devon locality. The initial £15,000 of funding was spent on the following:

Employ an outreach Worker (initially 3 days a week – now extended to 4) to:

- Initially investigate whether there was a need for regular outreach in the area of East Devon
- Make contact with services in the area working with people who are sleeping rough – such as the Open Door Day centre, CHA Smartmove, Housing Options, PCSO’s, Street Clean and the Grounds Maintenance
- Set up regular outreach, hotspot counts and estimates for the area
- Verify who is sleeping rough and where
- Assess people sleeping rough in conjunction with other services
- Support people into suitable accommodation and to access appropriate support for their needs
- Working with East Devon District Council to develop accommodation options for rough sleepers and to give guidance on Housing / Homelessness Strategies
- To purchase a laptop and set up remote access
- To cover expenses, fuel, refreshments for client/ worker meetings etc

**Outputs**

- Four early morning outreach sessions have been carried out, finding 9 individuals
• 5 verified rough sleepers are engaging with the outreach worker

• The outreach worker has made contact with a further 8 (non verified) rough sleepers. Additional work has been done in partnership around current winter provisions, setting up a protocol to accommodate people during extreme cold weather. Exeter services (Gabriel House, Esther & St Petrocks) have accommodated some individuals who cannot access B&B in East Devon during this period

• Regular drop in advice session established at The Open Door Centre in Exmouth every Friday Morning 10am – 12pm

• Attendance ay monthly police ‘links’ meetings

Outcomes

• 1 person relocated back to their family

• 1 person accommodated at Alexandra House

• 1 person accommodated at Morwenna Court

• 1 person sectioned under the Mental Health Act

7. **Barnstaple Poverty Action Group – Torridge and West Devon**

Barnstaple Poverty Action Group (BPAG), have been working within West Devon Borough Council since 25th October 2011. The support to West Devon has been provided over 3 days per week, with the focus being around mapping rough sleepers within the area, in particular Okehampton, Princetown and Tavistock.

The initial proposal was to:

• Find and map rough sleepers within the Tavistock and Okehampton areas with the intention to extend to more rural areas of the district as the project develops

• Meet with partner rough sleeper services in neighbouring areas to understand local working practices

• Identify severe weather provision that can be accessed in neighbouring areas
- Identify opportunities to work jointly with neighbouring districts

- To establish a protocol for ‘cross border’ rough sleeping cases between Torridge and West Devon

- To carry out regular rough sleeper counts

**Outputs**

- Created a database detailing verified rough sleepers

- Have made contact with landlords, local churches, police, street pastors, Dartmoor rangers, Okehampton Training Camp (MOD), Okehampton Food Bank and members of the public, in order to raise awareness

- Are in the process of arranging regular meetings to enable cross agency working with St Petroc, West Devon Ecumenical Rural Development Enabler and Shekinah Mission

- Close working with Torridge district

- Rough sleeper counts being conducted on a monthly basis, within different areas of West Devon

**Outcomes**

- Made contact with 10 rough sleepers 2 of whom are entrenched and 4 of whom are alternating between rough sleeping and staying with friends

- 1 entrenched rough sleeper is engaging with the outreach worker

- 2 people have been accommodated

- 2 foreign national have moved on in a planned and positive way

**Budget Breakdown November 2011 – March 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing costs</td>
<td>£5848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>£ 645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundries</td>
<td>£ 991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£7484</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **Plymouth Access to Housing (PATH)**
PATH operates an established outreach service in the city of Plymouth. There is a long history of partnership working led by a bimonthly Rough Sleepers Strategy Group.

**Initial Aims and Objectives – Plymouth**

PATH had identified that there was a legacy of entrenched rough sleepers in the city, who have proved challenging to move away from the streets into sustainable accommodation. Consequently PATH had already secured charitable funding to create an outreach worker post to specifically target rough sleepers who had entrenched behaviours/ complex needs, by providing individual support packages including Individual Budget work. The additional funding from the Devon Rough Sleeper partnership was used to increase this post to full-time.

**Outputs – Plymouth**

- 27 clients have received a service via this post
- The post has also provided short-term interventions to enable clients with ‘entrenched behaviours/ complex needs’ to remain in their accommodation
- Individual Budget money has been used to clear small rent arrears, provide a television, buy a muzzle for a dog, to pay for gas and electric in a new tenancy and to purchase a microwave and a kettle and to get a birth certificate for ID purposes.

**Outcomes – Plymouth**

- 4 people have been supported to access temporary Bed and Breakfast accommodation, paid for by PATH Individual Budget money
- 13 people have been supported to stay in their accommodation
- 1 person supported to relocate to another area
- 1 person supported to return to their Housing Association tenancy
- 1 person supported to stay with friends after a long period on the streets

**Budget Breakdown**

Funding for dedicated Outreach worker time £7,500

**Initial Aims and Objectives – Teignbridge**
The initial work focused upon building links with relevant agencies; increasing knowledge about Teignbridge and starting to build a clear picture as to the extent of rough sleeping in the district. The work was led by the PATH Rough Sleeper service manager. From September an outreach worker was employed and the focus of the work has changed to concentrate on client work, to evidence and support rough sleepers into accommodation, as well as continuing to develop partnership working.

**Outputs - Teignbridge**

- Initial contact and on-going partnership work with Teignbridge District Council Housing Options Team, Sanctuary Carr-Gomm, Police Neighbourhood Beat Managers for the district, Police Community Support Officers (PCSO’s) covering Dawlish (town centre and rural), Teignmouth (Town centre and rural) and Newton Abbot, EDP, Anti Social Behaviour Unit and local charities

- Attending monthly Devon (and now Cornwall) Rough Sleeper Partnership meetings

- Attending Teignbridge District Council’s Rough Sleeper Strategy Group Meetings

- 22 clients have received a service

- Led 2 hot spot counts in Newton Abbot and Teignmouth/ Dawlish

- Compiled a list of evidenced rough sleepers used by the Teignbridge Rough Sleeper Partnership to agree an official estimate for the Department of Communities and Local Government

**Outcomes – Teignbridge**

- 7 people supported to access temporary Bed and Breakfast accommodation, via Teignbridge District Council or paid for directly by PATH. 1 person is still in Bed and Breakfast (paid for by PATH / Local Housing Allowance) whilst they are awaiting a date to enter treatment for their alcohol issues

- 2 people have been supported to access supported accommodation outside of the district

- 1 person supported to relocate to another area

- 1 person who is currently unofficially staying with friends is being supported as they are at risk of returning to the streets
• 3 people supported to access private rented accommodation and 1 person is in the process of accessing private rented accommodated financed by benevolent funds and PATH Individual Budget money

• 2 people already have accommodation but are being supported to sustain it until a partner agency has the capacity

• 5 people known to be rough sleeping at present; 1 about to move into a private rented tenancy, 4 are entrenched and qualify for Individualised Budget support

**Budget Breakdown**

Funding for dedicated Outreach Worker time £7,500

9. **North Devon District Council**

**Initial Aims and Objectives**

North Devon considered the 3 overarching aims and objectives of the Rough Sleeper Partnership;

**Mapping** – North Devon already has a good understanding of the scale and extent of rough sleeping and therefore did not dedicate any resource to this aspect.

**Capacity** – Alongside the Devon Rough Sleeper Partnership, North Devon has used £10,000 of the Department of Communities and Local Government funding allocated to improving access to the Private Rented Sector to help create and increase the capacity of a new local project called ‘Smartmove’. The project brings together the resources and expertise of 3 local voluntary agencies.

North Devon does not have an emergency hostel and has agreed with its strategic partners to develop a dispersed emergency/assessment model. The £7,500 from the Devon Rough Sleeper partnership was originally set aside to support ‘Smartmove’s’ bid to the Homelessness Transitions Fund. Unfortunately this bid was unsuccessful in the first round, but North Devon District Council support the bid to be submitted in the next round. In the meantime a decision has been made to increase the capacity of the existing Rough Sleeper Outreach Service.

**Direct Service Provision / Outputs**

• Increased capacity of the Rough Sleeper Outreach service achieved by a variation of a service level agreement with a voluntary agency to extend the role of the second outreach worker from 11 hours to 22 hours per week, from 01.01.12 – 31.03.12

• 79 new rough sleeper cases were opened from 01.04.11 – 24.02.12
Outcomes

- 17 people were assisted into supported accommodation
- 16 people were accommodated in the Private rented Sector without financial assistance
- 9 people were accommodated in the Private Rented Sector with financial assistance
- 5 people were given financial assistance to sustain their accommodation
- 3 people were accommodated in a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO)
- 2 people were accommodated with family or friends
- 2 people were accommodated in social housing

Budget Breakdown

Funding of additional outreach worker hours + travel expenses £2575

Funds still available £4925

It was decide that a strategic approach would be taken to understand the scale and extent of rough sleeping in the district and to understand what activity is being undertaken by agencies in the area.

Mapping

North Devon developed a survey questionnaire and letter. This was to involve all agencies working with rough sleepers in Mid Devon. This was distributed by the most active voluntary agency, called Community Housing Action Trust (with support from Mid Devon DC) to all main agencies likely to be having contact with rough sleepers in the district.

The survey was conducted over a month. Four completed surveys were received.

North Devon assisted CHAT with an early morning hotspot and outreach activity.

Both the above events were used as intelligence for an estimate submission. Mid. Mid Devon completed an estimate meeting, using intelligence acquired.

Mid Devon submitted an estimate in December 2011 of 5 rough sleepers.

Capacity Building

North and Mid Devon have been working with CHAT to understand how to develop capacity and direct interventions.

Mid Devon have provided winter weather provision.
Mid Devon are considering emergency assessment units with support.

**Direct Service Provision**

Mid Devon are considering how to assist with direct service provision.

**Outcomes**

- Survey completed
- Buddy work with local voluntary sector
- Intelligence based estimate submitted
- Capacity Building and direct provision approaches being developed and considered

**Budget**

All above activity has been completed through peer support, with no costs charged.

£7,500 is still available to support decision making that will provide direct service provision to rough sleepers.

10. **Feedback from District Authorities**

**South Hams District Council**

‘Shekinah have been working in the South Hams and after changing their project brief have been providing outreach. Sarah Pengelly is in regular contact and we have already seen some preventions from the work that she is doing. We are also in talks with Shekinah about a separate project around empty homes. We are happy with how the partnership is progressing, although it started slowly.’

**East Devon District Council**

I feel that over the past year there has been a great deal of positive work in the East Devon area and there is a good, honest relationship with SHOT; Kye’s role is going very well and there is a lot of good interaction with other agencies; PCSO’s in the area, who are keen to work in partnership.

**Mid Devon District Council**

‘Mid Devon carried out a more targeted and evidenced rough sleeper estimate. We contacted over 30 organisations with a questionnaire during September and only received 4 replies. MDDC district officers were involved in the search for rough sleepers too. CHAT was the only organisation who knew of any rough sleepers. We then tried to locate and count those rough sleepers that CHAT knew about in the early morning. This resulted in an estimated count of 4 people which we submitted to CLG.

Following this work we have helped 4 known rough sleepers (not necessarily the same 4) into private rented accommodation although we did not have a statutory duty to them. We have had the night shelter open in cold weather.'
and CHAT have had contact with these people. Two of those accommodated in the night shelter were not local and have now moved on. We do not believe that we have any entrenched rough sleepers in Mid Devon District. Therefore I think Mid Devon DC’s Homelessness Service together with CHAT is helping this group adequately. We will be interested to see if the phone line identifies any rough sleepers that we do not know about.

Exeter City Council
The Devon Rough sleeping Partnership has generally been very successful at achieving the aims set out at its inception. It will also provide an excellent basis, and now with Cornwall, for both counties to successful adopt the No Second Night Agenda. The partnership has achieved a great deal and the regular meetings are probably the most productive and constructive of any similar partnership meetings we attend, which is due to the high level of commitment to this agenda but also to attendees completing their actions in a timely fashion. It is crucial however that the partnership remains united and that all partners take responsibility for and contribute to achieving the shared aims and objectives as there is a danger that the majority of work falls on a few partners.

11. Rough Sleeper numbers

The table below compares the rough sleeper returns from autumn 2010 and autumn 2011 which were carried out using the guidance published by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Table one: Rough Sleeper counts and estimates autumn 2011 and 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>+/-</th>
<th>Count / estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Devon</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>+8</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Devon</td>
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<td>Count</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Devon</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Devon and Cornwall Rough Sleeper Partnership 2012
* Estimates were carried out in 2010

Total number of Rough Sleepers Autumn 2010: 72
Total number of Rough Sleepers Autumn 2011: 95

All the counts and estimates took place in November 2011 and show an overall increase in rough sleeping numbers in Devon by 32%.

The initial pieces of work carried out by existing outreach services in their partner districts meant that the estimates were much more reliable than in previous years as some exploratory outreach had taken place in each area. It is interesting to note that numbers also increased in areas where there are outreach services regularly gathering intelligence on rough sleeper numbers.
The rise could be attributable to cuts in Supporting People funding, changes in Housing benefit and the effects of the economic downturn. Only Torridge and Torbay saw a decline in rough sleeper numbers from 2010.

Numbers in the South West have increased from 270 in autumn 2010 to 337 in autumn 2011, which is an increase of 24.8%. Of all the regions the South West had the highest incidence of rough sleepers per 1,000 households with 0.15, followed by London and the South East with 0.13 and 0.12 respectively.

Cornwall returned an estimate of 80 rough sleepers in the county. Combined, this presents the Devon and Cornwall Rough Sleeper Strategy with a real challenge to engage with, assess and assist the peninsula’s rough sleeping population of 175 people. Improved partnership working, intelligence gathering and information sharing that has been developed in the first year will assist in meeting this challenge.

12. Conclusions

Initial achievements

The level of commitment from the 5 outreach services has remained constant throughout the year; the monthly steering group meeting is well attended and very focussed. A lot of work has been carried out:

- An eligibility criteria has been agreed for Individual budgets (see Appendix one)
- Projects guides and standards have been written and agreed (see appendix two)
- Work has gone on to develop a database using the Homeless Link Inform system, this will now include Cornwall. Data protection issues have been looked at and the Service Level Agreement should be ready to sign at the next meeting in March 2012
- The phone line has been set up and is almost ready to be launched. The phone line will be hosted by Shilhay Community based at their 24 hour staffed hostel, Gabriel House in Exeter
- The publicity materials for the phone line have been designed and are nearly ready for distribution to all Paris Clerks, etc
- There will be a publicity launch once the promotional literature is ready

Areas requiring further development

- Communication between the district authorities and their partnering outreach service need to be better. The districts need to decide and agree on reporting mechanisms
- Initial outcomes and breakdown of spending has not recorded in a consistent manner. It is difficult in some cases to measure the
effectiveness of the additional funds as it has not been separated from the core budgets

- A proposal to form a strategic board across statutory agencies was written but this work needs to be progressed (see appendix 3)

**Cornwall**

In April 2011 and additional £200,000 was awarded to Devon and Cornwall. A decision was made that the cost of setting up a database should come out of this money.

Initially Devon continued with their plans alone, but in November Cornwall projects attended the steering group meeting and it was decided to extend the database and phone-line to cover both areas, both pots of money were also amalgamated with areas putting in bids for identified Individual Budgets and Reconnections. This makes it difficult to account for the remainder of the initial £100,000.

**Recommendations**

- Local Authorities need to sign up to commit to ensure that a number of key aims and objectives are adhered to in their area
- All Local Authorities need to make sure they are represented at the partnership board or that they are happy to entrust decision making to partners
- Local Authorities need to agree how best to continue with the partnership work; to keep with the same partner outreach service or tender all potential service providers
- A decision will need to be made as to whether the additional funds (which is a one–off payment) should be used to bolster existing services, plugging the gaps left by funding or whether they should be used in more innovative and creative ways
- All partners need to continue to maintain the partnership approach to maximise consistency across both counties, with all funded projects able to demonstrate their ability to inform best practice and be adopted by all partners.

**Next Steps**

The DCLG are awarding Devon and Cornwall and additional £606,000 pounds to continue the work of the Devon and Cornwall Rough Sleeper Partnership.

An extended meeting will be held on Tuesday 13\textsuperscript{th} March 10am – 4pm at the X Centre in Exeter to plan how to use this money to the best effect.