



Rough Sleepers Strategy

November 2013

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Government's housing strategy '*Laying the foundations: a housing strategy for England*' (November 2011) identified rough sleeping as 'the most visible and damaging form of homelessness' and said that tackling it would be a priority.
- 1.2 Housing authorities have a statutory duty to secure permanent accommodation for unintentionally homeless people in priority need¹. The priority status applies to a range of client groups including: those with dependent children or pregnant; those who are vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or disability; 16 & 17 year olds; care leavers; former service personnel. However this safety net does not extend to homeless people who are deemed not to be in priority need. For these non-priority applicants, the local authority has a duty 'to ensure that the applicant is provided with advice and assistance in any attempts he or she may make to secure that accommodation becomes available for his or her occupation.'
- 1.3 Homeless people who are not successful in obtaining alternative accommodation, despite advice and assistance provided by local authorities, or who do not approach an authority for assistance, may therefore find themselves sleeping rough.
- 1.4 Homeless Link² confirm that some people are more vulnerable to homelessness and rough sleeping because they have particular support needs or have fewer rights and an individual is considered more likely to become homeless if they have :
 - been in care as a child or had a disturbed childhood
 - a mental illness or addiction
 - been in the armed forces
 - spent time in prison
 - migrated to the UK from Eastern or Central Europe or arrived as an asylum seeker.

As well as these personal factors, specific events can precipitate homelessness, including:

- relationship breakdown or death of a partner
 - domestic violence
 - leaving home or care
 - leaving institutions (prison, hospital or the armed forces)
 - getting into debt, specifically mortgage or rent arrears
- 1.5 Arun is working with statutory and voluntary sector partners to develop a response to rough sleeping to reduce it to as low a level as practically possible in the District.

¹ The priority need categories are set out in section 189 of the 1996 Housing Act.

² Homeless Link is a national charity supporting those working directly with homeless people in England

2. Aims of the Strategy

- 2.1 'A properly housed community' a place where 'everyone has a home which meets their needs and is of a decent standard' is one of Arun's ambitions for all its residents.³ The Rough Sleepers Strategy and overarching Homelessness and Housing Strategies are fundamental to achieving this aim.
- 2.2 The main aims of the Arun Rough Sleepers Strategy are to:
- Reduce the number of people sleeping rough in Arun to as close to zero as possible
 - Increase the options and life chances of rough sleepers and those who may resort to sleeping rough by giving them access to advice and support services, principally to be achieved by membership of the Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection Engagement (SHORE) partnership
 - To meet the aims of the No Second Night Out Initiative (NSNO)
 - Ensure the on-going provision of emergency shelter, support and advice for rough sleepers particularly in the winter months within Arun District

3. Rough sleeping in England – Government Statistics

- 3.1 In 2010 the Government began to publish statistics about the extent of rough sleeping. The statistics are a snapshot of the number of people sleeping rough in each local authority area on a single night between 1 October and 30 November, based on a count or estimate.
- 3.2 Rough sleepers are defined as: 'People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes').'⁴ The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers.
- 3.3 The Autumn 2012 total of rough sleeping counts and estimates in England was 2,309. This was up by 128 (6%) from the Autumn 2011 total of 2,181 following a 23% rise the previous year. All 326 local housing authorities in England provided a figure. The total was comprised from counts provided by 43 local authorities and estimates provided by 283 local authorities.

³ Arun DC Community Strategy 'Our Kind of Place' 2008-2026

⁴ Homeless Link definition of rough sleeping

3.4 The rough sleeping statistics for the last 4 years in West Sussex are shown below:

Authority	2010	2011	2012	2013
Adur	0	0	0	Figures not available at time of publishing
Arun	25	10*	26	
Chichester	15	15	26	
Crawley	16	11	17	
Horsham	6	5	2	
Mid Sussex	3	2	6	
Worthing	5	7	8	

* Street count - all other figures are estimates

Source Department of Communities and Local Government ⁵

3.5 The local authority members of the SHORE partnership undertook their 2013 rough sleeper count or estimate on 27/28 November 2013. Arun and Chichester held a shared estimate meeting, as was carried out in 2012. Partner agencies contributed to the estimate including housing staff from both local authorities, Sussex police and Stonepillow. The estimate includes individuals known to be sleeping out on that night, excluding those in hostels or making their own informal arrangements such as sofa surfing.

4. Rough sleeping in Arun

4.1 The 2013 figure of 18 rough sleepers is a marked reduction from the 2012 figure of 26. The reduction coincides with the opening of the Glenlogie night shelter. On the night of the estimate 8 people were accommodated in Glenlogie.

4.2 The Arun estimate of 18 rough sleepers revealed the following:

- 14 rough sleepers were men and 4 were women
- 13 were UK nationals, 5 from outside the UK
- The majority were sleeping rough in Littlehampton or Bognor Regis

4.3 In the winter of 2012/2013, Stonepillow⁶ recorded that 64 individuals, and on average 15 individuals a night, made use of Arun's SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) emergency accommodation provided at Glenlogie in Bognor Regis for 26 nights when the weather was forecast to be below 0°C for three consecutive evenings. This figure of 64 is significantly higher than the 2012 street count figure of 26 as confirmed in 3.4 above.

4.4 In 2011 and 2012 Arun provided funding for a Rough Sleepers Resettlement Link Worker employed by Stonepillow. Anecdotal evidence from that worker about the circumstances of those people who they assisted in 2012 is summarised below:-

- The Resettlement Link Worker received 61 referrals in 2012 with over 43% being rough sleepers for more than 6 months

⁵ Statistics for 2013 not available at time of print.

⁶ Stonepillow are a charity based in Chichester offering shelter, information and support to empower homeless and vulnerable people to make positive changes in their lives.

- The majority of referrals made were for clients who had a local connection with Arun. Three clients were supported to gain accommodation outside the district.
- 40% of clients had alcohol/substance misuse issues and 45% had mental health issues.
- 30% of rough sleepers were assisted to move into supported housing. One of the main issues with this approach was the long waiting lists for vacancies.
- The main barrier for clients to obtain private rented accommodation was requirement for a rent deposit.

4.5 Housing Register

4.5.1 In October 2013, Arun's Housing Register included 320 housing requests from people with a housing status of No Fixed Abode (NFA). Approximately 70% (229) were male applicants and 30% (91) were women. The average age of the male applicants was 34 (12 over pensionable age) and the average age of the female applicants was 29 (6 over pensionable age). In contrast to the number of housing requests, only 27 applicants (16 male and 11 female) were registered and therefore eligible to bid for accommodation. The main reason for not registering applicants was the Council's inability to contact them.

4.6 Migrant Workers

4.6.1 Many migrant workers from central and Eastern Europe are attracted to West Sussex because of the availability of work as agricultural labourers on local farms. The majority of migrant workers obtain employment and accommodation in the UK. However, a minority become destitute as a result of loss of employment and accommodation and restrictions on access to public funds. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some rough sleepers in the area may be working on local farms but choose not to rent accommodation because of its high cost in relation to their wages. This can contribute to Arun's rough sleeping population.

4.6.2 Migrant workers from countries in the European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) have broadly the same rights to housing as UK workers providing they are classified as a 'worker' (this may include where an individual is not working but seeking work). With effect from 2014, Bulgarian and Romanian citizens will have the same rights as migrant workers from other EU countries. Transitional arrangements are in place for Croatian nationals who are expected to have the same rights as other EU nationals with effect from 2018 although this may be extended to 2020. There is concern that, with an increase in the number of migrant workers entering the UK, those with housing difficulties may also increase.

4.7 Community Safety Issues

4.7.1 Drug and alcohol abuse and street violence are associated with rough sleeping and can have wider community safety implications. The Littlehampton area is subject to a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO). This order has been made because nuisance or annoyance to members of the public and/or disorder associated with the consumption of alcohol has been identified. The effect of this order gives the police a discretionary power to require persons not to consume alcohol or to seize and dispose of it. This power does

not leave the police with a compelling duty to challenge every person consuming alcohol, but it gives them power to target those who are engaged in or, in the officers' opinion, about to become engaged in anti-social behaviour connected with the consumption of alcohol. The police may also act in response to complaints received from members of the public.

5. Rough Sleeping Services in Arun

5.1 A range of services for rough sleepers are currently provided and proposed:

1. The provision and further development of Glenlogie in Bognor Regis as a hub for rough sleepers to include direct access accommodation
2. Access to advice and support services principally achieved by membership of the Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection Engagement (SHORE) partnership
3. Support via the Council's Housing Options Service
4. Complementary services provided by other statutory and voluntary agencies working across Arun
5. Sussex Police street community project

5.2. Glenlogie, Bognor Regis

5.2.1 Arun has provided a SWEP (when the temperature has fallen below or been predicted to fall below zero) for the last two years (2011 and 2012) at Glenlogie in Bognor Regis. The service has been run by Stonepillow on the Council's behalf.

5.2.2 The Council has recently agreed to trial nightly opening of the shelter, working in partnership with Stonepillow. The shelter will be open for seven days a week, irrespective of weather conditions, for a six month period from November 2013 to April 2014. In addition Glenlogie will be open on three days per week to offer advice and support to rough sleepers, the homeless, and those who fear they may become homeless. Glenlogie will be complimentary to Stonepillow's night shelter (St Josephs) and day centre facilities in Chichester (The Glassworks). The facility also provides a gateway into Stonepillow's specialist services and 'move-on' accommodation. Arun will review the success of this initiative in order to consider the development of a permanent service.

5.3 SHORE Partnership

5.3.1 The SHORE (Single Homeless Outreach Reconnection & Engagement) housing authorities from West & East Sussex are working together to deal with the issues of rough sleeping and the single homeless, supported by funding received from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) until April 2015.

5.3.2 The Initiative will support work across all of the Authorities' areas, specifically to bolster front line provision to address and prevent single homelessness and rough sleeping, with

the aim of ensuring that all single homeless people approaching any of the Authorities receive consistent, tailored advice and assistance as appropriate to address or resolve their homelessness or rough sleeping. The project will work toward an appropriate offer of suitable accommodation if required through the development of a robust No Second Night Out model of provision as well as access to any additional support they may need.

5.3.3. The Key Objectives of the Initiative are:

- to carry out overall needs analysis and relevant mapping of current provision of services for single homeless and rough sleepers
- develop a No Second Night Out model across Sussex and appropriate Reconnection Service
- to help prevent homelessness for single people in the Authorities' administrative areas
- to develop access routes into the private rented sector building on existing services
- to ensure access to the private rented sector and develop services such as deposit schemes
- to facilitate joint working between the Authorities' internal services and external partners
- to ensure that effective outreach services are developed across Sussex and that there are sufficient front line resources to offer advice and assistance to all single homeless households
- to develop a Sussex-wide rough sleeping reporting method to provide emergency bed options for homeless single people
- to share good practice examples across the Authorities

5.4 Housing Options Service

5.4.1 Arun staff provide a Housing Options advice service for homeless people from their offices in Littlehampton. From October 2013, a Systems Thinking review is being undertaken to understand the service from the perspective of customers. This will consider the purpose of the service, the ways in which the system could be better designed to meet customers' needs in the best way possible, avoiding waste. The outcomes of the Systems Thinking Review will help understand whether the team has the right resources to meet demand for housing help and advice as well as applications from customers who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

5.5 Services provided by statutory and voluntary agencies

5.5.1 Stonepillow

Stonepillow offers shelter, information and support to empower homeless and vulnerable people to make positive changes in their lives. Stonepillow provides services in Arun & Chichester to offer a pathway from the street to independent living, based on the core ethos of Health, Housing and Work, the foundations for longer term recovery. Stonepillow is working with Arun to develop its own service hub based at Glenlogie.

The No Second Night Out outreach team works closely with the Arun Resettlement workers to engage with hard to reach rough sleepers on the street but also identify new rough sleepers, supporting them to secure accommodation.

A specialist Probation Worker engages with soon-to-be or newly released offenders, who have a local connection with the Arun area and need support to access Health, Housing and Work.

The Housing Team manages 42 units of supported accommodation tailored to clients' specific needs. Stonepillow also works closely with private landlords to assist their clients to access affordable housing.

The Stonepillow Restore is a Recycling Social Enterprise, which offers work experience opportunities for rough sleepers to engage in work and obtain work related skills in many different areas, including IT, manual trades, driving and administration.

Stonepillow also administer the Local Assistance Network for the Chichester & Arun area, including emergency food, fuel top ups, moving costs and furniture for individuals and families on low incomes.

The Hubs provide the pathway into all Stonepillow services and these can be made in person or by phone. Some services will also accept direct referrals and information can be found through www.stonepillow.org.uk

5.5.2 Bognor Street Community Outreach Project

Bognor Street Community Outreach Project is funded by West Sussex County Council, working in partnership with CRI. Its aim is to reduce the number of street drinkers and rough sleepers in Bognor Regis by supporting them to address their alcohol and/or drug use and to access services.

5.5.3 Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)

The Arun and Chichester CAB aim to offer advice on debt, housing, welfare benefits, employment, consumer problems, family issues, legal issues and many other areas. The CAB offer advice at their advice centres in Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Chichester. Advice can also be obtained over the telephone. The CAB work closely on housing issues with Shelter, West Sussex.

5.6 Sussex Police Street Communities Project

Sussex Police have appointed a former Government advisor to work on a unique Street Communities project in 2013/2014. This initiative is intended to develop a collaborative, multi-agency response to street communities across Sussex.

The reasons for the project are to try to address the high cost of policing street communities, as both perpetrators and victims of crime, including instances of murder. Two pop-up hubs are planned for late 2013 and early 2014: one in Eastbourne in East Sussex and one in West Sussex located in Glenlogie, Bognor Regis. These will provide multi agency assessment and a short burst of targeted activity working with street communities over one to three days and nights in community venues. One aim is to evaluate the costs and savings of different interventions. The project will include some

short term outreach work. Faith groups and the voluntary sector will play a role in befriending and supporting clients.

6. Proposed Offer to Rough Sleepers

6.1 DCLG good practice guidance encourages local authorities to develop a clear “offer” which sets out the assistance the authority can provide for people who are sleeping rough. This offer needs to be consistently communicated to rough sleepers and to local communities, faith groups and the statutory and voluntary agencies who are working with them. The proposed offer to rough sleepers in Arun is based on the following issues;-

- Outreach services (i.e. not office based)
- Advice and support
- Severe weather provision
- Reconnection services to enable individuals to return home
- Enforcement action and removal

6.2 Outreach

6.2.1 Outreach is an essential first step in making contact with people who are rough sleeping to identify their needs and refer them to advice and support services. To be effective, outreach staff need to be experienced in working with this client group and include people who can communicate with non-English speakers in their own languages.

6.2.2 SHORE has received funding from central government to support a new Outreach Service for Rough Sleepers in Sussex for 2013/14. SHORE is offering commissioned grants to provide outreach services and strengthen local communities through three hubs:

- Hub 1 Crawley, Horsham & Mid Sussex
- Hub 2 Arun, Chichester & Worthing/Adur
- Hub 3 Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Rother & Wealden

The outreach services will be in place in early 2014.

6.3 No Second Night Out

The SHORE authorities have agreed that rough sleepers should not spend more than one night sleeping rough in Sussex. To achieve this there will be:

- A rapid response to new rough sleepers
- A Single Service Offer of suitable accommodation and support for new rough sleepers
- A commitment to people who have been sleeping rough over a longer period to engage with their individual needs and to find appropriate solutions
- A focus on linking people who migrate into Sussex local authority areas back to accommodation and services where they have a local connection and where they are most likely to sustain a life away from the street

6.4 Severe Weather Provision

6.4.1 Glenlogie in Bognor Regis (see 5.2 above) will be available as a direct access night shelter between 1.11.13 and 30.4.14 irrespective of the forecasted temperature.

6.4.2 Glenlogie will provide;-

- Somewhere warm and dry to sleep in basic dormitory style accommodation with bedding and toiletries provided;
- Access to hot drinks and a meal;
- An initial assessment of needs;
- Links to advice and support services at Glenlogie see 6.3 above.

6.4.3 In order to enhance the safety of staff, volunteers and service will have clear policies to manage behaviour and risk and will work closely with the police and community safety teams to respond appropriately to any incidents which arise.

6.5 Reconnections

6.5.1 The 14 SHORE housing authorities in West & East Sussex will develop a staged approach to services provided for EEA nationals. This will include ensuring people are supported to fulfil their treaty rights, receive offers of support for documentation and employment. Reconnection back to their country may also be an option.

www.routeshome.org.uk is a DCLG funded website designed to help local authorities and others to help people reconnect to their own country. The website includes good practice guidelines, consulate information, and Eastern and Central European country information, Administrative removal and involvement of United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) and successor bodies will be implemented at an appropriate stage in the process, in partnership with Sussex Police.

SHORE authorities are also developing a Reconnections Protocol. Its purpose is to assist rough sleepers, particularly new arrivals into a local authority area, to reconnect with the area/country from where they originate. Alternatively they may be assisted to relocate to an area where they either have:

- accommodation; or
- support networks; or
- other connections to another local authority area.

The Protocol is aimed at acting in the best interests of the client to ensure they are reconnected to areas they are familiar with and can access services in the community leading to the securing of more stable accommodation within that area. The Protocol sets out a framework across Sussex to facilitate rapid reconnection or relocation to prevent people sleeping rough in our area unnecessarily.

The Protocol does **not** over-ride any legal requirements or obligations which are placed on individual local authorities within the SHORE grouping. Each local authority is responsible for ensuring they fulfil any legal duties and obligations placed on them. This includes any obligations they have to clients who have a priority need as defined by legislation. As such this Protocol is aimed at assisting those sleeping rough with reconnection or relocation, over and above statutory duties owed to the client by the identifying local authority.

7. Enforcement Action and Removal

- 7.1 Housing Services will work in partnership with Community Safety and Sussex Police to identify problematic individuals whose anti-social behaviour may require enforcement action, such as injunctions and ASBO's.

8. Monitoring the implementation of the Strategy

- 8.1 The responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the offer to Rough Sleepers will lie with the Housing Services Manager who will ensure that the Housing Management team, director and the Portfolio Holder for Housing are kept updated as appropriate. The responsibility for the effective implementation of the SHORE Action plan lies with the local authority working group of which Arun is a member.