

# Priority Areas Homelessness/Begging



# Introduction/Overview:

Serving our communities,  
protecting them from harm



- **The problems of rough sleeping/homelessness & Begging were identified as the top ASB issue for the City Centre Sector.**
- **Begging is the main source of complaints from the business community.**
- **Not only are the homeless perceived by businesses and shoppers as problematic; they are themselves highly vulnerable, as evidenced by the murder of two Big Issue sellers, Wayne Busst & Ian Gladwish in the city centre in January 2013.**



# Journey Begins:

Serving our communities,  
protecting them from harm



- **Since October 2012 the City Centre NHT commenced building strong relationships with several of our key stakeholders. Securing five Anti Social Behaviour Orders against key nominal's.**
- **Each of these organisations were allocated a dedicated Police SPOC.**
- **Morning Engagement Patrols Conducted.**
- **Links being developed between police and stakeholders.**
- **Regularly Attend City Centre Multi Agency Meeting.**
- **Initial feedback from partner organisations very positive.**

# Understanding Our Problem:

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**We have made every effort to understand our problem which is done by the following methods:**

**Begging in Birmingham City Centre is driven by substance misuse/addiction?**

**People who beg in Birmingham City Centre are homeless?**

**The main driver for rough sleeping/homelessness in Birmingham City Centre is due to relationship breakdown?**

**People who rough sleep or are homeless within Birmingham City Centre are not from the West Midlands Area?**

**The street population - this term refers to people who have a 'street lifestyle' such as street drinking or begging. Many people who have a street lifestyle are also rough sleepers but a minority are not.**

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## Perception survey

**A perception survey was created in conjunction with SIFA Fireside and Midland Heart. These organisations were best placed to advise police as to what questions/perceptions to explore. This ran for a period of six weeks.**

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**When asked why do you think people beg? A Respondent gave the following reply:**

*“Because they are desperate and need help. However, I think it is best to help charity's that work with homeless people than give to beggars as money may be spent on drink or drugs”*

**When further asked why do you think people give money to individuals who beg? A Respondent gave the following reply:**

*“Pity, fear, because it eases their conscience. Again there are many reasons why people give money. I personally don't as I feel that it won't help that individual who is begging. They won't spend the money wisely and I don't want to contribute to them buying alcohol or drugs or cigarettes, I'd rather give them food.”*

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## Operation Engage:

**This operation is being run for a period of 8 weeks commencing from the Monday 12th AUGUST 2013 through to Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013.**

**This operation is being run in conjunction with Arrest Referral Workers based at Birmingham Central who will be collating information from those arrested for begging and those engaged during early morning patrols.**

### Key Principles:

- **All individuals arrested subject of mandatory drug test.**
  - **Crasbo applications are considered in each case.**
- **Person centred approach to explore the reasons behind rough sleeping/begging.**

# For The Future:

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## For the future:

- We are looking to implement an Alternative Giving Scheme to dissuade people from giving money to beggars.
- A chain database is being developed.
- Mapping of City Centre services. Right service for right problem!
- Code of conduct for all services to sign up.



# Positive Working Practices:

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- Communication and engagement with key stakeholders.
- Develop a keen and engaging working group.
- Clear understanding of organisation capabilities and how these fit into the issue being addressed.
- Obtain public perception of the issue in Question. The answers may just surprise you or confirm your own thoughts/opinions.

# Homelessness/Begging

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Thank you for listening

# Any Questions?

For any further points that may be raised after this meeting please feel free to contact me.

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