**SOUTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP**

**ROUGH SLEEPING CHARTER**

**Vision**

To End Rough Sleeping within:

* Boston Borough
* East Lindsey District
* South Holland District

The Council’s call on the residents, healthcare and other public sector services, charities, faith groups, businesses, institutions and other organisations to adopt the values of this charter; and to implement it through improved working practices, specific pledges and by working together.

**Values**

While rough sleeping remains, this charter provides guiding principles concerning the rights of people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. We believe that everyone who is rough sleeping should have a right to:

* A safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life
* Safety from violence, abuse, theft and discrimination, and the full protection of the law
* Respect and a good standard of service everywhere
* Equality of access to information and services
* Equality of opportunity to employment, training, volunteering, leisure and creative activities

We believe that those who work with people who are rough sleeping have a collective responsibility to ensure that:

* Good communication, coordination and a consistent approach is delivered across all services
* People with experience of rough sleeping have a voice and involvement in determining the solutions to their own issues, of sourcing accommodation and any other support they may require in wider society

South East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP) support the Governments ambition to end rough sleeping. Homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring. This ambition is supported through the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2022-27.

**Principles:**

Our approach is integral to this strategy; its principles are aligned to this approach:

We see potential and work with strengths. To overcome the effects of rough sleeping, we want to create environments for people to thrive. This means recognising the assets that people who are or at risk of rough sleeping have and start with these strengths. It also means thinking and planning about more than just housing. This diverse and person-centred approach towards providing support is a principle of this strategy. It involves building self-expression, increased wellbeing, greater social inclusion and positive relationships in order to create a much deeper and more effective support structure. This includes increasing access to mental and physical health services, addiction services, sports and leisure opportunities, alongside employment, education and training.

Services are aimed at persons who are or at risk of rough sleeping, including those in complex situations, to give them access to effective support so that everyone can get the type of help they need to prevent homelessness. Through working with the strengths of each individual we can increase the collective strengths of the district and borough.

We listen, learn and respond through co-production. We value the experiences of people who use our services, or have been rough sleeping, or who are at risk of rough sleeping. The more complex a person’s situation, the greater the need for co-production to find innovative, joined-up and peer-led solutions. We are committed to increasing involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of our services with people who might have experienced or been at risk of rough sleeping.

We need to work together as an inclusive partnership. We need to collaborate with the voluntary sector, the District, Borough and County Council, the police, health, housing providers, community and faith groups, businesses, education facilities and concerned citizens. This allows people to experience genuinely joined-up services, with strong communication about their goals and potential, rather than a disjointed system.

It’s all about people.

* We work with people, not labels
* We focus on what really matters, rather than just patching problems, and take the time to consider underlying causes and experiences rather than make assumptions.
* We work ‘with’ people, not ‘to’ them; this creates change and enables people and families to flourish.

**Aims:**

The charter will aim to make:

1. Rough Sleeping a rare occurrence: increasing prevention and early intervention.

2. Rough Sleeping as brief as possible: increasing and improving temporary and supported accommodation so it becomes a positive experience.

3. Experience of rough sleeping a one-off occurrence.

Organisations across Boston borough, East Lindsey and South Holland all have a contribution to make and a role to play towards these aims to reduce rough sleeping. Our work with other Districts and Borough Councils; private, public and voluntary organisations and the County Council will be mutually supporting and working towards a shared vision with a common approach.

**AIM 1**: **Making Rough Sleeping a rare occurrence: increasing prevention and early intervention**

We can increase prevention by:

* Involving people who have had experiences of rough sleeping to contribute in designing services to make sure they are accessible.
* Ensure relevant information is available from venues where rough sleepers go and these venues know how to refer people into our service.
* Getting services across all sectors to work better together, not as individual organisations
* Making sure people are not discharged from one service, for example prisons, mental-health services or hospitals, directly onto the street
* Making sure we are good corporate parents to care leavers, helping them access the correct services and pathways so they do not become another statistic of rough sleeping when they leave care.
* Encouraging all organisations to recognise and respond to the additional vulnerabilities
* Working with the private-rented sector and social landlords to establish new approaches to reduce evictions
* Ensuring that there is easy access to specialist advice where there is a risk of people rough sleeping, and that organisations can support people who arrive at a point of crisis or refer to the appropriate services.
* To work with relevant organisations to support ex-service personnel who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Ultimately, to prevent people from rough sleeping we need to address inequalities that may exist in accessing employment, education, training, housing and in particular health services. We need services to be more aware of people who are or at risk of rough sleeping and what they can do to work together to prevent it.

The Partnership will support people to maintain their home by:

* Creating links to local services; offering opportunities to improve physical and mental health, education, leisure and cultural activities; and providing access to training, volunteering and employment.
* Providing advice and information to support people to access services that could prevent them from rough sleeping.
* Raising awareness about realistic housing options and rough sleeping throughout the district and borough.
* Identifying earlier where people might be at risk of rough sleeping.
* Raising awareness with front-line staff across public services to recognise at-risk people to then reduce the likelihood of people rough sleeping, and when needed, referring them for support.
* Working across services and organisations to proactively prevent and reduce rough sleeping.
* Engaging with private-rented sector and social landlords and developing new approaches that reduce the number of people rough sleeping.
* Bringing in other support services that might be needed where antisocial behaviour could put someone at risk of rough sleeping, using a restorative approach to resolve the situation.
* Raising awareness of the potential impact of short custodial sentences in causing the loss of a stable home and promoting the use of diversion methods during court proceedings in such circumstances, ensuring other support is linked into this.
* Reducing recurring rough sleeping, identifying influencing factors such as mental health, learning disability, substance misuse, domestic abuse, entrenched poverty, and connecting people to local services, education, cultural and leisure activities, training, volunteering and employment opportunities.
* Ensuring people with no fixed abode who are to be discharged from hospital, in-patient mental-health services, or drug and alcohol detox treatment are referred to the Council as early as possible.

Support people to move in a managed way:

* Creating opportunities for accessing housing of the right kind and quality
* Enabling people to move and feel at home in their new home, through working with their strengths and interests.
* Supporting people to reconnect to where they have a local connection if safe to do so in accordance with the Councils reconnection policy.

**AIM 2: Making rough sleeping as brief as possible: improving temporary and supported accommodation so it becomes a positive experience**

We know how long it can take to move on from temporary accommodation, and the difficulties of finding suitable, affordable accommodation within the district and borough. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to find affordable homes in the private-rented sector. Increasingly, people verified as rough sleeping can be in B&B’s long term which is not conducive to their needs, especially those with mental health conditions.

Staff working in supported accommodation schemes have stated there is an increasing demand for these services and an increase in the complexity of the people they are working with. In particular, more young people and women accessing support services and those with no local connection. Better links into wider support services and raising awareness of what is required by those being housed in supported accommodation and those who are rough sleeping. People who currently live in unsupported temporary accommodation (B&Bs) can face a very confusing and alien living conditions, as there are no cooking facilities and they are only provided with breakfast, if this is provided. This can impact significantly on a person’s financial position, their mental health and wellbeing.

The Partnership will make the experience of temporary and supported accommodation as positive as possible by:

* Reducing inequalities and disruptions to accessing physical and mental-health services, education, advice, community resources or other support that might be needed for people living in temporary and support accommodation inside and outside the district. Ensuring that people in temporary and supported accommodation participate fully in their community and that they aren’t isolated or disadvantaged through being placed in temporary or supported accommodation.
* Focusing on the strengths and interests of people living in temporary and supported accommodation, connecting them to the education, training, volunteering, housing, cultural, leisure and employment opportunities within the district.
* Understanding the current demand and unmet need for supported accommodation to influence the future commissioning of services, and improving access to supported accommodation.
* Minimising the need for temporary accommodation over time by preventing people from rough sleeping.
* Working with single people and couples who have lived in temporary and supported accommodation, to design, commission and deliver future services, and ensure they are accessible.

**AIM 3: Making the experience of rough sleeping a one-off occurrence: increasing access to settled homes**

Feedback from partner organisations, our staff and clients will highlight what support is required following moving out of temporary or supported accommodation to prevent repeat homelessness. We need to use this feedback to develop and improve our services.

This could include involving more people who have been through a similar experience, to support people through this process.

Housing options for people on low incomes, or in receipt of welfare benefits after moving out of temporary accommodation, are becoming limited and we need to try and overcome this barrier.

Average rents of private-rented accommodation in the district and borough have increased over the past few years, and even the HMO’s (homes of multiple occupation) are becoming unaffordable to those on benefits and having to rely on the Local Housing Allowance rate, which has not gone up in line with the rental market.

The Councils Housing Allocation schemes have been updated to accept some people who have been verified as rough sleeping onto the housing register. Thus, giving them an opportunity to apply for and gain affordable homes. However, demand still outweighs availability; therefore, the private rented sector needs to be more affordable for those on low incomes. Consideration will need to be given to other types of housing that could be developed.

The Partnership will reduce recurring rough sleeping, aiming to make any experience of rough sleeping a singular experience by:

* Ensuring that people can access affordable, good-quality homes in the right places in the private-rented sector, working with private and social landlords to develop different options
* The councils have already reviewed the impact of the Allocation Scheme on people who are at risk of rough sleeping including single people who may face barriers to accessing social housing and adjusting their approach to best meet this demand.
* Connecting people to local services, physical and mental-health services, education, cultural and leisure activities, training, volunteering and employment opportunities.
* Enabling people to move and feel at home in their new home by addressing any basic needs and working with their strengths and interests.
* Offering people who have experienced long-term repeated rough sleeping access to treatment, care or support in their local community and refer them into the Neighbourhood Teams and Team around the Adult Services. Ensuring this support is delivered in a flexible and person-centred way to help reduce the risk of another period of rough sleeping.
* Ensuring that people have access to ongoing support when they move on to their own tenancies, through appropriate resettlement services, day centre provision or other support to ensure that they don’t end up rough sleeping again.
* Understanding more about the demand for housing for people who are or at risk of rough sleeping, and working with landlords, accommodation providers and housing developers to review what the demand is and what the gaps are to shape our building profile.
* Involving people who have experienced rough sleeping to identify barriers and designing future services and approaches to support resettlement and connect people to their new communities.

We require all the local services, physical and mental-health services, education, cultural and leisure activities, training, volunteering and employment facilities and enforcement to make a pledge to enable us to end rough sleeping.

**Legal Duties:**

We will adhere to legislation and statutory guidance:

* Housing Act 1996 as amended by Homelessness Act 2002
* Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
* Homelessness Code of Guidance

**Taking Action**

Everyone has a role to play in improving outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

If you wish to adopt our Charter and demonstrate your commitment to ending rough sleeping, you can do so by completing and returning the below form to either

* Boston Borough Council – [RSI@boston.gov.uk](mailto:RSI@boston.gov.uk) – 01205 314200
* East Lindsey District Council – [RSI@e-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:RSI@e-lindsey.gov.uk) – 01507 601111
* South Holland District Council – [change4lincs@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:change4lincs@southkesteven.gov.uk) – 0800 121 4430

Thank you to all the organisations and companies who have already pledged their support

**SOUTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP**

**ROUGH SLEEPING CHARTER**

*Insert organisation name or individuals name if not an organisation* commit to support the South East Lincolnshire Councils partnership to reduce and prevent rough sleeping.

Our organisation can do this through:

Report the siting of a rough sleeper

Refer people who are at risk of sleeping rough

Provide access to support for substance misuse

Provide mental health support

Provide accommodation

Provide advice and support

Provide a warm and safe space

Provide access to a shower, toilet and laundry facilities

Provide access to a food bank and/or clothing

Provide debt and welfare advice

Work in partnership by attending multi-agency case conferences

Display the Homelessness Charter

Other – please state:

I can support the following Councils with my pledge/s:

Boston Borough Council - East Lindsey District Council - South Holland District Council

**Name -**

**Organisation -**

**Telephone -**

**Email -**