

The European End Street Homelessness Campaign



CR Zero 2020 Project Information

Together we can end chronic street homelessness in Croydon by 2020.

Despite the availability of homelessness support services in Croydon, chronic rough sleeping is a rising problem in our borough. Croydon has one of the highest numbers of people sleeping rough on our streets, in the country. In 21st century Croydon we believe that no one should be sleeping on the streets and it's time to find new ways to help our rough sleepers, so we can end chronic street homelessness for good.

The European End Street Homelessness Campaign is being developed by Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF) and FEANTSA - the European federation of national organisations working with homeless. It is a pan European movement of cities, working together to permanently house Europe's most vulnerable people and end chronic street homelessness by 2020. The campaign supports cities across Europe in a growing movement that aims to gain public support and mobilise action to end street homelessness.

Croydon is one of the two Local Authority areas in London that are early adopters of the campaign in the UK. There are several local organisations working in partnership on the CR Zero 2020 campaign including Crisis, Evolve Housing + Support, Expert Link, Homeless Link and Thames Reach. The campaign is endorsed by Croydon Council.

We will be delivering the campaign under the name of 'CR Zero 2020' to reflect our aim of ending chronic rough sleeping in Croydon by the year 2020.

Our principles

We believe the time has come for the whole community to work together and take action to end homelessness. Although there are unforeseen events in people's lives which mean they sleep on the streets, no one should be trapped in an endless cycle of homelessness. Therefore the aim is to end long term, chronic street homelessness. Past and current campaigns in America and other initiatives in Europe are proving that with concerted action this is possible.

We see chronic homelessness as an issue that affects entire communities, not just those sleeping rough. As such, the campaign is focused on involving as much of the wider community as possible in identifying the problem, and the solution. The campaign will be

formed around a community coalition of the willing, working together to improve the community that we live and work in.

The campaign in practice

There are two key aspects to the campaign. Firstly, and crucial to the success of the campaign, is to understand Croydon's unique set of strengths and challenges through the use of a City Self-Assessment Tool, created as part of the wider European campaign.

We will get to know every homeless person in Croydon by name, by going onto the streets to find them and to discuss what they need. This should help us to target specific practices or policies for improvement and track our progress over the life of the campaign.

We will be conducting a 'connections week' beginning on Tuesday 30 August 2016 where we will be gathering the information on who's out there and what they need to successfully move into accommodation. This will be led by local volunteers and will culminate in the public presentation of the data in Croydon on Saturday 3 September 2016.

But this is just the start. After we know who's out there, we need to find solutions for each and every person. Improving local systems could be one way to do this through building coordinated housing and support systems that are simple to navigate, while targeting resources quickly and efficiently to the people who need it the most. Ensuring homeless people are housed in permanent, safe, appropriate and affordable housing with the support necessary to sustain it, provides many challenges.

The second key aspect of the campaign is that, unlike traditional efforts to reduce or manage street homelessness only involving one or two homeless agencies and the council, this campaign will be a community effort and a community solution. We aim to build a coalition of the willing, in which all members of the community can play an active role in identifying solutions and putting them into practice.

CR Zero 2020 is an ambitious campaign, but we believe that by bringing local people together to find new solutions for chronic rough sleepers in Croydon, we will end the cycle of homelessness.

For more information on how you can get involved in the campaign, please contact Lee Buss, Director of Operations, Evolve Housing + Support on lee.buss@evolvehousing.org.uk or visit www.evolvehousing.org.uk

