

Salisbury Area Board, 15th March 2018

Rough Sleepers priority – update since the January 2018 meeting

1. Impact of this winter on rough sleepers in Salisbury

The Annual Rough Sleeper count that took place in November 2017 estimated that there were, on the night in question (16th November 2017), 13 rough sleepers in and around the Salisbury area. Of those, 7 did not have a local connection to Wiltshire and thus the support offered would generally be limited to helping them reconnect with an area where they have a connection so that they can access appropriate services. None were known to be veterans. The meeting of the Rough Sleeper Operational Group that met in December 2017 in Salisbury focussed very much on these individuals, who are a group of entrenched individuals and currently unwilling to engage or make the changes that are required to make housing achievable.

Our Assertive Outreach Worker, Sarah Johnson, working with partners Turning Point and Alabare has gone out to meet and talk to those affected. We are pleased to report that her role has now been made permanent in the current restructure and we are reviewing her hours across the county to ensure that she targets the worst affected areas, with Salisbury identified as being a priority.

During the Winter 2017/18, there have been four Severe Weather Provisions triggered – this is a statutory duty on the Council to offer accommodation to rough sleepers during the coldest days (the trigger is 3 days in a row at zero or minus). The latest trigger, which commenced on 21st February (ongoing and will be for the foreseeable future due to the sub zero temperatures) saw 12 individuals take up the offer of accommodation. We work to engage with them during this time to encourage them to consider rehabilitation and other housing options. We have successfully assisted 3 into supported housing and 1 into Temporary Housing during the latest round of SWEP so it is an opportunity. In regard to the Maltings regular use by rough sleepers, officers plan to convene a meeting of relevant partners in the coming months to review how this can be addressed.

Update from Sarah – outreach worker in Salisbury

I am currently working with a number of individuals in Salisbury, one of whom text last week to say he'd found accommodation. Three of my clients do not have a local connection, one does not wish to engage at this time as he is a traveller and happy doing what he is doing the other has moved back to Salisbury from Wales to be nearer his young children and the third has started working with Turning Point again after we worked with outreach together and she is hoping to go into rehab in the next two weeks. I have managed to get two of my clients interviewed at Alabare and JBH in recent weeks. One lady client who stays at the Maltings has asked to meet at housing on three occasions so far and failed to arrive.

I had a walkabout with Ann from Turning Point two weeks ago and we failed to see anyone.

I continually try to engage with others who attend the drop-in at Alabare, but this does not reach those who do not wish to be at the drop-in with others. Hence the need for regular walks around Salisbury.

Update from Morning Star

Morning Star runs the Banquet Run (soup run) three times a week. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and have been doing so for the last 15 years. The sessions run from 3.30pm usually until 4.00pm, unless people need us for a bit longer. The BR is for those sleeping rough, those from hostels and others who are couch surfing. Rough sleepers are told about provision in Salisbury and directed to Wilts council if they want to follow this up.

To compliment the BR and as part of our "Hope Project" we spend quality time with those who are sleeping rough and those from hostels. This works especially well with those who have addiction issues, providing encouragement and support to move towards seeking further help from other organisations like Turning point etc.

We have seen numbers rise this winter compared to last year. Some are sleeping rough for the financial handouts. There doesn't seem to be much community spirit within the rough sleepers, normally there is a sense of "all being in this together".

Update from Salisbury Trust for the Homeless

Due to the STFH service being accommodation-based for those people with low support needs, we don't generally see many actual street homeless people. However, we ensure that those that we do know of who are rough sleeping are told about the Severe Weather Emergency Provisions offered by Alabaré Place and Unity House (Chippenham). We then put them in touch with Wiltshire Council so that they can access this service if they choose.

Update from Alabare Drop In

The Alabaré Drop In Centre, at Alabaré Place, is open three days a week for those who are street homeless. This winter we have seen an increase in the number of people accessing the service, in line with the national trend. Significantly, we have also noted an increase in number of those using the service who have no local connection to Wiltshire.

We have worked with Wiltshire Council in order to facilitate the Severe Weather Emergency Provision throughout the winter, which has been triggered on a number of occasions. Our team are proactive in ensuring that those who are in need are aware of the provision, but have found that despite being street homeless, they do not always wish to use the facility, despite the fact that we can offer a bed for the night for up to seven people. When we have been able to engage with clients through the Severe Weather Emergency Provision, our team have used it as another

opportunity to try and reach those who are rough sleeping, particularly those who are more entrenched, helping to create a support pathway for those who may not ordinarily wish to engage with services.

2. City Council update

Salisbury City Council continues to monitor the rough sleeping issue in the City, of which the numbers of persons involved remains broadly unchanged.

Officers and Members have met with and are now sharing information with Turning Point, the organisation who offer assistance to those with drug and alcohol dependency, and there is a visit scheduled in early April for a tour of Alabare's main facility which will help further a better understanding of their services.

SCC will be inviting all those who attended the October 2017 gathering at Guildhall to a follow up meeting next month and within that meeting will be addressing those actions and discussion topics raised at the November Area Board.

3. Update on the Real Change communications campaign

The Real Change Wiltshire Campaign was launched just before Christmas to raise awareness of street homeless and how the public can best help – not through direct donations but through donations to charities and reporting rough sleeping. The Campaign is supported by most of our partners, including Alabare and the Police. Posters and information have been distributed to local partners, libraries and other venues to help raise awareness. The campaign in the south has so far raised £100.

4. This month's main feature – the role of the Assertive Outreach Worker

My role is to support anyone who is rough sleeping throughout the county. I do this by meeting with new clients at the drop-ins in Devizes, Trowbridge, Chippenham and Salisbury. I also respond to STREETLINK reports that come through regarding new rough sleepers, telephoning potential new clients or arranging with the police, Turning Point or one of my colleagues to go out and introduce myself to those who have been mentioned.

I support individuals with their substance misuse by helping them engage with TP to gain the best support, often accompanying clients to their meetings or arranging for TP outreach to meet with us in an agreeable place in a neutral territory. If a new client does not have a GP I have an agreement with most GP surgeries across the county whereby they accept an email from me to verify who an individual is rather than insisting on having photo ID. I often accompany clients on their visits to their GP, as this can be a daunting process.

I then ask a client if they are in receipt of benefits, if they are then I ensure that the money is being paid into their bank account rather than a friend or family member. I have had some success with different banks to arrange for clients to use two letters as their ID and we visit the bank together to arrange a proper account for them. So

many of my clients were having their benefits paid into ex partners' accounts or friends who would then spend the money leaving my clients with nothing.

I discuss with a client their local connection if they have no local connection I discuss with them the prospect of them being reconnected to the place where their local connection was. If they are willing to do this then we set the wheels in motion to arrange this. If not, then I offer some support for their mental and physical wellbeing.

If a client does have a local connection, I ask them when they last spoke to housing and confirm this by looking at Abris on my mobile phone. We then arrange, if necessary, to go to speak to housing together; many of my clients become anxious about engaging with housing and struggle to walk into the council buildings.

I am basically the support that a client may need to help them to get through the darkest times. I tell them, if they are not ready to engage with me right now then I'll be there when they've changed their minds. I have had clients begin to engage a year after our first meeting but I'm there if they need me. I can be the person to give them a voice if they are likely to become angry in a certain situation, eg. With Housing Options or Turning Point, to keep them calm and achieve what they are seeing that person for in the first place.

I work with probation for them to enable them to remain engaged with their officers rather than being breached for their non-engagement.

I had a recent question regarding a dentist for one of my clients and have been able to contact the NHS to try to organise this.