

Rough Sleeper Update

Presenter:

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Rough Sleeping Definition

The Government definition of rough sleepers is;

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 which are makeshift shelters, often comprised of cardboard boxes). Bedded down is taken to mean either lying down or sleeping. About to bed down includes those who are sitting in/on or near a sleeping bag or other bedding.

In Wolverhampton there are a number of individuals who are habitually rough sleeping despite having secure accommodation. The city also sees a number of transient rough sleepers who visit from out of area. Via our outreach service every individual is offered help to access support services and housing.

Rough Sleeper Annual Count


- The Annual Count took place on Thursday 10 November 2022 between 11:45pm to 2:30am across five locations in the city.
- Wolverhampton conducted a spotlight count followed by an evidenced based estimate meeting.
- Partners included: Department for Levelling Up, P3, Good Shepherd Ministry, RMC, Changing Lives, St George's Hub, Housing First, Solace, SUIT, Recovery Near You.
- The count highlighted 11 people bedded down on the night of the 10th November 2022
- Of the 11 people seen bedded down in Wolverhampton on the night :
 - Two people had Wolverhampton Homes tenancies
 - Two people had been released from prison, reporting no accommodation
 - Three people were from out of area
 - Two people undergoing an immigration process

Rough Sleeping in Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton, in line with the West Midlands, saw an increase in people sleeping rough in Autumn 2022.

P3 are commissioned to provide rough sleeper services for the City, through a £1.5million contract until April 2025. This is delivered in partnership with other voluntary and community sector organisations who collectively offer;

- outreach provision
- floating support
- accommodation and support service
- Housing First.



Working to prevent and relieve rough sleeping and improve health outcomes for complex rough sleepers.

The life expectancy for people who rough sleep is considerably lower than the national average, 43yrs for women and 47yrs for men, in comparison to 82yrs women and 79yrs for men in the UK.

People who have a history of rough sleeping experience some of the most severe health inequalities and suffer much poorer health than the general population.

Rough Sleeper Annual Count - Rationale

The Annual Count highlighted a number of trends, some of which are more challenging to address due to additional factors and complex needs. This can include movement from out of area, personal choice, complex immigration status and inappropriate use of the statutory duty by other organisations.

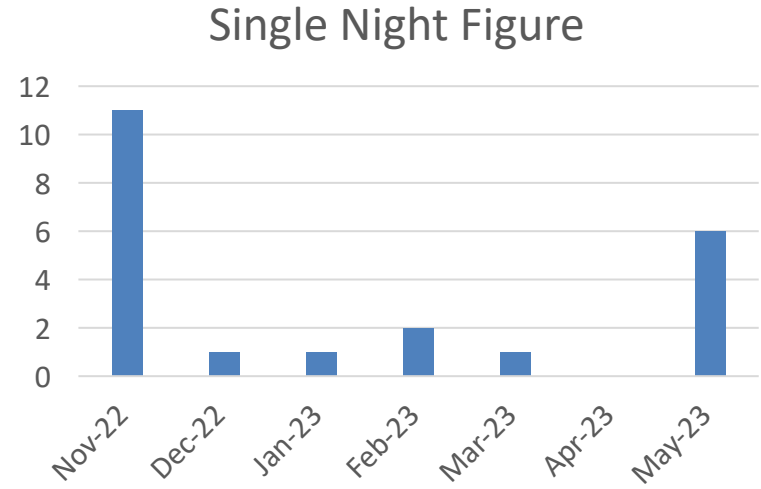
***The majority of individuals that rough sleep in Wolverhampton are not homeless.** These individuals have accommodation options available to them but other factors, including mental health, substance misuse, negative relationships with peers and peaks in crisis cause a barrier to using their settled accommodation.

***Substance misuse** was a common factor in people choosing to leave their accommodation as was travelling to Wolverhampton and **refusing to engage** with the requirements for immigration processes.

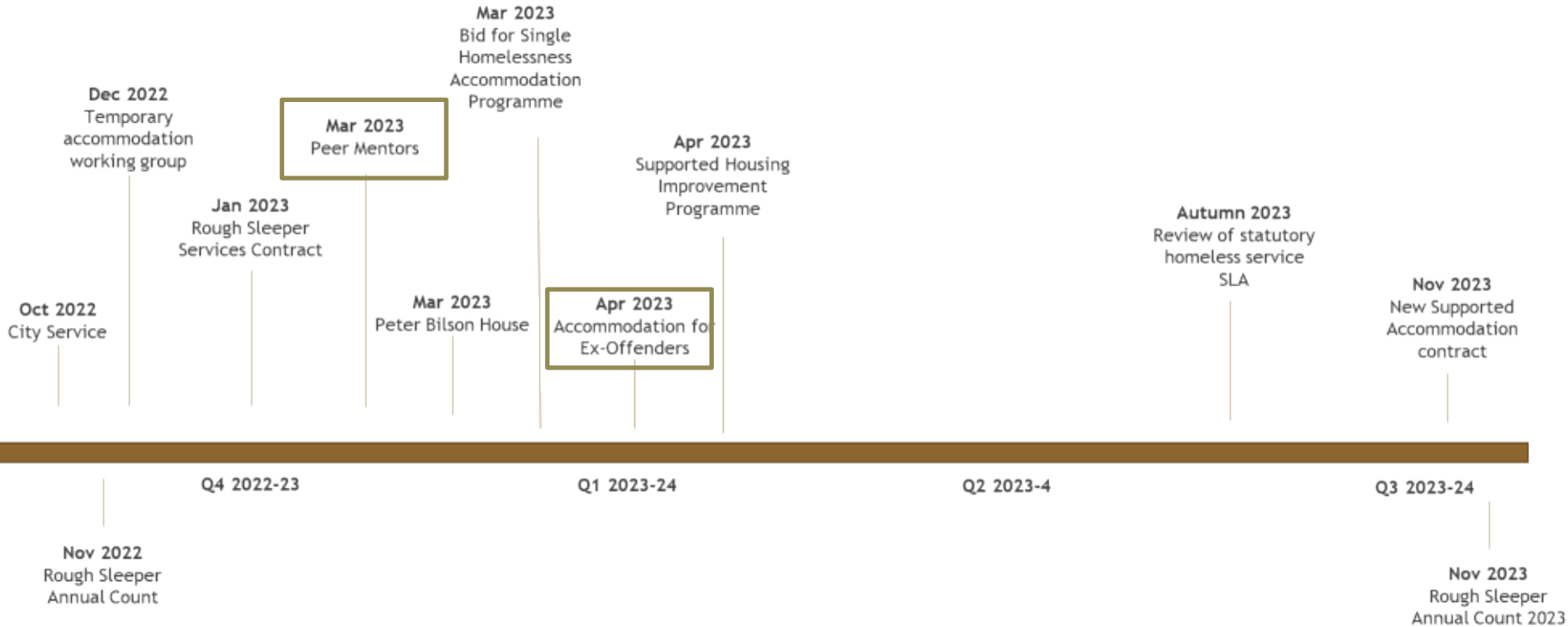
Single Night Figures

Outreach is carried out daily, with monitoring submitted to DLUHC, including a single night figure based on the last outreach session of the month.

Apart from November the numbers of people regularly sleeping rough has been single figures, including April where no one was regularly out sleeping rough.



Ongoing and upcoming projects



Additional areas of work – Addressing the issues

A **peer mentor system** is being developed to further understand the reasons why some people refuse suitable accommodation options and choose to continue rough sleeping.

The current review of the SLA for the statutory homeless service will help to ensure a more consistent and responsive service for single people. This includes improved use of temporary accommodation.

CWC's contract for supported accommodation will be reviewed for implementation in late 2023. The Supported Housing Improvement Programme provides opportunities to create savings within this contract, whilst improving outcomes for our residents.

Children's Services' Commissioning team and Homelessness & Migration are currently consulting on a bid for the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme.

Peter Bilson House

Opened in April to provide settled and emergency accommodation for people with a history of rough sleeping

- Of the **22** settled rooms
- 11 residents on site
- 2 to move in by 23rd June
- Full occupancy by end of July
- Emergency beds have a high occupancy rate with people being referred on a regular basis
- Referrals are via <https://www.p3charity.org/services/p3-places-to-stay-peter-bilson-house> or 01902 552211



Opportunities and Best Practice

Homeless Health Needs Audit in partnership with Homeless Link

In partnership with the voluntary and community sector and contracted services, the audit aims to engage with rough sleepers, and those with a history of rough sleeping to better understand the health implications and needs of those without permanent accommodation. The findings of this audit will help to evidence any gaps in provision and highlight trends. Very early findings include identification of: dual diagnosis and mental health.

If successful there may be potential to widen the Audit out to all people in TA and with a full homeless duty.

Best Practice Considerations

Leeds City Council offer targeted incentives and support to private landlords who accommodate people with a history of rough sleeping.

Camden Council (2019) created a health related rough sleeper team that engaged with over 700 people in its first year, supporting with health related interventions.

North Devon Council provide a targeted mental health service for rough sleepers providing rapid support to individuals with mental health and addiction issues whilst they are street homeless.

Street and aggressive begging

In Wolverhampton begging and homelessness are **not** linked.

The majority of rough sleeping reports made by the public are in fact people who are currently in accommodation and begging.

There is also a rise in people aggressively begging at traffic lights along the main routes into the city.

An Engagement, Education and Enforcement approach is required to deal with begging effectively:

Engagement: working with people who are begging to access treatment services, support and employment

Education: working with the public to educate around the Alternative Giving programme
<https://wolverhamptonchange.co.uk/>

Enforcement: using legal interventions related to people who are persistently and aggressively begging, even though they are accommodated or continually offered accommodation

Street and aggressive begging

Education and engagement need to be separated from enforcement to allow the more effective use of civil and criminal powers.

Powers can include:

- Civil injunctions
- Criminal Behaviour Orders
- Community Protection Notices
- Public Spaces Protection Orders
- Dispersal powers

Consideration - explore opportunities to use the Big Issue in Wolverhampton, for Wolverhampton based residents. This is a legitimate social enterprise that could support this group. The current sellers in the city are from Birmingham.

Recommendations

1. Endorse the approach to rough sleeping as outlined in this presentation.
2. Agree to support opportunities for a one Council and city-wide approach to street and aggressive begging.

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