

Kerslake Commission evidence submission

Sussex Homeless Support

1. Thinking about the response to rough sleeping during the pandemic, which measures, policies, practices or joint working do you think worked well and why?

From a frontline perspective the "everyone in" announcement was good it was a driving force for council's to take advantage of empty hotels, this was made possible by the funds coming from central government and was welcomed by everyone working within Homeless/Rough Sleeper network. It would be fair to say everyone worked at this goal along with moving people from multiple occupancy hostels it provided a safe(as) solution.

2. In contrast, which measures, policies, practices or joint working do you think have not worked well and why?

The downfall was the way support arrived, in the first week of lockdown all the day centres and even soup runs closed, local government closed them on advice, but the support was not ready in the hotels, people had nothing, hundreds were still left on streets or in dangerous locations, the food deliveries were a shambles, many had no bedding, no way of cooking, we took police advice and support and upped our street kitchen to 8 servings a week in the open air. Over the months the service to hotels etc got better, but in the first 2 months it was bad. The solution would have been to support frontline services on the streets, by helping them run safer, we now know open air was the safest place to be. We never received a penny of the Government or Local Government Funding.

3. Please describe the specific challenges, and opportunities, in the next phase of the Everyone In programme and helping people to move on from hotel accommodation.

All the figures coming back are bad, people in rent arrears, evictions pending, businesses closing, domestic violence off the scale, teenagers having severe mental health issues, family breakdowns and these create a perfect storm. There will be many more people hitting the street, we need to cut the flow off first night, a homeless centre in every city, we need this in Brighton so everyone has a place to go, made covid safe, security in place, no more wandering the streets in search of help, everyone in community will signpost and community will run it with professional support.

4. And finally, what do you think needs to be put in place to embed the good work that developed

No question small frontline charities like ours stepped up, we took risks, but we managed those risks well, we spent thousands of our funds on PPE, we did not wait for the funds like government backed organisations did, we

during the pandemic, or improve upon it?

provided full PPE to those in the streets and in hotels, we also provided to other frontline services, we will be providing our own Trustees Report showing just how volunteers really stepped up and this should be a lesson for government in how the answer to homelessness may well be in the community not the big money soaking services.