No One Left Out: communities ending rough sleeping

An annual progress report: November 2008 – November 2009
Introduction

The government’s new rough sleeping strategy No One Left Out: communities ending rough sleeping was launched on 18 November 2008. Building on the success in reducing the numbers of people sleeping rough by two thirds over the last 10 years, the strategy sets out a new ambitious objective of ending rough sleeping in England by 2012.

The new rough sleeping strategy recognises the importance of:

- Preventing people sleeping rough – tackling the flows of new rough sleepers onto the streets
- Diverting people from the streets as quickly as possible – so no one needs to stay sleeping rough and to avoid people becoming entrenched and developing or exacerbating problems such as poor mental health, substance misuse and physical health
- Sustaining people in accommodation and their communities to prevent them returning to the streets in the future.

The strategy was backed by a 15 point action plan. This report reflects on the progress during the first year of the strategy’s delivery.
1. Infrastructure and support for delivery

The implementation of the strategy is led by a dedicated team within Communities and Local Government (CLG). Delivery on the ground requires buy-in and action by local authorities and their partners across statutory and third sector organisations. Two specialist advisers with experience in providing and commissioning services for rough sleepers were appointed to support this work – one leading on London and one working with authorities in the rest of England; with almost 50 local authorities outside the capital having received visits and advice.

A strategic framework has been developed for local authorities to help them plan and deliver their work to prevent and tackle rough sleeping. This sets out six key areas:

- Strategic Approach and Partnerships to co-ordinate the work of key agencies
- Early Interventions Services to reduce the risk of people sleeping rough
- Prevention and Emergency Accommodation Services to divert people away from the street
- Contact and Assessment through Outreach to support people to leave the streets as quickly as possible
- Accommodation and Support Pathways to enable sustainable moves away from the street
- Specialist Support for health, skills and work.

A self-assessment tool has been developed for local authorities to use, to help them review and develop their current arrangements to prevent and tackle rough sleeping.

Good practice notes on preventing and tackling rough sleeping have been produced and are available on the website. A series of regional seminars have been held to promote the strategy and good practice examples, and targeted seminars held to support local authorities with high numbers of people from the A8 nations sleeping rough in their area.

The London Mayor’s Delivery Board has commenced work in London, chaired by the Mayor’s Director of Housing. This brings together key people from the inner London boroughs, police, NHS London, criminal justice system and the voluntary sector to co-ordinate effective actions. There have been some notable successes. The CHAIN database which records all outreach
contacts in the capital was used to identify the London 205 – the most entrenched rough sleepers. Co-ordinated case management through CLG and the London Delivery Board has enabled boroughs and providers to work flexibly with this group, and has enabled around 140 individuals to come in off the streets. The London Mayor’s Director of Housing has secured the support of Transport for London to fund work to help rough sleepers using night bendy buses, and link them up with appropriate services. Working with the GLA and Homeless Link, CLG are supporting the development of sub-regional rough sleeping strategies and action plans; East London are launching their strategy, which all eight boroughs have signed up to, in December.

CLG has funded 15 Ending Rough Sleeping Champions to promote and share best practice in preventing and tackling rough sleeping. The programme includes a series of seminars and conferences, hands on advice and support, and the dissemination of tool kits and policies to avoid other local authorities needing to re-invent the wheel, and to help them develop services across the country.

CLG has also funded a Small Grants programme to support the work of 30 local authorities. This has pump primed the establishment of private rented sector access schemes, funded skills development and social enterprise activities, supported specialist alcohol and mental health outreach services, and enabled the recruitment of former rough sleepers to undertake outreach and support work.

In partnership with Chartered Institute of Housing, Homeless Link and Broadway we have commissioned the development of an accredited training programme – Engage to Change, to improve the practice of front line homelessness workers. This is being further developed to help the Boards of homelessness agencies to better understand and deliver against the strategy.

CLG continue to fund the national capacity building project – Beyond a Helpline which supports small homelessness organisations to better recruit, develop and manage their staff. The programme is now reporting on outcomes including levels of evictions, exclusions and incidents and service user satisfaction to gauge the impact of this work on direct beneficiaries.

Our specialist advisers have worked with Homeless Link to develop the Homeless Link website and Rough Sleeping portal following their merger with Resource Information Services to develop and strengthen “Homeless UK” and “Homeless London” pages. The website will become a key source of information on local services and best practice, including new information on volunteering opportunities and donation and support needs for local organisations.

We have also started a series of meetings with officials from other key government departments, including the Department of Health, the Home Office (UK Border Agency) and the Department for Work and Pensions. This preparatory work has identified critical areas where different government
policies interact, and is driving effective joint working towards ending rough sleeping.

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2. Early intervention and prevention of rough sleeping

CLG has commissioned Homeless Link to develop a Prevention Opportunities Mapping and Planning Tool (PrOMPT) to assist local authorities in understanding the routes people follow before they end up on the streets, and develop interventions to prevent them having to sleep rough. This has been piloted with authorities across the country and is now available on the web.

We have produced good practice notes on using local authority powers under Section 192(3) of the Homelessness Act to prevent people sleeping rough. CLG has also worked with Homeless Link to identify good practice for their publication Preventing Homelessness – providing emergency accommodation options.

Crisis produced a report No One’s Priority which identified the gaps in the homelessness prevention safety net in five London boroughs, following a Mystery Shopping exercise. CLG has worked with Crisis to promote many of the recommendations to local authorities and is working with London Councils to provide additional advice and training for the authorities involved.

Work has been undertaken to pilot a hospital discharge protocol in London. As a result of this, recommendations have been made to NHS London – through the London Delivery Board – for the establishment of Homeless Ward Rounds to prevent people leaving hospital with nowhere to go.

Delivering against actions:

1, 2, 5

Outreach services to contact and assess rough sleepers

We commissioned the development of a Balanced Scorecard for Outreach Services which provides a tool for local authorities who wish to commission and review street outreach services, and provides a framework for self assessment and improvement for providers. This has been piloted in Nottingham, London and Reading and is being promoted at a conference on outreach practice in December.

Significant impacts have been achieved for the London 205 – the capital’s most entrenched rough sleepers – by agreeing with boroughs and providers a
flexible and personalised approach to helping these individuals off the streets. CLG provided additional funding to tackle blockages to moving into suitable accommodation, and around 140 individuals have now moved indoors.

We have worked with Broadway who manage the CHAIN database to improve the information collected to help inform and monitor the work of the outreach teams across London. This now records the areas from which people have moved and will aid their reconnections, and help local authorities who may not see rough sleepers on their streets recognise the need to improve their prevention safety net. CLG has also consulted with outreach teams, local authorities and other stakeholders to update the Street Count recording format to capture information on the needs of people sleeping rough, and focus upon actions to be taken following the count to help people off the streets.

In response to the growing numbers of people sleeping rough from the A8 and A2 countries, we have commissioned specialist services – the London and National Reconnections Services to tackle the destitution faced by a minority of migrant workers and support them to return home. We are working closely with the UK Border Agency to develop the response for this group.

Through the London Delivery Board we have engaged with Transport for London to tackle rough sleeping on night and bendy buses. A new service has been funded to work with people who use the bus network because they have no other accommodation available, and to ensure help can be directed to them.

Through the small grants programme we have funded new outreach workers and related services in 15 local authorities – including specialist alcohol and mental health outreach.

\textbf{Delivering against actions:}

6, 12
3. Developing support and accommodation pathways

We have provided small grants to 12 local authorities who will use the money to help rough sleepers and those at risk of sleeping rough to **access the private rented sector**. CLG has funded Crisis to work with these and other authorities to help them establish and expand schemes and to develop good practice standards.

CLG continues to work closely with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) who now manage the **Places of Change programme**. The specialist advisers have contributed to the leadership training programme that supports the managers of projects in receipt of capital funding to re-model services. We are also working with Homeless Link and – through our champions programme and specialist advisers visits – **promoting best practice to reduce evictions and exclusions** from supported accommodation.

We have developed a briefing for those interested in developing **Working Hostels** that sets out two different models. The Working Hostels concept is aimed at people who have the lifeskills to manage their accommodation, but who need affordable accommodation and tailored support to enter the workplace. The briefing is available from the CLG website.

In London, CLG has worked with St Mungo’s and the London borough of Islington to re-provide one of London’s **rolling shelters** for rough sleepers – to premises which offer an improved standard of accommodation with space for advice, counselling and training to enable rough sleepers to leave the streets.

In Preston, we have funded the local authority through the small grants programme to test a **supported lodgings** model, and have provided advice on funding to expand a lodgings service run by Hope Worldwide in London. This is an established approach for young people at risk of homelessness and we have agreed with the council and its partners, including faith groups, to explore the role this approach can play for older people who might otherwise sleep rough.

In recognition of the complex needs of many entrenched rough sleepers, we have worked with local authority and third sector partners to identify effective **“Housing First”** models of provision. These provide alternative pathways – where other hostel and accommodation arrangements have broken down repeatedly. Housing First approaches use general needs accommodation in the private rented and social rented sectors, with intensive tailored support packages to enable the individuals to sustain accommodation and address their needs.
We are working with Crisis and Housing Justice to promote mentoring and befriending opportunities for faith groups, and are holding a London based volunteering event to encourage people to focus their energies in supporting and befriending people to live independently and sustain accommodation in their own communities.

Delivering against actions:

1, 2, 4, 8, 10
4. Work to improve the skills and health of people sleeping rough

Health and well being

We continue to work closely with the Department of Health (DH) on their analytical work to establish the “business case” for accessible primary care provision for homeless people and rough sleepers. This found that homeless people tended to use seven times the resources in secondary (in-patient and A&E) care as the housed population. This was due to delays in seeking treatment – meaning that hospital stays were longer because conditions being presented were more advanced and complex to treat.

We are also working with DH and Homeless Link to support the involvement of homelessness agencies in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) process, and to promote the importance of planning to meet the needs of the homelessness population to commissioners. A Health Needs Audit tool has been piloted by three local authorities and a further six are testing it. This tool will enable homelessness organisations to gather data on the health needs of their service users and feed into the JSNA and commissioning activities at Primary Care Trust level.

We have funded four Personalisation pilots in the City of London, Exeter and North Devon, Northampton and Nottingham. In each pilot area, partnerships of housing, third sector and adult social care colleagues are working together to identify the most entrenched rough sleepers and develop personalised packages with the individuals concerned – focusing upon their needs and aspirations, rather than on promoting existing services.

We are also working with DH colleagues and other specialists to develop a Complex Trauma guide for homelessness organisations and their staff. The guide will provide advice and information to staff, and signpost them to appropriate services for their clients.

Delivering against actions:

5, 9
Skills and employment

The Strategy recognises that ending rough sleeping on a sustainable basis requires people who have slept rough developing the skills they need for work and independence.

We have worked with the HCA and Homeless Link to deliver the very successful Key Garden at the Chelsea Flower Show. This involved homeless people from over 100 homelessness organisations nationally growing plants and getting involved in the design and construction of the garden. This helped people develop skills — many have gone on to further training or work in the horticulture sector — and raised their self confidence and esteem through participation in a flagship project.

CLG has continued to fund and promote GROW (Gaining Real Opportunities through Work), which is delivered by Thames Reach, and supports homeless organisations develop the policies and structures to recruit, train and develop current and former service users. We have commissioned an independent consultant to review the project and the report’s findings strongly endorse the model.

We have invested £1 million in the SPARK and Sparklers programmes, which provide start up grants for social enterprises, involving and (in the case of Sparklers) run by individual homeless people. The winners were announced in the summer, and a range of businesses are already entering their set up phase. One of our Ending Rough Sleeping champions, CREATE in Leeds, is a successful social enterprise and has agreed to work with other homelessness organisations to advise and support them on their business plans.

Delivering against actions:

3, 4, 10