



THE SOURCE

The Source Academy Safeguarding Newsletter

December 2017

Homelessness

Although there are no up to date figures of the number of homeless people in Sheffield or surrounding areas, the BBC reported in 2016 that there were 250,000 people affected by homelessness in the UK and it is thought that the figure is higher in 2017 and is increasing.

Misconceptions about homeless people

- They are uneducated or have low ability
- They are all addicted to alcohol and / or drugs or have mental health issues
- Only those sleeping on the streets and in shelters are homeless
- All homeless people are beggars
- Those that have run away from home have done so for unimportant reasons
- That all homeless people are there for the basically the same reason
- That people choose to be homeless or it is as a result of poor choices
- That they are all criminals

Facts about homelessness in the UK

Being homeless means not having a permanent home. People classed as homeless are those living in temporary accommodation, staying with friends or family, staying in shelters, sleeping in their cars and sleeping on the streets (rough sleeping). There has been an increase in rough sleeping in the UK. London and cities in the South East have the largest number, and the Yorkshire region has the lowest number (2016).

The reasons for homelessness can be complex and might be as a result of one or several events. It is reported, however, that the main reason for homelessness in the UK is the breakdown of relationships, with family and friends no longer being able to provide support. Changes in circumstances such as a bereavement, losing a job, no longer affording to pay rent or mortgage, or developing mental health issues can be a direct or indirect cause of homelessness. It's important to remember that people in work are also affected by homelessness with financial instability, the lack of affordable housing and changes to housing and other benefits.

Why we should be concerned

There are long term costs to homelessness in communities, both financially and socially. Homeless Link reports that:

- 77% chance that a homeless person could sleep rough
- 53% chance that a homeless person could be involved in street drinking
- 32% chance that a homeless person could beg
- 10% chance that a homeless person could be involved in prostitution
- the average cost of an A&E visit is £147; 4 out of 10 experiencing homelessness have used A&E in last six month
- £1,668 is the average cost per arrest; 7 out of 10 homeless ex-offenders are reconvicted within one year
- £26, 000 is the estimated average cost of a homeless person each year to public purse
- £1 billion is the estimated annual cost of homelessness

There are 70,000 homeless children in the UK, many living in temporary accommodation, and as 6 in 100 homeless people are in paid employment, it's likely that some of our apprentices, learners, clients or colleagues are, or could be, homeless or affected by homelessness. They might not be sleeping rough or in shelters but could be "sofa surfing", staying with family or friends for short periods of times, sometimes days at a time. This causes instability and is linked to physical and mental health issues and can impact their employment opportunities, their relationships and their financial security. People in these situations are vulnerable and need safeguarding.

The following organisations can help:

- Local councils (housing teams)
- Shelter
- Centrepoint
- Crisis
- Roundabout (Sheffield)
- Archer Project (Sheffield)
- Light House Homes (Rotherham)

If you have any concerns about a learner, client or a colleague please follow the safeguarding reporting procedure found on the I drive / Safeguarding and speak to the Safeguarding Officers:

- **Andy Womble on 0114 263 5638 / 075843981447**
- **Helen Lee on 0114 263 5619 / 078278552504**