

## **Bromsgrove Advertiser report on Bromsgrove being a homelessness hotspot – position statement**

### **Background**

- Following the release of a national report by Shelter on December 1<sup>st</sup> 2016, and a local conference on Homelessness organised by Centrepoin, the Bromsgrove Advertiser ran a story on December 6th claiming that there are 38 homeless people in Bromsgrove.
- Shelter have reached the conclusion that there are 38 homeless people in Bromsgrove by adding the number of rough sleepers together with the number of people living in temporary accommodation and dividing the overall local population figure by this number to give a 1 in X are homeless per district.
- Following publication by the Advertiser we asked Shelter for a copy of their press release containing local data, as we did not understand where the figure of 38 homeless people came from, or how they had reached their conclusion.
- This press release has now been provided, along with information about the methodology behind the calculation.

### **Our analysis**

- The O&S task Group on homelessness in Bromsgrove has paid considerable attention to homelessness in the last year and made recommendations.
- On this occasion, Shelter's methodological approach to analysing levels of homelessness locally is fairly rudimentary, and their note to editors mentions a number of caveats to the data supplied. See Editors notes at the end of this document.
- In their press release, Shelter also supplied a table of homelessness in the West Midlands – regionally Bromsgrove was ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of 31 authorities, (although they did not explain the total number of councils) and 4th in Worcestershire:

### Top 20 homelessness hotspots in the West Midlands

LA	Region	Estimated total homeless people	1 in x people are homeless	Regional rank
Birmingham	West Midlands	9560	119	1
Coventry	West Midlands	1686	204	2
Solihull	West Midlands	485	444	3
Walsall	West Midlands	569	487	4
Rugby	West Midlands	204	515	5
Worcester	West Midlands	124	830	6
Wyre Forest	West Midlands	122	831	7
Shropshire	West Midlands	345	877	8
East Staffordshire	West Midlands	124	945	9
Stratford-on-Avon	West Midlands	124	1011	10
North Warwickshire	West Midlands	62	1023	11
Wolverhampton	West Midlands	250	1041	12
Wychavon	West Midlands	82	1494	13
Staffordshire Moorlands	West Midlands	59	1645	14
Herefordshire	West Midlands	100	1838	15
Telford and Wrekin	West Midlands	93	1864	16
Nuneaton and Bedworth	West Midlands	67	1945	17
Lichfield	West Midlands	52	1960	18
Tamworth	West Midlands	38	2061	19
Bromsgrove	West Midlands	38	2503	20

## Position statement

- There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that Bromsgrove is a homelessness hotspot in the West Midlands – in Shelter’s data, the council is ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of 31 local authorities in the region and 4<sup>th</sup> of the 6 authorities in Worcestershire. So Bromsgrove is in the lowest quartile for both data sets when measured in this way.
- Shelter’s calculation doesn’t provide a very robust way of providing an overview of homelessness in any area. It also combines a number of data measures to reach a conclusion in a way that has not been done before. For example, people included in Shelter’s calculation because they are living in temporary accommodation are not usually classified as homeless for data gathering exercises.
- Unfortunately, Shelter’s report compiled in the way it has been, and reported in the way that it was by the Advertiser, has caused confusion. Our latest rough sleeping analysis, undertaken in November with a number of other agencies locally shows we have 2 rough sleepers in Bromsgrove, not 38 homeless people. Had the Advertiser reported the entire data line supplied by Shelter, it would have been saying that Bromsgrove’s figure is 1 homeless person per 2503 people.
- We are confident that the extensive work undertaken by the O&S Task Group on homelessness in Bromsgrove has highlighted areas for us to focus on so that we can continue to ensure homelessness doesn’t become an issue in Bromsgrove.
- For ease of reference the homelessness position for Bromsgrove is as below:

Bromsgrove Homeless Performance Table							
	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Presentations	115	127	138	122	120	123	Q1. 22 Q2. 22
Acceptances	66	66	78	68	68	70	Q1. 16 Q2. 12
Preventions	198	204	192	225	263	240	Q1. 76 Q2. 51
Housing Options Interviews	756	787	802	793	714	654	Q1. 219 Q2. 168
Rough Sleeper Snapshot Estimate	7	3	3	1	3	4	

## Shelter's notes to editors

- This analysis estimates the total numbers of recorded homeless people (adults and children) in England at the most recent point in time possible.
- To arrive at a figure for the number of homeless people in the West Midlands we have added together figures on different forms of recorded homelessness, for the first time. Most of these are from official sources (DCLG figures on temporary accommodation and rough sleeping), plus Social Services figures via an FOI and figures on single homeless hostel bedspaces from Homeless Link's annual report.
- The local level figures are drawn from two of these sources only - rough sleeping and temporary accommodation, because the other datasets are at a regional level only. For this reason, the local totals will sum up to slightly less than the national total.
- Our calculations are then used in conjunction with the latest ONS population estimates to produce '1 in x people'.
- The figures should be viewed as robust lower-end estimates of recorded homelessness. A number of conservative assumptions have been built into the analysis. For example, that 'other' household types in the temporary accommodation figures contain only two people when they will contain a minimum of two. Additionally, the hostel bedspaces data from Homeless Link have been adjusted down to account for voids (10%) and possible overlap with other figures (a further 50%).
- The figures do not include 'hidden' or unrecorded homelessness which is very difficult to quantify, but known to be sizeable. A poll of 2,000 UK adults commissioned by Homeless Link in December 2013, found that 32% of people have experienced homelessness (including sofa surfing and staying with friends) or know someone who has experienced homelessness. 14% had experienced it themselves, 20% knew someone else who had experienced it, 2% said they had both experienced it and knew others who had."