



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper update

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To update the committee on the status and recent activity in our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the latest position of our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Connecting communities
Housing
Effective council

Which wards are impacted?

(All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the report, however the Council's funding allocation from Government for 2025/26 is set out at 3.24 & 3.25.

Completed by: Paul Sutton, Interim Head of Finance/Section 151 officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report, which is prepared for the purposes of updating Members.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Services

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. At the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on 14 November 2024 it was agreed that there will now be a standing agenda item updating the committee on our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services. This report will give an overview of the recent work and status of both teams as well as some key updates in specific areas of interest.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Please see below an overview of key updates from across the service

3.2. Rough Sleeper Initiative

- 3.3. As previously reported, SKDC's Rough Sleeper initiative is delivered via the Change 4 Lincs (C4L) team which covers four local authority areas: South Kesteven District Council, North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council

- 3.4. The team is hosted by South Kesteven District Council and was created by each district council contributing their Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.
- 3.5. The team consists of eight team members who provide an outreach service, support service and access into the private rented sector. The team is managed by the Councils Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Manager, managers from the other three districts also provide support to help shape the service.
- 3.6. Up until recently, the future funding for this initiative was looking uncertain as funding had only been confirmed to 31 March 2025.
- 3.7. However, on 18 December 2024, MHCLG announced the funding for 2025/26, confirming that the allocation will mirror that of 2024/25. This totals £646,348 which will be awarded to South Kesteven and must be used to continue to deliver this service for the four districts.
- 3.8. Work has commenced to finalise the plans to deliver this service across the four districts with the aim of moving away from the current model to a model where the team is dispersed across all districts. This would allow each district to have a dedicated team in place to complement their existing Housing Options service.
- 3.9. The following table details the C4L case numbers as at 3rd January 2025.

District	Number in temporary accommodation	Number of open support cases
South Kesteven	5	18
North Kesteven	0	12
West Lindsey	2	16
South Holland	2	19

- 3.10. The number of people in accommodation is low compared to the number of people being supported. This could be because the people we are supporting are already in accommodation and require support to maintain it, or they have refused the offer of temporary accommodation.
- 3.11. Seven people moved on from temporary accommodation in December 2024, as they were either moved to other longer-term accommodation or they were evicted from the placement provided due to their behaviour.

3.12. Annual Rough sleeper count

- 3.13. Since autumn 2010, all local authorities in England have been required to submit an annual snapshot figure to MHCLG to indicate the number of people sleeping rough in their area on a 'typical' night between 1st October and 30th November.
- 3.14. The chosen night in Lincolnshire was agreed as the 21 November 2024. There are three approaches councils can use to conduct this count which are as follows:
 - 3.14.1. Count Based Estimate - This is a full physical count of the area, after midnight on the chosen 'typical' night.
 - 3.14.2. Evidence based estimate – an estimate meeting with partner agencies is held after the chosen night to agree an intelligence-led estimated total number of people who slept rough on that 'typical' night.
 - 3.14.3. Evidence-based estimate, including a spotlight count - after midnight on the chosen 'typical' night, a smaller physical count of only hotspot areas is completed. Following the 'typical' night, an estimate meeting is held (as described above) to discuss those not seen during the hotspot count.
- 3.15. South Kesteven chose option 2, evidence-based estimate to conduct our count. The reason for this is that the Council have outreach staff out throughout the year so therefore have good knowledge of who is rough sleeping at any one time.
- 3.16. From experience, to then also conduct a physical count on the night is a huge strain on resource when the information we have is just as accurate without this count
- 3.17. This process has now been completed, with a partnership meeting being conducted on the 26 November 2024.
- 3.18. The final count for SKDC was 8 rough sleepers. This is 1 less than our count in 2023.
- 3.19. MHCLG are yet to publish the full UK figures for 2024, however previous years results (from 2010) can be viewed here: [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2023 - GOV.UK](#).

3.20. Homelessness update

3.21. The Housing Options team provide the Council's statutory homeless function. The team consists of four Housing Options Assistants, six Housing Options officers, a Senior Housing Options Officer and a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper manager.

3.22. The following table provides details of the homelessness case figures for the last three months:

	October 24	November 24	December 24
Number of active homelessness cases	301	248	252
Number of new approaches	159	170	157
Number in temporary accommodation	49	57	58
Of which – nightly paid	3	8	11
Of which – our stock	46	51	47

3.23. It is important to note that not all homelessness cases require temporary accommodation. The team work with households who are threatened with homelessness to try to prevent their homelessness, therefore alleviating the need for any temporary accommodation.

3.24. To fund Local Council's homelessness services, Central government distribute a Homelessness Prevention Grant. On 18 December 2024 the funding allocation for 2025/26 was announced. Details of all allocations can be found here: [Homelessness Prevention Grant allocations: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

3.25. The Council's funding allocation is £753,955 which is a 27% increase from last year's allocation of £592,433.

3.26. However, in addition to this increase in funding, MHCLG have introduced a new ringfence which states that 49% of the funding allocation must be spent on prevention, relief and staffing activity. The 49% within this ringfence may not be spent on temporary accommodation.

3.27. This will give the team the opportunity to develop new and innovative ways to prevent homelessness..

3.28. As shown in the above figures, the number of households in nightly paid accommodation is increasing which could create a budget pressure for the council if the demand continues to increase. This figure usually increases in the colder months when the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is activated as

the Council are required to provide temporary accommodation to all rough sleepers.

3.29. Night shelter

3.30. As detailed in the previous paragraph providing nightly paid hotel accommodation can create a budget pressure for the council. In addition, it is recognised that hotel accommodation is not always suitable, there are limited options to access food and often the hotels the Council can access are outside of the main towns and difficult for people to travel to.

3.31. So, in order to tackle this issue, SKDC working in partnership with Grantham Ark have launched a new night shelter in Grantham which opened on 19 December 2024.

3.32. At present, the Shelter consists of a 4 bed flat, with 2 beds in each room so the maximum capacity is 8 occupants. On 10 January 2025 the Council had 7 people placed in the shelter.

3.33. Individuals placed in the shelter have access to basic food provisions, and a bed in a shared room. In addition, there is a volunteer support worker on site each evening and first thing each morning to signpost individuals to further support and provisions they can access during the day.

3.34. SKDC are funding overnight staff to ensure the safety of all individuals throughout the night.

3.35. The team are currently reviewing the potential utilisation of a community hall to increase the capacity of the shelter. If this is successful, the team will explore the possibility of spreading this provision across the district. An update on the progress of this provision will be provided to the committee at the meeting on 17 March 2025.

3.36. To date this provision has worked well, especially during the most recent activation of SWEP as it has meant most individuals placed due to the cold weather have been placed in the night shelter rather than hotels.

3.37. SWEP update

3.38. Since November 2024, SWEP has been activated twice, firstly from 19 November 2024 to 24 November 2024 and then again from 31 December 2024 and is currently still running as at the time of writing this report (10 January 2025).

- 3.39. During the first activation 6 individuals were placed in hotels across South Kesteven (5 male, 1 female)
- 3.40. During the second activation, 11 individuals have been accommodated in total as at 10th January 2025 (4 females, 7 males). 10 were placed in the night shelter, but not all required the same night so maximum 8 bed spaces has been sufficient so far. 1 individual was not deemed suitable for the shelter and therefore was placed into hotel accommodation.
- 3.41. This report highlights the amazing work the team has been doing and continues to do on a daily basis to try and support some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1 This report is for noting only and ensures that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are kept updated on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper services.