

Your Ref.
 Our Ref. JL/dmcg/da
 Contact Jenny Laing
 Email councilleader@aberdeencity.gov.uk
 Direct Dial (01224) 523009



ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Aberdeen City Council
 Town House
 Broad Street
 Aberdeen AB10 1FY

Minicom 01224 522381
 DX 529451, Aberdeen 9
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

17 July 2018

Kevin Stewart MSP
 Minister for Local Government, Housing
 and Planning
 Scottish Government
 St Andrew's House
 Regent Road
 Edinburgh
 EH1 3DG

by email: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Dear Mr Stewart

Thank you for your letter of 28th June regarding outreach support for rough sleepers in Aberdeen City. Officers from the Council met with your officials on June 12th to discuss the Aberdeen Cyrenians' Outreach Service, and more generally how we can most effectively end rough sleeping together.

Aberdeen City Council is committed to improving outcomes for this customer group and last year we experienced a 36% decrease in those reporting rough sleeping before presenting to us as homeless. We have operated without the need to open any winter shelters in the city for many years, and our effective partnership working supports vulnerable people across the City getting direct access into our temporary accommodation.

Despite being the lowest funded Council in Scotland, we are commissioning over £2m of homelessness and housing support services in the city this year, with over £600,000 committed to Aberdeen Cyrenians to deliver an outreach Advice and Information Service, a care home service, support at Margaret House, and an assertive street begging service. A significant focus of our funded services is reducing rough sleeping.

We met with Aberdeen Cyrenians on 20th June to discuss the Scottish Government funded Assertive Outreach Service. We noted some of the provisional evaluation and some of the positive experiences of individuals involved. We have requested further data to assist evaluation and service planning in this area and look forward to receiving this.

With respect to planning, we are contracted with numerous third sector providers to fund current outreach and housing support services in Aberdeen until October 2019. Due to these existing commitments, we were not in a position to provide any additional funding for further outreach services. However, we suggested a willingness to vary current outreach contracts with the Aberdeen Cyrenians so that the Assertive Outreach Service could be funded from 1st July. I understand that the Aberdeen Cyrenians took the view that they would take this under consideration if Scottish Government was unwilling to provide further funding. We can confirm that this flexibility is still available if required.

It is our intention to incorporate outreach support, and specifically, more assertive outreach support, as part of our new Housing Support Framework. Rapid Rehousing transition plans will also include assertive outreach support, Housing First and further strategic commitments to improving homelessness prevention and provision of services for rough sleepers and other individuals with multiple and complex needs who although not rough sleeping, are vulnerable due to leaving institutions and care.

I trust that this response has addressed some of your concerns and outlines the provision that is available in the city. Aberdeen City Council is fully committed to ensuring services are available for homeless people, with the long-term aim of eradicating homelessness from the City. This letter sets out our existing and planned commitments in this field, and our officers will continue to engage with your officials on this matter and we remain committed to working with our local partners to improve outcomes for homeless people in Aberdeen.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Laing'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Councillor Jenny Laing
Co-Leader, Aberdeen City Council