

Agenda item : 5

AVON AND SOMERSET ROUGH SLEEPERS STEERING GROUP
ANNUAL REPORT AUGUST 2012-2013

Acknowledgements

It has been an interesting and informative year. For the client group, it has been momentous. At the simplest level, the weather has been volatile as we have moved from drought to prolonged rainfall, to long periods of extreme cold to unseasonal summer weather, a sustained heat wave and sunshine. Set against that, there has been radical change to welfare benefits and in parts of Avon and Somerset, services have been re-commissioned with some services under new management and others involving changes to access arrangements via local hubs. The Government's Vision to end Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out has had an impact on helping those new to the streets.

I am very grateful to the members of the Avon and Somerset Steering Group for all their support over the first twelve months both as an important information source and as a critical friend offering guidance and appraisal as objectives within the Action Plan have been worked through. Beyond the Steering Group, there have been many others within local authorities, other statutory bodies and voluntary agencies who have helped with best practice or have been able to highlight the diverse needs of homeless clients that need addressing. **(See Appendix 1 for full list)**

Apart from local networking, I have also been grateful to the authors of the many publications, blogs and alerts that have helped to inform my desk research, an important element of the work undertaken in the first year to reinforce knowledge and understanding of single homelessness and rough sleeping.

Unfortunately, there is still much to do: between April and June 2013, over 5100 households across England were recognised as being homeless but not in priority need. Many of these households were single people with health or life skill challenges but who are not considered vulnerable enough to be offered housing. As a result, there are more single people joining the already significant numbers of people sofa surfing, squatting or sleeping rough.

The challenge for us all in the year ahead is to acknowledge that the nature of this work can at times be slow and painstaking with small steps towards re-engaging with society representing huge change for some clients. Success cannot always be defined by tangible housing outcomes but rather as small shifts in behaviour patterns that may lead to a more settled way of life for clients. **Prevention, early intervention, person-centred planning and co-ordinated services remain paramount.**

I look forward to working with you all again.

Elizabeth Parry

10 September 2013

Introduction

The Avon and Somerset Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator was appointed in August 2012 for 12 months. Although the contract has been extended for a further 12 months, a yearend report to examine the activity in the first 12 months is a fitting way to evaluate what has been achieved and where the priorities remain so that we can move with confidence in to the second year of the project with an informed rough sleeping and non-priority single homeless strategy.

Aim of the project

To ensure that frontline service provision is effective at preventing and reducing non-priority single homelessness and rough sleeping across Avon and Somerset.

Background

Avon and Somerset has been awarded **£539,000** funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government to develop a **strategic response** to ensuring that frontline service provision is effective at preventing single homelessness and rough sleeping. Specifically, it is for the purposes of supporting work to prevent and tackle rough sleeping and single homelessness and the development of an early intervention and prevention service across the grouping including supporting the roll out of No Second Night Out.

Management of the project

A Co-ordinator has been appointed to undertake this work, reporting to a Steering Group that is both guardian and beneficiary of the fund. In that role the Steering Group sets the policy and direction and is the decision maker for the use of the fund. Mendip District Council has been appointed as the lead authority and hosts and manages the Co-ordinator's post.

Local authority partners

The local authority partners included in the Avon and Somerset grouping are as follows:

- Bristol
- Bath and North East Somerset
- North Somerset
- Mendip
- Sedgemoor
- South Somerset
- Taunton Deane
- West Somerset

During the first year, Somerset County Council re-commissioned its accommodation and housing related support services for young people and adults. These services formed an integral part of the Somerset landscape and it was decided that Somerset County Council should be represented on the Steering Group to help inform the debate.

The demography of each local authority varies considerably from the very urban to the very rural, each with its own challenges for single homeless people. Some local authorities such as Bristol and

Banes have well embedded local services to support rough sleepers and single homeless people. Their resources and experience have been helpful in addressing some of the issues for the other local authorities that although more rural, contain towns with similar challenging social issues associated with homelessness without a social infrastructure to meet these challenges.

Role of the Steering Group

The role of the Steering Group is to determine an overarching Action Plan based on agreed priorities supported by a Gap analysis. The Group meets six weekly and reviews the Action Plan, the statistics and evaluates any funding proposals that fall within the remit of the Action Plan.

One of the first priorities of the Coordinator was to prepare a Gap Analysis that mapped all services currently in place across the 8 authorities and to highlight the gaps in strategic emphasis or simply services on the ground.

Appended to this report is a table setting out the main gaps that were identified. **(See Appendix 2)**

Budget

By August 2012, just over **£100,000** has been spent on services, for example outreach and cold weather support together with the Co-ordinator's post.

At August 2013, **£263,849.60** has been committed

Expenditure to date has been allocated to the following initiatives:

Beneficiary	Details	Amount (£'s)
BHA – Yeovil	Cold Weather support worker for East Somerset LA areas	£20,000
Taunton Assoc Homeless	Cold Weather support worker for West & North Somerset LA areas	£20,000
Mendip DC	funds towards RS o/reach service covering Mendip	£10,000
Taunton Deane BC	Outreach service covering Bridgewater & Taunton	£15,000
Homeless Link	Web advert for position of Single H/less Co-ordinator	£50
Mendip DC	Single Homeless & Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator (Avon & Somerset)	£35,000
Julian House	Printing costs for leaflet	£420

Mendip DC	Seminar	£1468.60
Mendip DC	Crisis sheet	£484.00
Mendip DC	Low cost High Impact Funding : Round 1*	£ 32,124.00
MendipDC	Inform licenses	£1107.00
North Somerset DC	Nightstop/Outreach Worker	£35,197
Julian House	Reporting Line Extension	£750
Avon and Somerset	Training course; 'Empowering difficult to engage service users'	£1750
West Somerset	Outreach service for West Somerset	£4999
Avon and Somerset	Low Cost High Impact Funding: Round 2 **	£50,000 allocated
Avon and Somerset	Extension of contract for Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator post	£35,500
TOTAL		£263,849.60

*/** detailed breakdown of low cost high impact funding

***Low cost high impact funding: Round 1**

Local authority	organisation	project details	£sum	Numbers of clients benefiting.
Banes	Swan Advice Network	Money Help Plus	£4,999	30-40
Banes	Julian House	Good start	£4,000	50
Bristol and Banes Big Issue Foundation	Big Issue Foundation	Vendor support fund/aspirations	£3,500	200
Mendip	Salvation Army	Wet room	£4,999	100
Mendip	Elim Connect Centre	Wet room	£3,577	10-15 pw
North Somerset	Alliance Homes	Crisis living packages	£4,800	20-30
North Somerset	YMCA	North Somerset Night Stop	£4,999	100+
North Somerset	Somewhere to Go	Off the Streets	£1,000	51-100
South Somerset	South SomersetDC	supply of phones and top up vouchers	£250	10
TOTAL			£32,124	

****Low cost high impact funding: Round 2**

Local authority	organisation	project details	£sum
Banes	Bath District Deposit Bond Scheme	deposit bond scheme	£4,999
Banes	Banes	homeless rent scheme	£4,999
Bristol	St Mungos	Improving access to the private rented sector	£4,999
Mendip	Mendip YMCA	loan scheme for up front private tenancy costs	£4,990
North Somerset	WDGB	Removing barriers to a tenancy	£4,800
South Somerset	SSDC	rent in advance for non priority homeless	£4,999
South Somerset, Sedgemoor, Taunton Deane	Avon and Somerset Police	Somerset IMPACT Housing Project	£4,999
TOTAL			£34,785

Statistics

As well as the annual estimate of rough sleepers that is reported to central government, the Steering Group is collecting information about numbers of rough sleepers on a given night each month. In order to regularise and standardise the picture as much as possible, local authorities are requested to supply an estimate based on numbers sleeping rough on the first Tuesday of each month. This is mostly achieved through the diligent efforts of the Outreach Services, reinforced by local intelligence from homelessness agencies and the reporting line. Of the eight local authorities in the grouping,

Bristol, Banes, Mendip and Taunton Deane have a disproportionate share of rough sleepers with Mendip consistently returning a high estimate. Our understanding of what these numbers represent in terms of causes and individual histories is still limited but we are working on 'drilling down' further to gain better information about demographics, recent histories and interventions in order to better inform preventative strategies. Increasingly, Outreach workers are collecting data that will support this and entering it on the INFORM or other similar databases. This has taken some while to roll out and to reach its optimum; hence our analysis of the statistics has not been optimal to date.

See Appendix 3 for estimated counts/estimates up to July 2013.

No Second Night Out

In its strategy, Vision for ending rough sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide, the Government has asked that every local authority adopt the No Second Night Out standard. The Government recognises that every local authority area is different and that local responses will vary according to the demographic demands. However, the aim is that every community has services in place that will:

- ensure that new rough sleepers can be identified and helped off the streets immediately
- the public can alert services if they see anyone sleeping rough so they can get help
- rough sleepers can access a place of safety, where their needs can be assessed and they can get help
- rough sleepers are able to access emergency accommodation and other services they need
- rough sleepers from outside the area can be reconnected with their community where they can be near family and friends and can get housing and support

The attached table in **Appendix 4** identifies the various components of a No Second Night Out Service and which services are in place in the various local authorities in the grouping. At a meeting at the DCLG in January 2013, officers required a commitment from all eight authorities that they were each No Second Night Out compliant. Officers of DCLG were satisfied that the means to identify rough sleepers which could include the police, a place for assessment and routes to emergency accommodation were sufficient to ensure compliance. Nevertheless, the Avon and Somerset local authorities have been aiming at a more comprehensive service, notwithstanding local variation.

Priorities for Year Two

The overriding priority is to reduce the numbers of people sleeping rough and to prevent those at risk of sleeping rough through homelessness from ending up sleeping outside. At present, it is difficult to confirm a correlation between the DCLG funding and its impact on reducing rough sleeping. Much prevention work is undertaken by outreach staff and as our data handling becomes more informative, how these interventions have prevented rough sleeping will become clearer.

However, we have identified significant 'stress points' for individuals who because of personal histories are at risk of rough sleeping. These include clients being discharged from mental health settings, ex-offenders being released from prison, patients being discharged from acute hospital wards who have lost their homes during in-patient stays. At a more basic level, the experience of

individuals who access housing options services can affect outcomes. With the mismatch between demand and supply of appropriate affordable accommodation for single homeless people, coupled with diminishing work opportunities in the economic downturn and a more punitive welfare package, few options exist. Very often, clients presenting as homeless may not meet the strict criteria around 'vulnerability' but may nevertheless have low level multiple needs which makes accessing housing and sustaining a tenancy difficult and problematic. Housing Options Services are thus constrained in what they can offer non-priority single homeless people. These 'stress points' are a priority to address in the second year of this work.

A further significant priority is to acknowledge the very valuable work undertaken by Outreach Services. It is intended to measure more closely the outputs from this service and to explore gaps in the reach of these services across Avon and Somerset. The aim is to ensure that all the key areas in the grouping have sufficient outreach coverage as a key ingredient for the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping.

Finally, as with any significant funding from central government, the sustainability of change brought about by injections of funding is critical both from a value for money perspective and from the value derived from the funding by the beneficiaries. Planned exit strategies for the various initiatives are a key priority for the second year.

Conclusion

The second year of the contract has now just begun. There are some big issues to address, principally around breaking down the barriers to housing for the more vulnerable non-priority single homeless people and rough sleepers. Creating permanence and a more settled way of life for this client group so that their housing is sustainable in the longer term is of paramount importance. With a settled home, the opportunity to develop resilience to tackle education, training and employment or to manage drug, alcohol abuse or revolving door offending is already more feasible and realisable. Abigail Scott Paul from Joseph Rowntree Foundation comments in this week's blog on her experience with the Cyrenians , interviewing front line staff, voluntary agencies, benefit claimants and service users:

'one positive story that I can tell is how a preventative and individualised approach is successful in supporting people back into tenancies and jobs. Patience, time and commitment are required when working with people who've experienced a lifetime of social exclusion.

Elizabeth Parry

Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator(Avon and Somerset)

10 September 2013

Appendix 1

List of agencies and statutory partners visited

- Bristol City Council Housing Options Service
- Bath and North East Somerset Housing Options Service
- Bath and North East Somerset Mental Health Link Service
- South Somerset Housing Options Service
- South Somerset Housing Policy
- Taunton Deane Housing Options Service
- Taunton Deane Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator
- Mendip Housing Options Service
- Mendip Corporate management for political landscape
- North Somerset Housing Options Service
- Sedgemoor Housing Options Service
- West Somerset Housing Options Service
- Somerset Partnership
- Somerset Partnership Rowan Ward
- Somerset County Council
- Somerset County Wide Strategic Housing Officers Group
- Exeter City Council
- Devon County Council
- North Devon District Council
- Poole/Dorset Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator
- Department of Communities and Local Government
- Royal United Hospital
- Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group
- Eastwood Park Prison
- Homeless Link
- Shelter London
- St Mungos Compass Centre Bristol
- St Mungos London
- One25 Bristol
- Fareshare Bristol
- Mendip YMCA
- Mendip CAB
- Elim Street Level Access Programme Wells
- Salvation Army Mendip
- Heads Up Mendip
- Mostly Local Mendip
- Julian House Bath
- Bath Abbey Homeless Manager
- Big Issue Bath
- DHI Bath : central office and hub

Appendix 1

- **Swan Network Midsomer Norton**
- **Bath Deposit Fund**
- **Somewhere to Go day Centre Weston Super Mare**
- **Salvation Army Weston Super Mare**
- **North Somerset YMCA/Bridgewater YMCA**
- **WGDB Weston Super Mare**
- **Alliance Homes Weston Super Mare**
- **Westfield Church Sedgemoor**
- **Barnabas Housing Head Office**
- **Barnabas House Yeovil**
- **South Somerset Mind**
- **South Somerset P2A Hub**
- **Taunton Association for the Homeless**
- **Open Door Taunton**
- **Rethink**
- **Hope Centre Minehead**
- **Tressell Trust Warminster**
- **Outreach teams for Bristol, Banes, Taunton, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Mendip**
- **NHAS training on non-priority single homelessness**
- **Dick Laban training in PIE**
- **Crisis (private sector)**
- **South West Landlord and Tenant Forum**

AVON AND SOMERSET SERVICES

NON-PRIORITY SHINGLE HOMELESS AND ROUGH SLEEPERS – GAP ANALYSIS TABLE

APPENDIX 2

Standard service

	Co-ordinated rough sleeper estimates and counts	Rough sleeper reporting line	Extensive coverage of outreach services	Reconnection service	Day centre services	Emergency temporary accommodation	Personalised solutions	Support and means to access private rented sector	Intensive case work <hr/> Follow up case work
Bristol	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	
Bath& NE Somerset	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍
North Somerset	👍	👍		👍	👍	👍		👍	👍
South Somerset	👍	👍	👍	👍		👍	👍	👍	👍
Sedgemoor	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	
Taunton Deane	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	
Mendip	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍			👍	
West Somerset	👍	👍		👍	👍			👍	

KEY: 👍=in place; 🔄=working towards or proportionate to local conditions; blank = not in place or not appropriate

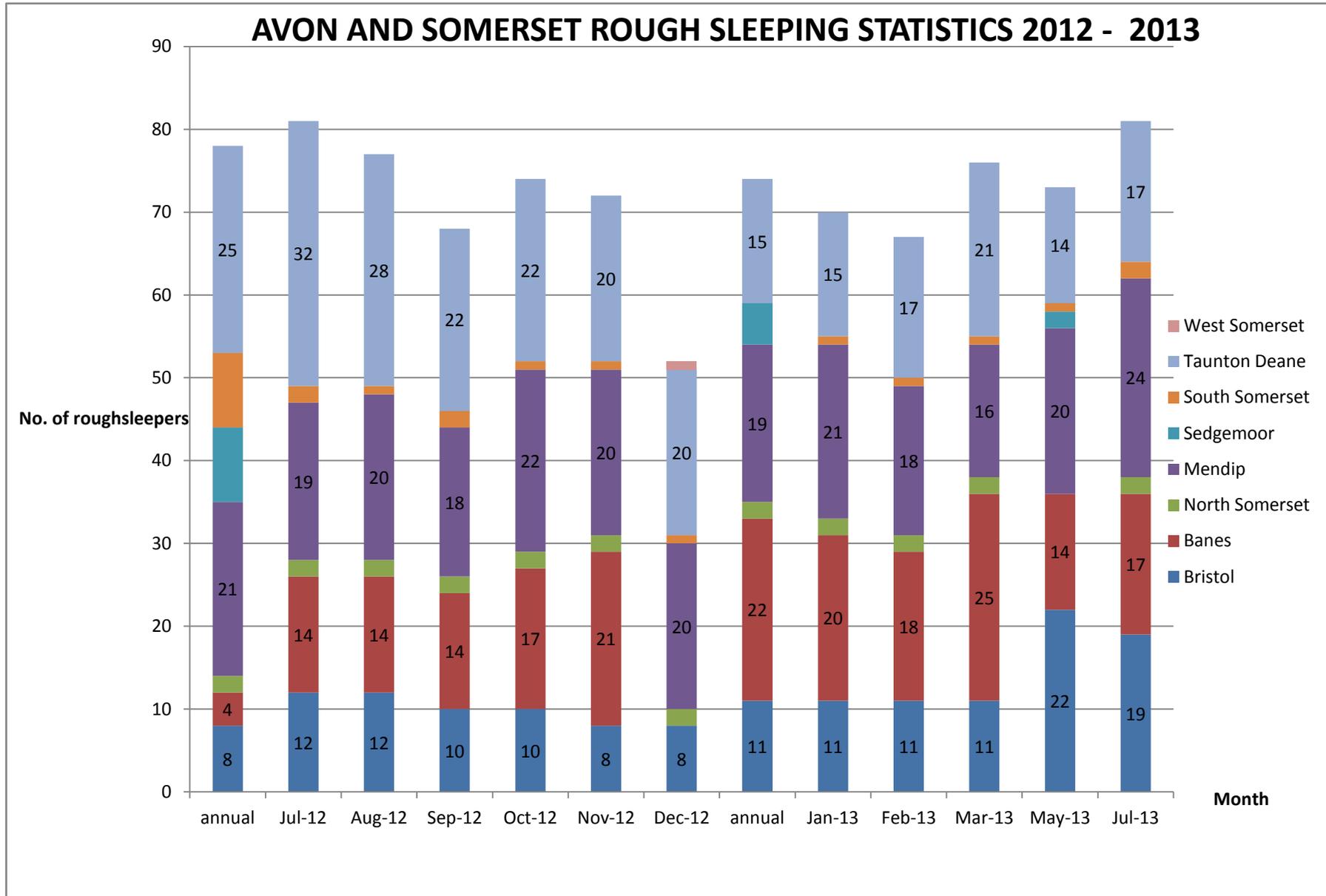
AVON AND SOMERSET SERVICES

NON-PRIORITY SHINGLE HOMELESS AND ROUGH SLEEPERS- GAP ANALYSIS TABLE

APPENDIX 2

	Standard service				Enhanced service				
	Supported accommodation	Move on accommodation with floating support	Severe weather provision		Hospital discharge protocol	Prison discharge protocol	Health, mental and therapeutic services	Eviction and referral protocol	Complex needs protocol/mental health pathway
Bristol	👍	👍	👍		👍	👍	👍	👍	👍 / 👍
Bath & NE Somerset	👍	👍	👍				👍	👍	👍 / 👍
North Somerset		👍	👍				👍	👍	/ 👍
South Somerset	👍	👍	👍			👍	👍	👍	
Sedgemoor	👍	👍	👍						
Taunton Deane	👍	👍	👍				👍		
Mendip	👍	👍	👍				👍		
West Somerset	👍	👍							

KEY: 👍=in place; 🔄 =working towards or proportionate to local conditions; blank = not in place or not appropriate



No Second Night Out – Components of a service

Appendix 4

Standard service

Components common to larger local authorities

	NSNO dedicated Outreach teams	Centre for assessment and place of safety	Assessors and advocates in centres of assessment	Reporting phone line and website	Single Service offer Advice and assistance (in writing)	Reconnection services		Standardised data collection ----- common database to enable follow up	Emergency temporary accommodation	Working relationship with UK Border Agency where appropriate	Assertive Outreach	Centre for assessment and place of safety available 24/7	Count/ estimate	
													2011	2012
Bristol	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍			👍	👍	👍		8	11
BANES	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍 👍	👍		👍	👍		👍	👍	4	22
North Somerset				👍	👍 ----- 👍	👍							2	2
South Somerset	👍	👍		👍	👍	👍		👍	👍	👍			9	0
Sedgemoor	👍	👍	👍	👍	----- 👍	👍			👍				9	5
Taunton Deane	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍 -----	👍			👍				25	15
Mendip	👍	👍	👍	👍	----- 👍	👍							21	19
West Somerset				👍	----- 👍	👍							0	0