

MARCH PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

As signs of spring begin to appear, here's a round-up of news, views and tales of hope from members of the Homelessness Partnership BCP – a group of more than 40 local organisations that are committed to 'ending homelessness in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole by ensuring that everyone has a safe place to live that they can call home'.



Welcome to the March edition of the Homelessness Partnership BCP's newsletter. Across BCP we're all working to prevent, reduce and ultimately end homelessness, ensuring that when it can't be prevented it is rare, brief and non-recurring. This element of our co-produced homelessness strategy, in line with emerging national work, may seem a challenging and ambitious vision, but we need to be bold, innovative and collaborative. We must work to end, and not simply manage, homelessness.



The purpose of our newsletters is to shine a light on the remarkable work that is taking place across Partnership, to help people in an individual and tangible way and to achieve our overarching goals. It is fantastic that there is so much variety, goodwill and desire to help. Hopefully, these stories illustrate the progress that is being achieved.

At a time when everyone is busy, capacity is challenging and economic times are tough, it is heartening to know that those affected by homelessness are the focus of so many talented, passionate and determined teams, services and organisations. Thank you for all that you do.

Fraser Nicholson, Homelessness Partnerships Coordinator, BCP Council

Chewton Glen raises thousands to help end homelessness

The Homelessness Partnership BCP has received a fantastic donation of £4,525 from Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa in New Milton.

The five-star resort named the Partnership as one of its charities of the year for 2022. Money was raised via guest donations, spa members' collections during a Christmas event and staff raffles during seasonal events.

Last month, PA to Executive Director Kathleen Price and General Manager Clive McNish presented the funds raised to Chair of the Partnership Forum, Alistair Doxat-Purser.

Chewton Glen's Clive McNish (pictured, left) said: *"It is reassuring to know that the Partnership is focused on those facing the challenges brought about by homelessness in the BCP area, which like many other towns and cities are being affected by an unprecedented rise in the cost of living."*

"The provision of warmth, food and shelter should constitute a basic standard of living that we can all enjoy, without concern, and we applaud the efforts made by the Homelessness Partnership BCP in making comfortable living more accessible for those who need it most."

The Partnership's Alistair Doxat-Purser (pictured, right) extended his thanks to the team at Chewton Glen, adding: *"Even in the midst of enormous economic challenges, businesses such as Chewton Glen are showing such a commitment and desire to play their part in bringing an end to the trauma of rough sleeping and all forms of homelessness. This support will help more people to get off the street and find a safe, secure and warm home."*



New initiatives help to reduce numbers sleeping rough across BCP

New figures highlighting the number of people sleeping rough in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole have reaffirmed that partnership working across the conurbation is having a positive effect on reducing homelessness.

While the government's Rough Sleeping Snapshot in England for Autumn 2022 found 64 people sleeping rough in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole in November, a further bi-monthly count carried out by local street outreach teams identified a substantially lower figure of 20 people in February 2023.

The indication of a reduction is reflective of the Homelessness Partnership BCP's commitment to ending rough sleeping across the area, with multiple initiatives successfully delivering new accommodation backed by wrap-around care to enable people to live independent, fulfilled lives.

The activation of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) in December and January further helped to reduce the number of people rough sleeping. Cllr Hazel Allen, Lead Member for Homelessness, said: *"SWEP activations helped to bring more than 100 people into safe accommodation. Significantly, 53% of all people helped during sub-zero temperatures have remained in accommodation after SWEP was deactivated. This is a fantastic result."*

Two new Rough Sleeping Initiative-funded services have provided 14 additional places in safe accommodation for people who have been rough sleeping. The ongoing roll-out of the government's Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) is providing around 60 homes in the BCP area for people with a history of rough sleeping.

Andrew Teale, Manager of the BCP Outreach Team at St Mungo's, said: *"Since the November count, we have had an extremely cold winter and have helped a large number of people into emergency accommodation as part of our SWEP response."*

"While the current number of people rough sleeping in BCP is less than half of what it was in November, the focus now needs to be on supporting them into longer-term accommodation so they can move away from homelessness for good."



HealthBus partners with Wessex Academic Health Science Network

The HealthBus Trust is delighted to announce that it is partnering with Wessex Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) to analyse the value of its service to individuals and society.

Dr Lindsay Welch, Programme Manager for Health Inequalities at Wessex AHSN, is helping the HealthBus Trust team to assess, monitor and measure the impact that specialist healthcare can offer.

The Trust is committed to reducing health inequalities and seeks to offer the best service for those who are experiencing homelessness. HealthBus Head of Fundraising and Marketing, Deano Pickering, said: *"Such comprehensive academic research and evaluation will enable further development while informing policy and practice for specialist healthcare both locally and nationally. We're excited about this new partnership, so watch this space!"*

The HealthBus provides accessible healthcare to people who are experiencing homelessness in Bournemouth and surrounding areas.

Go to www.healthbus.co.uk to find out more.



L-R: Dr Lindsay Welch, Programme Manager Health Inequalities Wessex AHSN, Dr Maggie Kirk, Medical Director of HealthBus Trust and Kate Hibbitt, Operations Director at HealthBus Trust

Helping Homeless Veterans UK is our Partnership Hero of the Month

Helping Homeless Veterans UK (HHVUK) has been named as the Homelessness Partnership BCP's 'Hero of the Month' for March.

The charity, founded in 2019, has helped 350 veterans in just three-and-a-half years, with 289 settled into permanent housing. Every veteran accommodated from day one remains housed.

HHVUK was set up by Army veteran David Wood and charity trustees Neil Hague and Stephen Young. David experienced homelessness himself after leaving the Armed Forces in 1997. Now, the charity is renovating a building above the Royal British Legion Social Club in Winton, Bournemouth that will provide state-of-the-art, move-on accommodation for six homeless veterans. The facility is due to be opened on 25 March by Tobias Ellwood MP, Johnny Mercer MP and the Mayor of Bournemouth.

David said the new accommodation will give homeless veterans their dignity back: *"As a veteran you're a proud person who believes in hygiene. For veterans who have experienced homelessness and then come to a place like this, there's nothing better for their mental health than getting into a hot shower in the privacy of their own room and having clean clothes to put on. That's why every room is en-suite, double-glazed and insulated."*

Visit www.hhvuk.org to find out more. Read the interview here: <https://tinyurl.com/2b5wzm27>



Collaborative working offers pathways out of homelessness

A Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT), which strives to resolve the most challenging situations of homelessness in the BCP area, has successfully helped 92 people into safe accommodation, including individuals who were provided with support during SWEP activations.

Officially launched in July 2022, the team first started working on an informal basis at the start of the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020, when the Government launched its 'Everyone In' initiative – an unprecedented step that asked local authorities to move anyone sleeping rough into accommodation.

The approach galvanised disparate teams into working closely, and when Covid restrictions ended, no-one working to help people experiencing homelessness wanted the new, close working relationship to end. The collaborative approach had proved to be a success, especially with people who had been sleeping rough for a long time.

The MDT's person-centred, wrap-around support takes into consideration individuals' physical and mental health, as well as their emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing. It addresses the multifarious and often complex needs of clients who are homeless, providing a service that is inclusive, understanding and compassionate. It is delivered by a team that seeks to develop trust with anyone who attends or has contact with the service.



Money-saving booklet helps to tackle the cost-of-living crisis

A comprehensive new Energy & Money Saving Booklet is helping struggling households to manage their finances as the cost-of-living crisis bites.

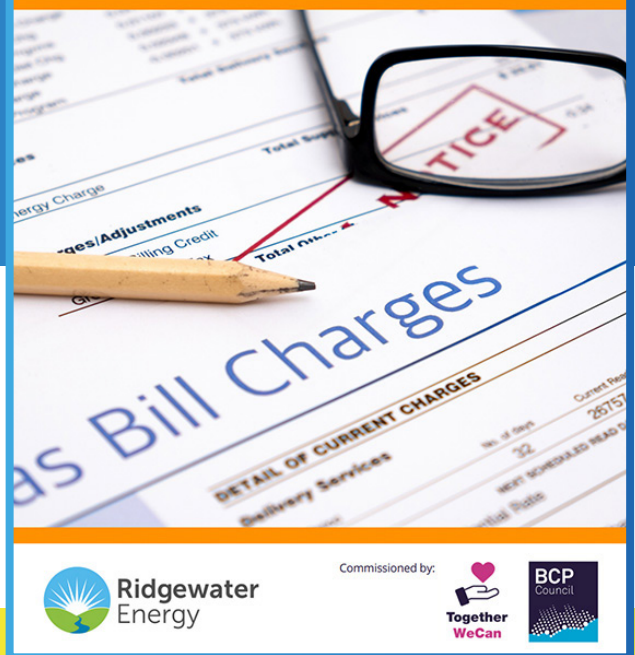
Around 5,000 copies of the booklet, produced in partnership with Ridgewater Energy and commissioned by BCP Council, have been distributed to services in the area.

It helps readers to get to grips with a host of rising costs that are ramping up the risk of households running into rent arrears, covering topics such as food shopping, low-cost cooking, using water wisely, budgeting and ensuring that boilers and central heating systems are running efficiently.

There's even a handy list of apps and websites that offer everything from discount codes at retailers to free furniture, clothes and gadgets – and a guide to services that offer support to people facing financial crisis.

A digital version of the booklet can be accessed online here: <https://tinyurl.com/vszzra9n>

Energy & Money Saving Booklet



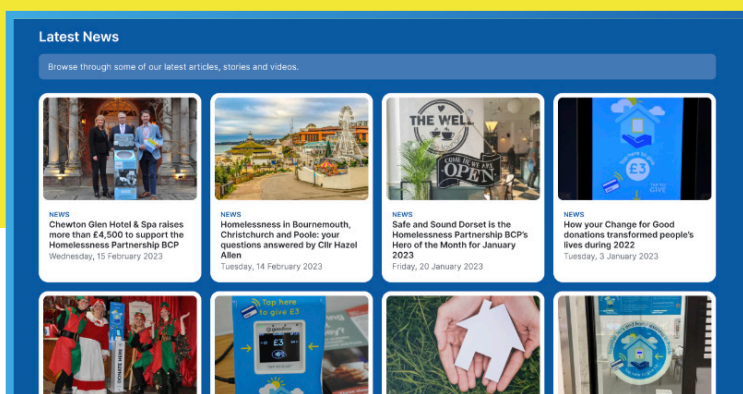
Homelessness questions answered by Cllr Hazel Allen

What are the primary causes of homelessness in the BCP area? What should the public do if they're asked for money by a person on the street? Why do some people who are helped into safe accommodation fall back into rough sleeping?

Homelessness is a complex issue and people understandably have concerns when they see someone sleeping rough. We are extremely grateful to Cllr Hazel Allen, Lead Member for Homelessness, who has shared her invaluable expertise in a special Q&A that's now live on the Homelessness Partnership BCP's website.

The Q&A aims to dispel misconceptions about homelessness, and draws a clear distinction between rough sleeping and begging, advising locals and visitors how they can help those in need, such as by using Change for Good contactless giving points across the conurbation.

To read the Q&A with Cllr Allen, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8mbpnn>



Rapid action prevents evicted family from falling into homelessness

REAL IMPACT STORY

When a family renting privately faces homelessness as a result of eviction, local authority support services pull out all the stops to ensure those at risk keep a roof over their heads.

In the latest of our series of 'Real Impact Stories', we are looking at how housing teams at BCP Council successfully helped a family served with a Section 21 notice. In addition to the unpreventable eviction, concerns were raised about the mother's mental health and ability to safeguard her autistic son, who was missing education and engaging in substance misuse.

Thanks to rapid intervention by BCP Council, the mother was provided with support to make an application to the housing register, as well as managing finances and identifying barriers to securing an alternative privately rented home.

Demonstrating services' commitment to ongoing care, the family was provided with assistance to improve the relationship between mother and son, while Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) supported the son to tackle issues including substance misuse and anxiety.

"This was a quick intervention and the mother was successful with her enquiry into alternative privately rented accommodation with her father as guarantor. She was, however, concerned the property was slightly higher than she could afford. We liaised with the landlord for a 12-month tenancy at a reduced rent, as long as we provided advanced rent and deposit with a landlord incentive, which was agreed."

Karen Gledhill, Senior Housing Options Officer
BCP Council



To find out more, please visit the Homelessness Partnership BCP website at <https://homelessnesspartnershipbcp.org>
If you have a story for our next newsletter, please email Marc Rosenberg at marcrosenberg@bcha.org.uk