



**FOR PUBLICATION**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

**30 September 2021**

**Report of the Director of Public Health**

**Supporting homeless populations in Derbyshire**

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To update the Health and Wellbeing Board on highlighting the cross-system priority in ensuring homelessness is everyone's business.

## **2. Information and Analysis**

- 2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has given partners in Derbyshire the biggest test of any of our working lives, and the efforts put into protecting the most vulnerable in our communities has been a truly inspiring experience to see.
- 2.2 This paper seeks to highlight to all Health and Wellbeing Board members the very difficult challenges that lay ahead, and the need for continued partnership working and accepting that homelessness is 'everyone's business' as we have done throughout the pandemic.
- 2.3 Since the first lockdown in March 2020 partners across Derbyshire have achieved a great deal together, with housing and health sectors collaborating closely. Projects such as the Mount Cook winter homeless provision set a high bar for what can be achieved by pooling funding and sharing resources. 91 people were housed in the project and everyone benefitted from the many services that came together

over the three months including drug/ alcohol services, NHS GP practices, mental health and dental services, rough sleeper support teams and housing & debt specialists.

2.4 Partners across Derbyshire have jointly funded the Keeping Everyone In Service (KEIS). This specialist team of support workers have been working with some of the most vulnerable individuals across the County for nearly a year now. So far 121 people have benefitted from this service which has primarily supported people to stay in their accommodation rather than falling back on the streets. Combined system-wide efforts have led to a 40% reduction in rough sleeping since the pandemic began.

2.5 The focus now needs to be based around the following questions:

- How do we continue and lock in the strong collaborative partnership work we have been engaged in?
- And how can we elevate this even further in coming months and years to benefit us all?

2.6 The Derbyshire Homelessness Officers Group (DHOG) have started the development of a County-wide Homelessness Strategy. DHOG want this strategy to be ambitious in scope and scale and would welcome support and involvement from Health and Wellbeing Board partners to make sure that this happens. The Derbyshire Health and Housing Systems Group are working on a number of priorities, including the homelessness agenda, and members of DHOG are very appreciative of the support provided.

2.7 Recently, The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness & Rough Sleeping released an interim report on the impact made by the 'Everyone In' Initiative. The report fully acknowledges the effectiveness of collective efforts over the course of the pandemic. Furthermore, it confirms that by treating rough sleeping and homelessness as a public health issue, innovations were made in the treatment of clients.

'The 'preservation of life' principle prompted an increase in innovation and creativity in approach, which was solution focused and facilitated the delivery of person-centred support. Examples were given of key services being delivered on-site or easily reached, swift and accessible assessment processes, and easier and more flexible access to drug treatment prescriptions.' (McCulloch, L, When we work together-learning the lessons, July 2021).

- 2.8 The Kerslake Report encapsulates perfectly what DHOG representatives want to see as a new normal. Homelessness officers, alongside partners, have seen what working together has achieved and there is strong evidence to show that our actions have saved lives and prevented hospital and intensive care admissions. What is now important is an ongoing commitment to keep getting things done together similar to experiences of the last 18 months.
- 2.9 The County-wide strategy, with full engagement from the health sector is a great vehicle to carry forward the gains made over the course of the last 18 months. The primary goal of the strategy is to ensure that there is effective, flexible and innovative support to those with severe complex need and high levels of deprivation. It is well documented that those suffering severe multiple deprivation access and engage with reactive services at the point of crisis.
- 2.10 The recent Changing Futures bid argued for the need to invest in a multi-disciplinary team consisting of substance misuse, adult social care, mental health, GP and clinical psychologist practitioners that would allow for the sort of rapid on the spot decision-making and interventions that we witnessed to some degree during the Mount Cook project. This sort of innovation needs to be at the core of the strategy, as well as the will from multiple sectors to collaborate on funding and fundraising initiatives. Likewise, there needs to be access to accommodation where people can get the right treatment for their complex needs. To this end we are looking at what we'd have to do to have a Derbyshire version of the CQC registered Edwin House project in Nottinghamshire, providing care, nursing and recovery oriented treatment and support for people living with chronic physical, emotional or mental health issues. In addition, this type of accommodation offers reablement support and a consultant-led medically assisted inpatient detox unit.
- 2.11 Homelessness is now increasing in new forms due to the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. Over 14,000 households in Derbyshire have been furloughed and this support ends in October 2021. In addition, significant numbers are still claiming Universal Credit, with the £20 top up also ending at the same time. Courts have been holding extended sessions to deal with the number of possession cases since the end of May 2021. All Derbyshire councils are reporting large increases in the numbers of possession cases from the private rented sector (Assured shorthold tenancies) being received, with some authorities reporting increases of 50% and more in July 2021 compared to June 2021.

### 3. Background Papers

- The Kerslake Commission Homelessness & Rough sleeping Interim Report: When We Work Together – learning the lessons  
<https://www.commissiononroughsleeping.org/>
- Edwin House Nottingham information  
<https://www.edwinhouse.org/>

### 4. Recommendation(s)

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- i. Recognise that continued rough sleeping and an increase in homelessness in general will affect services cutting across the health spectrum in the next few years.
- ii. Agrees as a partnership to work collectively on the coming challenges in the same way as we met the challenge of the pandemic.
- iii. Agree to work with Derbyshire Homeless Officers Group collaboratively to develop the county wide strategy in order to develop and commission new services to help those with severe and complex needs.

### 5. Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 5.1 Acknowledge the ongoing issue of homelessness and rough sleeping within the county.
- 5.2 Recognise the importance of ongoing partnership and collaborative working in tackling complex issues related to homelessness and rough sleeping and build on the lessons learnt from the past 18 months
- 5.3 Recognise the importance of DHOG in driving forward this work, especially in relation to the county-wide strategy development.

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