What are the Government doing to tackle homelessness and sleeping rough?

The Homeless Reduction Act of 2017 and the Sleeping Rough Strategy marks the greatest change in legislation for homelessness in the last 40 years. The legislation aims to prevent people from getting homeless in the first instance (Cromarty, 2019). The government is targeting to halve rough sleeping by 2022 with complete eradication by 2027. Funds of £100 million have been allocated to tackle homelessness and sleeping rough. Subsequently in five years The National Health Service will spend 30 million in ensuring that rough sleepers encounter the support to meet both physical and mental health needs. They aim to provide an advice service and to deliver adequate information to people who are at risk of homelessness and if people do become homeless than the aim is to ensure they receive accommodation (Gov, 2017). If in jeopardy of becoming homeless local housing authorities must work with the person within 28 to 56 days to prevent it from happening and must help find accommodation within 56 days. There must also be a decrease in the amount of homelessness amongst 16-19 year olds that have left care. There must be collaborative working with charities to get rough sleepers off the streets and making sure people gain access to all support they are entitled to (Cromarty, 2019).

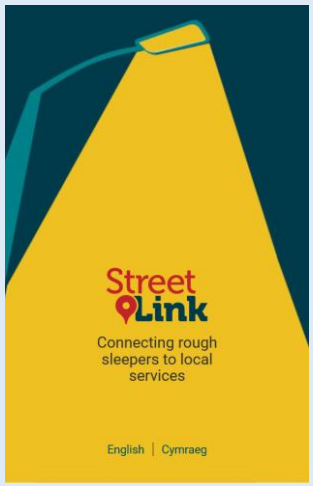

Image 3

Health & wellbeing The Samaritans - 116 123

Financial advice The Money Advice Service - 0800 138 7777

Domestic abuse National Domestic Violence Helpline - 0800 2000 24

Men's Advice Line - 0808 801 0327

Housing advice

Shelter - 0808 800 4444

UNDERSTANDING AND HELPING HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPERS

Image 1

What is Homeless and rough sleepers?

Moore and Scourfield States that homelessness is defined as not having anywhere to sleep and being socially disconnected from society. Sleeping rough refers to people who sleep out in the open air, for example the streets, door ways, bus shelters, parks or buildings (Moore and Scourfield, 2002). People who sleep in areas that are not constructed for habitation (Shelter Cymru, 2017). There are many factors that can contribute to homelessness and sleeping rough these include a break up in relationship, financial problems, the person may have lost or currently changing work, struggling with mental health, addiction, death of a family member (Housing rights, 2019).

Increase of rough sleepers in England

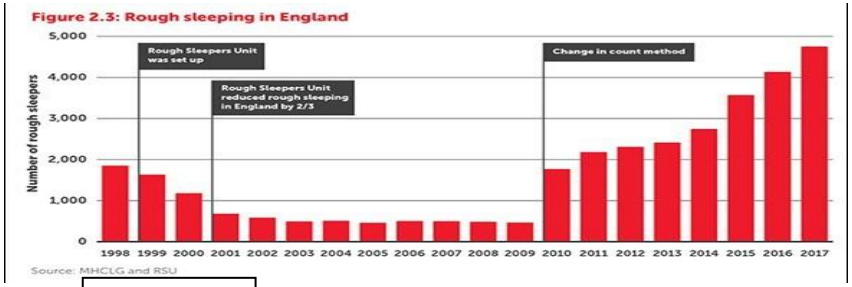

Image 2

Theories behind homelessness and rough sleepers

Homelessness can arguably be considered by referring to the ideas put forward by theorists including Maslow (1947), Karl Marx and Durkheim. Maslow identified a hierarchy of need which comprises of a five-tiered model of human needs (Henwood et al., 2014). Often depicted in a pyramid the needs are psychological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self- actualisation. Progress to the top of the pyramid can only be achieved if the needs in the preceding tiers have been met (Henwood et al., 2014). If a person is homeless and does not have their psychological needs being met in terms of food, shelter, warmth and security then they face difficulties in improving the quality of their life and their health and wellbeing. This arguably explains the importance of interventions such as the bus project to support people who are homeless so that they can move up the pyramid of needs (Henwood et al., 2014).

The German philosopher Karl Mark suggested that society faces many challenges which are mainly due to the result of individuals competing for limited resources (Dillon, 2014). When it comes to the conflict theory in homelessness capitalism is according to Marx, the key cause and explanation for homelessness (Frances, 2018).Conflict theory suggests that homelessness which is a social issue, is as a result of an individual being responsible for their own situation, 'the undeserving poor' (Somerville, 2013). Durkheim suggested that the way to elevate the well-being of society was to have equality in society. Sociological studies on poverty have historically focused on social structures to explain poverty (Somerville, 2013).

Does it affect Mental Health?

According to the charity Mental Health Foundation (MHF) it is a fundamental fact that 'single homeless people are more likely to have mental health problems compared to the general population' (MHF, 2015). Karl Mark blames capitalism as the cause of homelessness in society (MHF, 2015). Homelessness is evidently linked to mental health and in addition, mental health can lead to homelessness. According to the Mental Health Foundation homeless people are more likely to suffer from mental health issues. Research shows that poor housing or homelessness are contributing factors towards a person developing problems relating to mental health. It could also increase the severity of an existing mental health illness. Consequently, this will have a negative effect on the chances of the recovery for the individual (Shelter2018). For a positive outcome to be achieved a homeless person must have an opportunity to be rehoused, it will improve their chances of gaining and remaining in employment which will have a positive effect on their physical health that can contribute to preserving relationships. Research shows that homeless individuals, in comparison to the population in general, have a significantly increased chance of suffering with mental health challenges. Some 32% homeless individuals in 2015 indicated that they suffered with issues relating to mental health and depression (Shelter 2018).

What is available for homelessness

There are many ways of helping rough sleepers, however 80% of rough sleepers are not aware of what is available for them as they are socially excluded from society and suffer from loneliness (Cromarty, 2019). Rough sleepers are accounted to be the most vulnerable people in society. In additional the more time an individual is sleeping rough the increase chance of them having physical and mental health problems and can lead to addiction to alcohol or drugs (Cromarty et al, 2019). As Homeless and people sleeping rough think that they are not eligible to receive benefits however they can receive Universal Credit (UN)even if they do not have a bank account (Cromarty et al., 2019).

A homeless charity St Mungo announced that 80 % of people that came to them wanted to aim to get work. Some find it challenging to maintain employment due to their needs for instance mental health issues or additional needs. However, the homeless groups or shelters have advice on training, employment and other prospects (Cromarty et al., 2019). Rough sleepers are allowed to vote even though they have no fixed address (Cromarty et al., 2019). Street link is a new programme which helps rough sleepers to get off the streets. By using the street link website, it will send an alert to outreach services or local authorities can come out to the person and help then connect to support (Streetlink, ND). Outreach team can make a referral for 'no second night out' (NSNO, ND). The outreach team also arrange with the mental health team for the person to have an assessment (NSNO, ND). Churches, volunteers, and organisations working in United Kingdom to supply food for the homeless. The food can vary from hot meals known as 'soup kitchen' to a meal package and a referral to the food banks. There are approximately over 2000 food banks around the United Kingdom (Cromarty et al, 2019). Salvation Army, YMCA and Wallich Haggard offer access to a day centre accommodation in a hostel and a Bus project. The Bus project operates every night of the year providing the rough sleepers with hot drinks, sandwiches and facilities to sleep on the bus.

One rough sleeper Danny said this: (The Salvation Army, 2019).

"Going to the bus project every night, and talking To the friendly Salvation Army team who work there, helped him see that life could be different. The bus project kept me alive"

Rationale

The MHRA (no date) maintain that 'a well written and clearly designed leaflet can maximise the number of people who can use the information'. In view of this I endeavoured to produce a good quality leaflet that was well researched and designed to be clear and easy to read. Information design as indicated by MHRA is essential in making complex information more accessible and this was the aim. In order to achieve this a clear and readable font was used. Headings were used and in order for them to stand out a larger font in bold was used. The impact of the headings helped to define the different sections within the leaflet (MHRA, ND). The colour blue was chosen because according to Psychology of Colour it is calming colour that is often associated with the sky and sea. It also evokes a sense of trust and security (Ferguson, 2017). It was also important not to have too many colours which may have made the leaflet appear too busy. To have impact and to get facts and figures about homelessness across to the audience it was decided that an effective visual would be a graph which is in line with Slutsky (2014). The Image of the bus was selected as it provides the reader with a positive strategy in place for people sleeping rough. This leaflet is aimed at volunteers and to educate the reader about homelessness and ways to help them.

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Picture
referance

Image 1

The Salvation Army (2019). *On the bus | The Salvation Army*. [online] Salvationarmy.org.uk. Available at: https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/bus [Accessed 22 Nov. 2019].

Image 2

MHCLG and RSU (2017). *Chapter 2: Public policy and homelessness | The Plan To End Homelessness | Crisis | Together we will end homelessness*. [online] Crisis. Available at: https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending- homelessness/the-plan-to-end-homelessness-full-version/background/chapter-2-public-policy-and- homelessness/ [Accessed 17 Nov. 2019].

Image 3

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