

ITEM 9 ii)



Killing with Kindness – Anti Begging Campaign – Summary Document

Background

Since the beginning of 2009 there has been an increase in the number of public complaints regarding persons begging in Newcastle City Centre. The majority of these complaints are from the areas of Pink Lane, Neville Street, Northumberland Street, Collingwood Street and the Quayside.

Aim

To implement a new campaign aimed at reducing begging in Newcastle City Centre.

Approach

The campaign which will be a joint venture with Safe Newcastle will primarily consist of educating members of the public as to the effects of giving money to beggars. This will be achieved by launching a new poster campaign encouraging members of the public not to give directly to beggars and to support local homeless charities instead.

The campaign will also consist of increased enforcement, but those found begging will be offered help and support at every stage of the process.

Poster Campaign

A new poster will be launched which will be displayed in shop windows, bars, clubs and other prominent locations in and around the affected areas. The poster will utilise the striking 'Killing with Kindness' graphics which have been used successfully by various police forces and councils throughout the country.

The poster will seek to educate members of the public that any money they give to beggars will probably be spent on alcohol or drugs and of the associated dangers this poses to the user. The poster will encourage the public to not give money directly to beggars and to support local charities instead.

The poster will include the Safe Newcastle website address where a new page will list the charities working with the homeless in Newcastle.

The poster will also include a 24hr free phone number for the public to ring if they see someone begging or sleeping rough. The telephone number will put the caller in contact with the Cyrenians (ACE) outreach team who will visit that person and offer help and support at the earliest possible opportunity.

Support & Enforcement

At the start of the campaign Northumbria Police will write to every person who has a previous conviction for begging in Newcastle City Centre or those that are known to regularly put

themselves in a position to beg. The person will be advised of the campaign and that those persons found begging will face increased enforcement. The letter will also include a support leaflet detailing the agencies providing drop in services and those addressing drug or alcohol issues.

During the campaign period any person found persistently begging in Newcastle City Centre will be arrested and may be subject to conditions of bail. As per existing arrangements those arrested will be drugs tested and referred to Turning Point as required. The custody sergeant will issue the arrested person with the support leaflet and will also offer to call the Cyrenians Outreach Team so that they can be seen by them at the police station.

Northumbria Police will share the details of the arrest with its support partners to ensure that all the person's housing / substance abuse issues are being addressed.

For those persons that persist in begging during the campaign Northumbria police will consider all available powers and enforcement options to address their offending. HASBET will also be informed.

Council Enforcement officers will continue to summons persons begging during the campaign and will share the details of the summons with Northumbria Police. Both the council enforcement officers and NE1 staff will be given the support leaflets to hand out to those found begging.

Northumbria Police will also continue to patrol the affected areas in both uniform and plain clothes.

The Tyneside Cyrenians will share the details of all calls received to the free phone number with both Northumbria police and other support agencies.

New Web-Site Page

A new page on the Safe Newcastle web site will be constructed. This will include links to the web-sites of the following agencies who work with the homeless, many of which can accept donations on-line:

- The Big Issue www.bigissue.com
- Byker Bridge (Joseph Cowan) www.bykerbridge.org.uk
- Crisis www.crisis.org.uk
- NECA www.neca.co.uk
- Newcastle Futures www.newcastlefutures.co.uk
- Newcastle Women's Aid www.newcastlewomensaid.org.uk
- Norcare www.norcare.co.uk
- Outpost www.outpostproject.org
- Peoples Kitchen www.peopleskitchen.co.uk
- Phoenix Futures www.phoenix-futures.org.uk
- Praxis www.praxis.org.uk
- The Richmond Fellowship www.richmondfellowship.org.uk
- Salvation Army www.salvationarmy.org.uk
- Shelter www.shelter.org.uk
- St Cuthberts Care www.stcuthbertscare.org.uk
- St Vincent de Paul Society www.svp.org.uk
- Stonham www.stonham.org.uk
- Tyneside Cyrenians www.tynesidecyrenians.org.uk
- Young People's Services Hostel www.yhn.org.uk
- YWCA www.neywca.co.uk

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