

Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group

Policy Update

This paper provides further information on the Rough Sleeping Action Group in advance of Jon Sparkes (Chief Executive of Crisis), chair of the group, addressing the Board at their December Meeting.

Summary and Recommendations

This paper invites Members to:

- i. Note the chair of the Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group will address the Board at its December meeting;
- ii. Board members will have the opportunity to comment on rough sleeping and highlight any points to the Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group; and
- iii. Provide comments to future engagement in this area moving forward.

References:

CWB 17-09-17 Homelessness

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Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group

Policy Update

1. This paper provides further information on the Rough Sleeping Action Group in advance of Jon Sparkes (Chief Executive of Crisis), chair of the group, addressing the Board at their December Meeting.

Current COSLA Position

2. The Board agreed at their meeting back in September that:
 - COSLA welcomes the renewed focus on homelessness within the Programme for Government
 - the focus on 'rough sleeping' as the most visible form of homelessness – was understandable but
 - strategic partners must not lose sight of the need to prioritise preventative work.
 - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group must be a strategic forum for encouraging action between agencies and should be driven forward in the spirit of co-production.
3. Councillor Parry met with Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government and Housing, in November and conveyed the position of the Communities Board during that meeting. The Minister agreed with Councillor Parry's suggestion that to increase visibility and understanding of the work of the Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group it would be helpful for the chair Jon Sparkes (Crisis) to attend a future meeting of the board. Jon will attend the December Board meeting and provide information around the work of the group to date and future tasks.

Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group

4. The Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group was announced in the Programme for Government along with an additional £10m per year 'Ending Homelessness Together' fund. The Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group is a short-term action group, which will run until May 2018 to identify the actions and changes needed to end rough sleeping and transform the use of temporary accommodation in Scotland. Members of the action group are available [here](#). The action group was asked to examine four areas and provide recommendations for actions around:
 - Plans to minimize rough sleeping this winter;
 - How to eradicate rough sleeping for good;
 - Ways to transform temporary accommodation;
 - How to bring about an end to homelessness in Scotland.
5. The HRSAG first set of recommendations were published on Tuesday 28th November and have prioritised actions in the following areas based on the ability to implement at speed; and the potential impact to minimise rough sleeping this Winter. The First Minister confirm Scottish Government would be accepting these recommendations in full, a summary of these includes:
 - increase capacity in temporary and emergency accommodation in Edinburgh by expanding the winter shelter capacity from 60 to 75 and deliver an additional 12 rapid-access beds (winter only, and accessed via street outreach workers) – total additional cost £142,000 - £25,000 covered by Social Bite

- increase outreach capacity in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen and further explore any need for additional capacity in Dundee – total additional cost £106,000 - £11,000 covered by Simon Community and £15,000 covered by Govan Law Centre
- maximise use of Nightstop in Edinburgh and undertake discussion with statutory sector in Glasgow to agree how we implement Nightstop there by January 2018
- maximise effectiveness of existing and additional outreach capacity by boosting multi-agency partnership working; adopting 'by name lists' approach and empowering front line workers through direct access to services and dedicated accommodation
- making personal budgets and/or flexible emergency fund available for front line staff to employ where maximum flexibility is required to meet an individual's immediate housing needs, establishing trust and a basis on which further support can be provided towards a long term, sustainable successful outcome. This would only be the final resort, employed for those whom all other outreach and intervention fails. This would be treated as a pilot and the evidence gathered would inform development of thinking on the 'Housing First' approach – total additional cost £50,000
- at times of extreme weather, ensure flexible provision is available in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen for anyone who will not use winter night shelters, despite all efforts – total additional cost £15,000.
- engaging with people who are currently homeless and people who have experience of homelessness – total additional cost £15,000 to be covered by Crisis, with staffing contribution from Glasgow Homelessness Network.

COSLA Position

6. Elected Members should note that since the last discussion on the work of the action group it has been confirmed the Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group, co-chaired by COSLA and Scottish Ministers, will continue for the foreseeable future with inclusion of member(s) of the Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group attending to provide a conduit between the two.
7. The continuation of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group provides a strategic forum for encouraging action between agencies and should drive forward actions in this area, including discussions around the best use of funds to tie in with councils' responsibilities and existing efforts to tackle homelessness at a local level.

Summary and Recommendations

8. This paper invites Members to:
 - i. Note the chair of the Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group will address the Board at its December meeting;
 - ii. Board members will have the opportunity to comment on rough sleeping and highlight any points to the Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group; and
 - iii. Provide comments on future engagement in this area.

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