

Homes and Neighbourhoods
Islington Council
222 Upper Street N1 1XR

Report of: Ian Swift, Director of Housing Operations

Meeting of: Housing Scrutiny Committee meeting

Date: 17th July 2023

Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities - Rough Sleeping data analysis

Summary:

This report outlines the central Government data for rough sleeping in Islington. This information was requested at the previous Housing Scrutiny meeting and this performance data will enable Islington Council to be the best housing service in the country.

Recommendations:

The Housing Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on the attached report and to critically challenge the service to ensure we meet the elected members ambition and aspiration to eliminate rough sleeping and ending homelessness.

1. Introduction

1. One person sleeping on the streets of Islington is one person too many and the elected members expressed concern about the numbers of people sleeping rough in Islington at a previous meeting.
2. The attached data honestly and transparently shows rough sleeping in Islington over a longer period of time than the data provided through the quarterly performance data reporting framework allows.
3. This attached report allows members to critically appraise our work to assist with our improvement plan.
4. Rough sleeping is soaring in London, with over 1,700 more people living on the streets of London compared to last year – a 21% rise, according to figures released from the Greater London Authority (GLA) on the 28th of June 2023. It

can be seen from the attached report Islington Council performance is actually far better than the rest of London.

5. The increase from 8,329 people seen sleeping rough in London in 2021-22 to 10,053 sleeping rough in London in 2022-23 was described as “categorically terrible” by Rick Henderson, the chief executive of the Homeless Link frontline charity, and “extremely alarming” by Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London.
6. The increase in rough sleeping is a result of the cost of living crisis, Brexit and the pandemic.
7. The government also made a manifesto commitment to “end the blight of rough sleeping by the end of the next parliament” and with 18 months to go it is looking increasingly unlikely this target will be met across London.
8. There is a particularly sharp rise in the number of people sleeping rough for the first time, up 26% on last year to 6,391. This trend in Islington is not the same and the majority of people sleeping rough for the first time in Islington have been sleeping rough in other parts of London but are new to sleeping on the streets of Islington. However, in this area it is clear the performance in Islington is better than the data released for other London Council’s.
9. Also the number of people who returned to living on the streets after more than a year without sleeping rough jumped to 1,578, a 31% increase. However, in Islington this is not the case.
10. It is clear Islington Council requires much more support from central government, and better cooperation between central Government departments if we are to end rough sleeping in Islington.
11. The cost of living crisis is driving increases in homelessness and rough sleeping and the majority of the levers and controls to prevent homelessness and eliminating rough sleeping rests with central Government policies around the Local Housing Allowance rates, Welfare Benefits, the cost of living crisis and immigration policies.
12. Analysis published on the 27th of June 2023, by the Institute for Fiscal Studies revealed only one in 20 private rented homes in Britain are now affordable to people relying on housing benefit– the lowest level on record.
13. It is clear Islington Council’s commitment to eliminating rough sleeping is assisting people to build a better future and our performance locally is in sharp contrast to the data released by the GLA.

14. Legal Implications

There are no known legal implications from this report.

15. Financial Implications

There are no known financial implications arising from this report.