

## Details of application

Title of the project: **Havering Rough sleeper initiative**  
**( operation Pearl )**

## Contact Information

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## Summary of Application

The London Borough of Havering is a Historic Market town. The borough is 44 square miles and is an affluent area. The town centre has a number of, thriving shopping centers, fueling a busy day time economy. The Town also has a number of restaurants, bars, night clubs and leisure facilities supporting an even busier night time economy. There are good transport links into the town centre which is a designated no drinking zone. With such a busy day and night time economy and an affluent population the Town center Hub supports begging.

Police through partner agencies Identified Rough sleepers, street drinkers and beggars were contributing to Anti Social Behavior within the Town Centre. These individuals openly begged, sometimes aggressively. They drank alcohol openly within the No drinking zone. They squabbled amongst themselves for the most lucrative begging locations and they would urinate and defecate within that location, within sight of the public. The easy access to money through begging drove and enabled their anti social behavior.

Once they had obtained sufficient funds through begging they would then purchase drink and drugs which they consumed making their behavior worse.

In cold weather they rode the bus network while drunk, sometimes they would urinate themselves, leading to busses being taken out of service. The rough sleepers had entrenched themselves within the day and night time economy and were seen as part of the fixtures and fittings for over 10 years. Their behavior, caused members of the public, business and workers harassment alarm and distress and raised commuters perception of crime within the area ( Broken Windows effect )

Havering's response to dealing with this problem was to launch Op PEARL, A partnership involving multi agency stakeholders and the third sector. The initiative was implemented to;

support, direct encourage the rough sleepers to change their behavior if they refused then enforcement action would be taken. This was a step change from simple blunt enforcement action. The scheme assigned a dedicated liaison officer to each rough sleeper to act as a support worker guiding them towards recognized pathways of recovery.

The scheme has brought together a number of organizations and has established a referral process for any new rough sleeper identified. It has brought about the introduction of a night shelter assessment hub , supported housing scheme and coordinated partnership working. 61 rough sleepers have been referred through the project since its conception

## How we looked at the Problem

### Scanning:

After the problem was identified to police by partner agencies ie British Transport Police (BTP), CCTV, Street Pastors. Initial research was conducted using the Police custody, crimint, cris and Cad systems. We also asked for data from the local authority and the Third sector. We were able to obtain details of individuals these agencies had encountered, but could show little in the way of interventions or crime statistics. There was a distinct lack of data from all of the IT systems we would normally use to identify a problem of ASB. This meant it was impossible to set a base line from data held on police or partnership IT systems.

In an attempt to measure the impact of this behavior on the community the team developed a communication strategy to engage with the local community. Surveys where conducted within the bus hub, these were taken from bus drivers, commuter's, shopkeepers, and local night clubs. All expressed concerns towards the ASB involving the rough sleepers.

Bus drivers gave an example of a rough sleeper falling asleep on the top deck of a bus urinating himself and the urine dripped down through the floor onto the driver.

CCTV was being directed onto the Rough sleepers to ensure they didn't become the victim of an assault. The lack of action by Capable guardians was adding to crime statistics.

Nightclubs stated rough sleepers would sit in fire exits causing a hazard

The team spoke to local police units such as Safer neighborhood teams (SNT) and the dedicated Town Centre team; We spoke with staff within the British rail station and Bus Hub. All told us there was a problem.

We established the ASB was over a 24 hour period however it spiked during late evening into the early hours until the pubs and clubs closed around 4:30am. Begging, drinking and drug use occurred throughout the day, the main areas targeted by the homeless people were outside the BR station which was dry, enclosed and offered a large footfall of commuters and clubbers who were also identified as victims. There were no intelligence reports relating to the perceived problem only a few relating to individuals.

In a nutshell the behavior of the rough sleepers had been tolerated for so long it had become the norm. We were confident that there was a problem and that we knew what that problem was, despite having no analysis.

We used the problem solving triangle to look at this problem

### **The VICTIM:** Who were the VICTIMS?

Bus companies, due to buses being taken out of service, commuters complaining about the state of the buses and the behavior of rough sleepers.

Local Businesses who had to clean up the area and who suffered loss of business as people avoided the area. Commuters and local residential community had to walk past people openly

begging.

The Rough sleepers themselves were also victims as they were caught in a cycle of behavior they had no way of addressing the problem. There was also no reason for them to address their behavior as it was tolerated.

**The OFFENDER:** It was clear that offences were being committed by the rough sleeper's; they would beg openly sometimes aggressively. They would drink within a designated no drinking zone daily. They would bicker and argue amongst themselves causing a public disturbance, breach of the peace. Many of them had an addiction of some sort. Seven subjects were Identified as rough sleepers within the Town centre transport Hub. Of these seven identified rough sleepers, five were addicted to alcohol, drugs or both, all five drank openly within the town centre transport hub and all five at some point had come to police attention for ASB. All five begged. They would squabble amongst themselves for the most lucrative pitch. Management at the BR station was concerned at the lack of positive action from police.

The initial seven identified rough sleepers were all male, one was mixed race, one was black, the remainder white British. Two had mental health issues, five of the seven had drug or alcohol issues.

**The LOCATION:** We identified the Transport Hub area of the town centre and local buses as our locations; mainly route 174 and 248. The Bus Hub had undergone significant improvements over recent months, its layout, lighting and street furniture had all changed. The area was subject to extensive CCTV coverage, was a busy location with many capable guardians. We could not change the layout but we could change the actions of the capable guardians. The Busses had quality CCTV and the bus drivers were capable guardians.

**Time,** Crime and ASB were taking place over a 24 hour. It reached a spike late in the evening and into the early hours due to the increased footfall within the night time economy and after the subjects had consumed alcohol or drugs.

### **Analysis:**

- **Our research concluded there was a problem to be addressed.**
- **The problem was exacerbated by a lack of direct action by capable guardians.**

Having identified seven rough sleepers we concentrated our efforts on the six who were still on the streets.

The initial proposal was to run operation Pearl for six months then review. Following the review we would modify or develop the project as we saw fit. As we had no analysis to form a baseline we set our baseline as 6 subjects concerned in ASB.

We set Smart Objectives for the initial engagement phase.

- 1. Reduce the numbers of Rough sleepers by 20%**
- 2. Deal with the issues associated with rough sleepers more efficiently using positive action.**
- 3. Allocation of a lead liaison officer ( Police or PCSO ) to engage and support each rough sleeper.**
- 4, Ensure we identified recognized Pathways to support the rough sleepers, throughout their journey.**
- 5, Target those who refused to engage or change their offending behavior.**

Our research from the rough sleepers allowed us to understand that the area was viewed as a safe haven by the rough sleepers, for the following reason:

- a, The area was covered by CCTV, which afforded the rough sleepers a reasonable amount of protection.
- b, The area outside the railway station was dry and allowed them to beg in all climates meaning it was a sustainable location.
- c, The guardians who patrolled / observed the location did not target or disrupt the rough sleepers ASB, as the rough sleepers were seen as part of the fixtures and fittings.
- d, There was no direction to Capable Guardians to disrupt or engage, they therefore were not capable guardians.

This lack of disruption and the environmental features allowed the offenders to be motivated in their pursuance of funds to maintain their lifestyle, without regard to the consequences of their actions. In effect it drove and enabled them.

The rough sleepers had been allowed to establish themselves within the fabric of the town centre and transport hub and were on the whole tolerated without enforcement action, seen by many including capable guardians as part of the fixtures and fittings. It was apparent that although they were openly begging, drinking and engaging in anti social behavior little or no targeted enforcement was being conducted.

Our Initial patrols under operation Reach working with our street pastors, local churches and the local authorities' Homeless persons unit identified seven subjects who were rough sleepers. Within two weeks of the commencement of operation Pearl and the allocation of LLO's it was established that two of those seven individuals were not in fact homeless.

One had an address in Redbridge Borough, he had mental health issues. His income was managed by his support workers as part of his care plan, begging within Romford Hub gave him the income he craved to provide alcohol. This alcohol antagonized his mental health; he was stuck in a cycle of Behaviour which adversely affected his mental health.

The other had an address in Newham Borough. He had been begging within the transport Hub for over 10 years and was seen as part of the street furniture, being entrenched in a pattern of behavior which he refused to reject or address. He had an alcohol addiction and remained defiant for a number of Months until he was made the subject of an anti social behavior order in July 2011.

The remaining five subjects were genuinely rough sleeping. Three of those five were very well known to police and had had recent police contact. One male was homeless due to his violent episodes which were linked to mental health. He was unable to cope with sleeping rough and would damage property as a means of securing overnight accommodation with police. This pattern of behavior went on for a number of months. Meaning a number of busses were taken out of service.

The final subject had been rough sleeping for four years. The support agencies both statutory and voluntary had no knowledge of this male. He had, had no contact with any agency for over 6 years. He would spend his days in the library reading, used washing facilities within the Salvation Army centre and using a friend's address, and was in receipt of basic state benefits. He did not beg, he had no alcohol or drug addictions, was articulate and social. He had simply become homeless and had no means of getting himself into accommodation. He was given a liaison officer from the local authority Homeless person unit and due to his age he was given temporary accommodation within three days and housed within two weeks. He has sustained his tenancy without incident from that date.

This very quick, unexpected result in housing someone was a massive boost to the team and the project and gave renewed vigor to the team and those partner agencies involved.

## **Response:**

We conducted further research and established a list of Key contacts who shared a stake in the project. This list was updated as new agencies or charities were identified.

A steering / strategy group was set up to look at how best to tackle the problem. This allowed us to get statutory and voluntary agencies around the same table and look at what each agency was providing or could provide. We cut out duplication and we streamlined services. An Information Sharing Agreement was developed allowing information to be shared between statutory and non statutory agencies.

Detailed minutes were kept and a matrix action plan developed.

MPS Form 302 ( problem solving initiative) was produced.

During the first partnership meetings Additional stakeholders were identified and invited to subsequent meetings. Identified stakeholders are:- TFL, LBH homeless persons unit, London Street Rescue, LBH DAAT Team, local SNT's ,Various religious organizations including Havering Christian Fellowship, Salvation Army, Jubilee house, bus companies, extended family of subjects. We also considered the Crown persecution Service (CPS), The Big Issue and Job Centre Plus may be viable partners. NHS was keen to become involved as they had a vaccination program directed towards rough sleepers.

The steering group made decisions as to which agency would lead on an individual depending on need.

A profile was created on Each of the six rough sleepers. This profile would give details of the rough sleeper it would give a summary of the issues facing the rough sleeper and would list all engagement and interventions conducted with or against each rough sleeper.

Each Rough sleeper was allocated a Lead liaison officer ( LLO ) This was either a PC or PCSO as recent research conducted under the Diamond Initiative proved that if a police officer or PCSO asks someone to do something they were more likely to do it than if asked by any other agency.

Each LLO was given training, support and direction. Their role was to engage with the rough sleeper, explain the project and create a "Subject profile" document on their respective rough sleeper. This profile was designed with three things in mind.

:To give an in depth report of the rough sleepers history

:To capture the drivers and enablers which kept the subject on the streets committing offences.

:To maintain a log of interventions, engagement and enforcement activity that should it be required could support future enforcement / court action.

The team supervisor who had previously set up and developed the Diamond initiative would review each profile periodically, offer advise, guidance and direction to the LLO. It was also important for the supervisor to monitor the LLO to ensure LLO / rough sleeper boundaries were not crossed.

Each profile was designed to show a photograph on the front sheet, warning signals, any ailments the rough sleeper had. There was a toolkit of intervention to assist the LLO. The profile also gave a minimum expectation of each LLO. There was a suggested list of tactics of engagement, in order to direct subjects along recognized pathways of intervention.

The profile document was also designed to log and record every contact or piece of information which was forthcoming. Effectively building a communication strategy between LLO and client.

Different colored ink was used to allow specific interventions to be easily found. I.e. Supervision was in blue ink.

To assist with contacting the rough sleepers who moved about a lot depending on weather conditions. Sponsorship was sought from a local supermarket. ASDA Romford, supplied us with a quantity of very Basic low value phones, which we could distributed to rough sleepers to improve communication between rough sleeper and partnership agencies. ( risk assessment conducted ; the Phones were very basic low value ( less than £10 ) to prevent rough sleepers selling on the phones to support their addictions) Rough sleepers were allowed to charge the phones at the Police station.

Consultation between senior management team from police and other agencies took place ( CCTV, DAAT, Mental health, NHS, Third sector). We developed a power point presentation to give guidance and direction around proactive interventions when dealing with rough sleepers. This was compiled and cascade by the safer transport team.

A number of briefings to police staff and street based practitioners; Street pastors, CCCTV, response police and street care. The guidance included what they should do if they came across or were made aware of a rough sleeper.

Havering Police Senior management team issued a direction that if you came across someone begging or sleeping rough **Doing nothing was not an option**. This showed there was buy in from senior managers.

We instructed that a minimum expectation was required when dealing with any rough sleeper coming to the attention of police or partners.

These expectations were:

- Begging would not be tolerated anyone begging would be moved on or arrested.
- Their full details and circumstances of coming to notice could be passed to operation Pearl by means of a dedicated mailbox.
- Positive action must be taken on every occasion.

The information passed to the Rough sleeper mailbox was then copied to the relevant subject profile by each LLO. A comprehensive picture soon emerged of each individual, their habits, their problems, their aspirations, their concerns. We logged all contact with police and other agencies. "DOING NOTHING WAS NOT AN OPTION"  
Custody officers were also briefed so they understood why arrests would be made for begging under the vagrancy Act 1864.

**Enforcement / Prevention** – Prevention / Enforcement discussions took place at the steering group meeting. We set short and long term goals.

Short term enforcement of moving on anyone begging gave immediate respite to complainants. Rough sleepers were directed to areas such as church yards away from town centre. Anyone from outside the area was directed to their home borough.

A photo card was produced to allow rough sleepers to be identified by capable guardians this ensured every capable guardian knew who our rough sleepers were.

We considered a range of long term measures: Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO), Implementing a Dispersal zones within the bus hub, using county court injunctions, discussed supported interventions. Implementing Section 27, Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006, promoting

London street rescues "Killing with kindness" advertising campaign.

Our supported intervention between partner agencies proactively directed individuals to recognised pathways. It allowed agencies and groups to streamline their activities. We always considered an arrest strategy based on individual situations, and by building early comprehensive foundations, Custody management accepted that prisoners may be brought into Custody for Vagrancy Act offences such as begging.

A Post conviction ASBO sought for one prolific offender, was obtained as a direct result of the profile document. This male was not homeless had entrenched himself within the fabric of the bus hub for over 10 years and was one of the main protagonists. The ASBO prohibited him from entering the inner ring road of Romford Town Centre for a period of 2 years until 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

Havering Christian Fellowship linked with other church based charities and spurred on by the support offered by Police, set up a night shelter assessment hub, to run from November to March this would provide a much needed haven for rough sleepers. Seven church halls would be used to accommodate the night shelter over a seven night period. The shelter would have 17 bed spaces and would be funded by each of the seven churches spreading the cost of the proposal. It would be challenging logistically as every day the bedding and equipment would need to be transported to the next location. However it did mean that the burden would be shared across the borough and the impact on the local communities would be minimal.

The Salvation Army would be used as a referral point for the shelter. They already provide clothing, washing facilities and food to anyone they identify as in need.

### **Assessment:**

The Partnership agreed that they would monitor the project while interventions were being embedded as listed above.

The project was reviewed in July 2011.

The initial problem of ASB had been resolved.

21 subjects had been identified / referred to police with profiles created.

14 organizations' had been brought together as part of the steering group.

Housing was still an issue, and there was little we could do to change that due to changes with housing law. Also due to the limited availability of low cost housing options we had nowhere to move the rough sleepers on.

A winter night shelter was set to launch to cover the cold weather from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011 until 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012 funded by Havering Christian fellowship

A referral process had been established with referral points to run from the Salvation Army and Jubilee house.

Information sharing protocol agreed.

Following the Review we continued with our strategy of support engage enforce. Warning letters and enforcement action were used as a last resort but did prove effective. It was clear that supporting and engaging the rough sleepers allowed us to gain trust and achieve real engagement and commitment to change.

Since the introduction of operation PEARL a total of 61 subjects have been engaged through the partnership.

To date we have achieved the following:

- A dedicated coordinator role employed and paid for by Havering Christian fellowship.
- A Monthly strategy group meeting.
- Recognized referral process to the night shelter assessment hub.
- NHS now offering influenza vaccinations.
- A comprehensive training package for partnership volunteers
- 17 Bed night shelter and assessment hub now running across 7 sites
- 4 bedroom supported housing complex with 24 hour supervision.
- 61 subjects have been referred through the project
- 36% have been housed through the steering group
- 28% have been directed to other programs
- 70% have been registered with a GP
- 1 ASBO has been issued
- No begging within Romford town centre and Bus hub
- No street drinking within Romford Town centre and Bus hub
- Reduction in busses removed from service due to damage or soiling of seats
- Information sharing protocol set up
- Established links with like minded initiatives i.e. Veterans aid, Big Issue
- Established liaison between prison Chaplin's and Rough sleeper project allowing us to offer assistance to offenders as they are released from prison.

### **Outcomes**

The subject who broke 6 bus windows in order to obtain accommodation was eventually admitted to a mental health clinic after we pleaded with the court and probation service to offer help. His mother was so overwhelmed by our interventions she wrote to the police station and is in remains touch with the team today. Her son has recently been released from the MH Unit he was removed to and is living in supported accommodation within the borough. He has not reoffended since his release and is now re-sitting his GCSE's. His mother commented "you have given me my son back"

Capable Guardians are now present in the area. Due to guidance notes issued to all agencies beggars are no longer an accepted part of the Transport Hub. CCTV operators, local residential and business community will notify police if beggars appear in the area for immediate intervention and enforcement. Advice given to commuters re not funding this behavior by giving money, using a poster campaign in conjunction with London Street rescues "killing with Kindness campaign"

The transport Hub has had significant improvements made in lighting and paving and without rough sleepers positioned along South street the area is much more pleasing to the eye and the litter, smell and nuisance caused by rough sleepers has been removed. We have not had a rough sleeper in Romford Town centre since July 2011.

BY thinking outside the box we have also, in partnership with London Borough of Havering



street care unit, set up and developed a system to tackle the issue of people urinating in public. By issuing local authority Fixed Penalty Notice under section 87 - 88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for Littering, we now have a quick and effective solution to a major problem. We believe this is the first time this enforcement method has been used in London and we have secured convictions at magistrate's court. This new and innovative problem solving approach was developed as a direct result of dealing with rough sleepers.

A number of other local authorities are set to copy this evolving initiative

We have also inspired Havering Christian fellowship has set up a new Charity Hope For Havering who are working towards setting up a large scale supported housing project, recovery café, night shelter assessment hub, training and counseling facilities under one roof. This will allow supported interventions to take place on a larger scale cutting costs and allow the project to be sustainable from one location. Preliminary planning enquiries have been most favorable.

In conclusion Operation Pearl has swiftly and efficiently dealt with the identified problem of rough sleepers causing ASB within Havering transport Hub. The project was launched and developed with no funding in place. The success of the project has been down to efficient coordination of resources and partnership working.

In March 2011 we were given a grant by London criminal justice board for working with offenders

We also received a grant from the metropolitan police prisoner property fund. A large private donation has allowed the supported housing project to commence from 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011.