

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 31 OCTOBER 2013
title: PREVENTION OF ROUGH SLEEPING AWARD
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Committee of the budget available and the requirement for the Council to adopt the personalised solution scheme policy to enable the Council to draw down grant monies.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To address the housing needs of those individuals most in need and currently rough sleeping.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 For Ribble Valley to be able to draw down £1000 grant to assist rough sleepers, the Council must demonstrate they have adopted the personalised solution budget policy as attached as Appendix 1.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The scheme would be of benefit to the housing services department especially in the winter months.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – this will provide additional funding to assist rough sleepers and homeless individuals.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – this will improve the housing needs service option.
- Political – all Lancashire authorities will have the opportunity to apply for the funding.
- Reputation – the funding will increase the options for single homeless people.
- Equality & Diversity – improve the service for single households.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Request that Committee approve the adoption of the personalised solution policy to allow the release of funding to Ribble Valley.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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REF: RS/311013/H&H/EL

POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR PERSONALISED SOLUTION BUDGET (PSB)

Overview

Lancashire Councils have adopted and is working in line with a national initiative to end rough sleeping. No Second Night Out (N.S.N.O)

N.S.N.O aims to ensure that:

- No one new to the streets should spend a second night out
- No one should make their home on the streets
- No one should return to the streets once they have been helped off of them, and
- Ultimately no one should arrive on the streets. Lancashire Councils are also engaged in the Single Homelessness Initiative project, which supports the aims and objectives of No Second Night Out whilst also ensuring there is a single standard service offer to all single, non priority need customers. This includes a commitment to provide all customers with face to face advice including a written summary of the housing options advice provided.

As part of the Single Homelessness Initiative, a one off £1,000 cash pot has been created per participating council to fund a “personalised solution budget”, in order to prevent sleeping rough in Lancashire.

Customers are made a *single* service offer - a fundamental feature of the NSNO programme.

When the Housing Options officer engages with the individual referred to NSNO scheme, they will carry out detailed assessments so they can get a good understanding of the individual and determine what will improve their situation. They should try to identify a solution which is suitable to the customers' specific needs and wishes, and should be realistic and sustainable.

As part of this process, personalisation is considered and a part of the budget is allocated for personalisation costs. This money is likely to be predominately used for travel and emergency B&B accommodation when there is no other provision available

Lancashire's Offer

Single service offer is where an emergency solution to the individual's rough sleeping situation is suggested and only that one offer is made. This offer is made based on assessment of need through conversation with the rough sleeper.

There is an expectation that anyone who accesses emergency provision engages in the support. Potentially, it can mean that if the rough sleeper refuses the offer they ultimately could, by their own accord, exclude themselves from services.

How can the money be spent?

Examples:

1. Basic needs- food, clothing, personal hygiene facilities.
2. Accommodation (emergency B+B, basic overnight provision or hostel including funding to providing waking night staff if required due to risk etc.)
3. Reconnection services such as travel costs

No Second Night Out stresses the importance of reconnecting people with their families or other support networks and returning to their home area and evidence suggests that people are more likely to succeed where they have the most support and knowledge of an area. To this end, the project will provide new rough sleepers with assistance to access support and accommodation in their home areas, signposting to housing providers in those areas and providing the practical support for people to return closer to home where it is safe to do so.

4. Secondments or overtime payments for U.K Border Agency/police officers or other agencies who offer specialist services / support
5. Access to ancillary services such as mental health, drugs, alcohol
6. Short term detox facilities

This is not a “fixed” list and a needs assessment should determine what provision should be purchased to best meet the needs of the individual.

It is also good practice to only activate the PSB when all other avenues of support have been exhausted and should only be implicated in extreme circumstances to avoid sleeping rough for a further night.

All further (longer term) resources will come from commissioned in services or external agencies providing follow up support. Specifically:

- A) Pre-tenancy training
- B) Accommodation finder and enhanced rental bond scheme
- C) House sharing scheme

Process of allocating funds from PSB

1. A customer who is deemed to be a non- priority single homeless person is referred, identified by or self presents to the local authority, usually the Housing Options Team.
2. A needs assessment (Housing options interview) is undertaken
3. The Housing Options officer will provide housing options advice, taking into account existing provision / resources, any prevention measures which can be put in place to resolve the customers' immediate homelessness and where possible, meet the customers' needs using these.
4. If no immediate solution to their homelessness available, and the officer is satisfied that there is an immediate risk of rough sleeping, the officer will determine a plan with the customer in order to secure accommodate that night.
It may be necessary to extend this to out of hours or staff shortages determine so.
5. As a last resort, the Housing Options Officer may access PSB. There is a suggested maximum of £100 (per occasion) however professional judgement is permitted to extend this, including situations where not to do so, would cause further distress, increased risk or harm. *(EG: there might be more expensive / longer distant fare needed)*
6. Provide further advice and information to signpost to on-going services reducing risk of reoccurrence.
7. The Housing Options officer will complete the proforma, obtaining a signature from the customer and obtain approval from their senior officer to incur the costs. Record cost as and outcomes of intervention.
8. All participating councils must retain accurate & auditable records of the expenditure incurred and provide details of this upon demand by Chorley Council (lead authority).
9. All participating councils will send copies of proforma and details of expenditure incurred to the Single Homelessness Project Officer as they occur.

Remuneration

A budget of £1000 per local authority requires an invoice to be sent to budget holders, Chorley Council. This should be executed after 9 months, or when allocated funds are spent (whichever happens first) – or Local authorities signing up to scheme will invoice Chorley council for £1000 upfront.

This is a one off £1000 pot and any expenditure incurred over and above that amount will be at the individual council's discretion and will be at their own expense.

