

Preventing Street Sleeping

Crisis briefing for Cardiff Council



April 2023

About Crisis

Crisis is the national charity for people facing homelessness across Wales, Scotland and England. We know that homelessness is not inevitable, and we know that together, we can end it.

We provide services directly to people experiencing homelessness at our Skylight centres, carry out research into the causes and consequences of homelessness, and campaign for the changes needed to end it.

Preventing Street Sleeping

The cost-of-living crisis and a severe undersupply of affordable housing are just two of many factors that are pushing more and more people into homelessness across Wales. Although new interim legislation that came into force in October last year ensures people who are street homeless are in priority need for support, there are still many people sleeping rough across Wales.

Rough sleeping is the rarest form of homelessness in Wales, but it is also the most acute. Living on the streets is dangerous and can have long-lasting effects on a person's physical health and mental wellbeing. People who are street sleeping are also particularly vulnerable to abuse and violence. **We are therefore pleased that Cardiff Council is considering how it can improve its approach to street sleeping.**

In order to reduce street sleeping, it is important to work towards a wider preventative strategy that addresses all forms of homelessness and includes targeted interventions specifically for people at risk of street sleeping. Some general suggestions are included below:

- [The tools and templates available on our website](#) can be used to by local authorities to help **identify how to reduce disengagement with housing and homelessness support.**
- **Safeguarding people who are sleeping rough from criminalisation is important.** You may find [our guide to how police forces, local authorities and the voluntary sector can best work together to end homelessness](#) helpful.
- Those who are experiencing homelessness are often facing significant distress, trauma, fleeing from stressful situations, or may have particular communication needs. Training (and retraining) staff to provide **person-centred and trauma-informed support**, tailored to the specific needs of individuals can be really helpful in securing good engagement. Similarly ensuring that anti-social behaviour approaches are trauma-informed and seek to provide support for individuals is crucial.
- Taking a **flexible approach to the legal tests of intentionality, local connection and priority need** is helpful– there are many reasons why a person may wish to relocate or may not present as 'vulnerable' in the traditional sense of the word. Find out more in our [No One Left Out report](#).
- **Working closely with temporary accommodation placements to consider suitability and support options is helpful.** Unstable environments at some temporary accommodation sites

are especially difficult for people with experience of trauma, adverse childhood experiences and/or mental illness and substance use issues.

- Through multidisciplinary teams, **work in partnership with other public bodies and third sector services** in education, prisons, health and social care to ensure early intervention and multi-agency support for people may be at risk of homelessness can be crucial.
- Ensuring that services are equipped to meet various communication needs is key, as is keeping those who access the service updated with clear information.
- Ensuring that a range of **people with lived experience** of different types of homelessness with different socio-economic backgrounds are **involved in shaping policy and systems change**.
- Ensuring there is good awareness and communication on new legislation that came into force in October last year which requires people who are street homeless to be considered priority need for support.
- **Work closely with local housing associations** to ensure homeless households are prioritised for social housing.
- **Ensure progress is being made on implementing the local authority Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.** These plans are an integral part of ending homelessness in the longer term and buy-in at the highest level of local authorities from across council departments is essential.



More information

Thank you for inviting Crisis to submit evidence to help Cardiff Council in planning its next steps around street sleeping. We are grateful for this opportunity and hope that you find the above general points helpful in your early planning stages.

If you would like to discuss any of the points raised in this briefing further, or to discuss more detailed plans with us as they are developed, please do not hesitate to get in touch by emailing Jasmine Harris, Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer, at Jasmine.Harris@crisis.org.uk.