

**Harrogate
Anti-Homeless
Model
(HAM)**

A New Approach

David Cooper
www.coopermanvision.com

CooperMaxVision

Combating Homelessness - A New Approach

We must find a new approach to stop people losing their homes or being excluded from their homes for whatever reason.

Homelessness and rough sleeping although not necessarily connected are a major problem in the UK as families become more fractured and not as cohesive as they once were.

Firstly, I would like to 'drill down' the figures to ascertain what sort of people and what sort of conditions make up the figures. It is very important to do proper research to find the base causes of the problem so that we come up with the right and not the wrong solutions. It is a base fundamental that people in homeless and rough sleeping situations are interviewed to find out how they can be helped and what would be their preferred outcome. I have found in the little research I have done so far that the rough sleepers I have spoken to are against all forms of convention and authority for one reason or another. It is therefore pointless to offer a conventional situation to them because they will not accept it. Their wishes are minor. They just require a better situation than at present, especially in the current temperatures. A 'half way house' as I call it is something, I have found they would gladly accept. Somewhere out of the elements with a decent mattress and some form of fixed heating on an industrial estate not far from the Town centre. One caveat for them would be that they behave and do not commit crime.

Secondly, I would like to put 'Prevention before Cure', as Sir Robert Peel coined the phrase in 1829 when setting up the Metropolitan Police. We need to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place by thinking differently and not accepting homelessness as part of life. We need to set up a 'One Stop Shop' similar to the CAB, but more apparent, probably through social media, where people facing homelessness can go and receive proper advice and help. I have found for example at Harrogate County Court there is now no advice, free or otherwise, for anybody before they go into Court to face possible eviction.

There are a lot of able people in the UK but there are also many people who cannot run their lives without getting into problems, who are often unable to operate without the help of others. In our mostly caring society that predicament should not be a problem because there are always other people out there who want to help. If that help is channelled in the right way, we can overcome the

scourge of homelessness. We all just need to act together with a joined-up Plan.

In Harrogate at the last count in November 2018 there were 118 people apparently without a home but living in Hostels. How many of those people were without jobs or benefits I do not know at this stage, but hopefully within days I will have that information. If some of them do not have jobs in Harrogate there are around 2000 job vacancies at present. I attended Job Centre Plus and met with the deputy Manager who informed me that there is no formal or informal link between the Homeless Hostels and the DWP. She said if a link could be set up it would be 'brilliant'. My first suggestion therefore on this point is that a link should be set up as soon as possible. We could then get homeless people, who do not have a job, into work so that they can earn a rent and have somewhere they can call their own. If they have a job, we should ascertain why they are not earning enough or receiving sufficient benefits to pay a rent. Now that Landlords under Universal Credit can claim the rent directly from the DWP that should provide more rented accommodation.

To consolidate the above suggested 'link' it would be a good idea to call a Public Meeting for all homeless people where speakers from the DWP, HBC and a Mediator attend to provide information and answer questions on anything that is troubling them and with help can be overcome. I imagine although I do not have the evidence yet that some people are homeless because they have fallen out with their cohabitants. If that is the case a Mediator/s could be of great value in getting them back together and reducing the number of homeless by one and so on.

I am absolutely sure that if every relevant person works together in one big Plan and makes the effort with lots of vision, we can reduce homelessness in Harrogate and elsewhere in the future.

I would like to think that by November 2019 we have reduced the homeless numbers in Harrogate by more than a half to say 50. There is no reason why we should not. I do not believe that is being over ambitious.

David Cooper

3rd February 2019

Harrogate Anti-Homeless Model (HAM)

Having just partially researched the Homeless situation in Harrogate, where at the last count 118 people were registered Homeless, I have already come to the conclusion that while there are various people and organisations attempting to overcome the problem no joined-up solution programme exists.

I would like therefore to start resolving the Homeless problem at the beginning or even before the beginning, where people are on the verge of being made homeless for one reason or other. We should not wait until the inevitable happens but have a system (Model) in place ready to stop Homelessness. The Model would cater for people who are about to lose their homes because they cannot pay the rent or Mortgage, or have fallen out with their cohabiters, or for whatever reason.

Harrogate already has a 'One Stop Shop' in the form of the Harrogate HUB at 39 Oxford Street, in the centre of Harrogate. There are very able friendly people available there to advise anybody who finds themselves close to eviction for whatever reason. In my view the Harrogate HUB needs hugely more exposure by Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) the local Press, all schools and Colleges, JCP and via social media. People in Harrogate need to know about the HUB and use it to their considerable advantage.

Further, I would very much like to see that when a person registers as Homeless with HBC and Homeless Charities, they are automatically referred to the JCP to have the JCP analyse their job potential and their Benefit potential, neither of which may be happening at present. I understand from the JCP that there is no formal or informal link with either the HBC or HHP Hostel. There should be a link forthwith, so that anyone who has a job, but is not claiming the right benefits can do so in order to have rent money to find his or her own place to live. If they are jobless, as well as homeless, again the link between HBC/HHP should activate to get them into an income situation as soon as possible, to have sufficient to pay rent for their own home.

I know that the JCP is very keen to help so their keenness should be put to immediate good use during this month. I have spoken to the Armed Forces Recruitment office (AFCO) in Leeds and they are very keen to help. They are prepared to re-introduce 'Outreach sessions' in Harrogate as they always need suitable recruits. In the RAF for example there are over 100 different types of jobs available. Once trained in the Military the World is someone's oyster.

I understand of the 118 Homeless the vast majority are people between the ages of 16 and 30. A huge dent can be made in the Homeless figures by the Homeless linking up with the JCP and the AFCO. They after all have the rest of their lives to consider, which may be another 50 to 70 years.

I am now more than ever convinced that if all relevant parties can get HAM up and running this month, by November we will have more than half of the Homeless figure of 118 reduced to say 50 or even lower.

If you have any positive comments to make on HAM please write to me at davidmarriot@gmail.com or telephone 07714 152283.

David Marriot Cooper

10th February 201

Harrogate Anti-Homeless Model (HAM)

The HAM consists of two issues: 1. Rough Sleeping 2. Homelessness

In a very short time, my research threw up some really simple solutions to the two issues. The solutions will cost very little money to effect. In fact, the solutions will save money as less Hostel places will be required. Currently the main problem in solving the issues is poor planning and lack of cohesion between those engaged in the subject. People and organisations are working separately in their own area and not as a group. My simple solution is to join up the workings of all those people and organisations. This I have started to arrange.

- Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) working with the Job Centre Plus (JCP) and the Armed Forces Recruitment office (AFRO).
- HBC utilising the services of the Harrogate HUB with their Harrogate church contacts for free advice to anybody in Harrogate with a social problem.
- Opening up a Free Advice line on 07714152283 for people expecting eviction or who have been evicted.
- Using voluntary agencies who can help and advice on Domestic Abuse and relationship problems.
- Generally getting the very many good people of Harrogate working together to help deal with and overcome the two issues.

1. Rough Sleeping.

Until today Harrogate had 7 rough sleepers known to the authorities. I have met with 4 of them and they are men who were very happy to engage with me. None of them seems to have a problem with being articulate and decent. All they need is some help and understanding. Yesterday one of them told me that this was his last day rough sleeping as he had been offered a bed-sit by an independent landlord. He was overjoyed and surrounded by household items passers-by had given him on the news. Unless it has increased above 7 the rough sleeping figure has decreased to 6. That is progress!

In my discussions with the 4 rough sleepers I put the idea to them of a 'Halfway House', that is not on the streets nor in a Hostel but in a designated place away from the Town centre, but close by. There they could have decent mattresses provided with a roof over to keep out the rain and some form of fixed wall heating. Without exception they all thought that a very good idea because they did not like conformity or regulation of being in a Hostel. One said, in any case, that he had had problems in a Hostel.

My solution therefore is for this facility to be provided as soon as possible, on the understanding that those who use it comply with the Law. If they do not comply there will be sanctions.

However, since my above suggestion to the 4 rough sleepers, one, as described above, has been offered and has accepted a bed-sit, so is off the street. I was extremely happy when he told me the news and that begs the question 'What about other landlords offering a similar provision? Should we not be asking landlords if they can provide a bed sit for this very small number of people. If that were to happen those people could then go to the JCP as they would have a fixed address. They could then be assessed for Benefits and have a somewhat brighter future.

I do not think that the issue of overcoming rough sleeping is huge. It just needs some joined-up action and engagement and their lives could be turned around.

2. Homelessness.

In November 2018 there were 118 registered Homeless people in Harrogate. Whether that figure has moved up or down I do not know. However, what I do know is that with better effort and help of more good people that figure can be brought down considerably by this coming November. I am aiming for a reduction of over one half of that figure, namely 50.

I have held Meetings with Harrogate Borough Council, HHP Hostel, the JCP, the Harrogate HUB and had telephone and written communications with Harrogate College, Harrogate County Court and the Armed Forces Recruitment office in Leeds.

My solution to the Homeless issue is to bring all these people and organisations together, working together, to provide advice and help to people who are about to become homeless or who are already homeless so that we can start bringing the figures down.

What I would like to see is HAM working to bring those potential or actual homeless to an Advice Centre, the HUB, so that they can receive Free legal advice and alongside that an invitation to go to the JCP for an assessment for a job and/or benefit advice. There are some 2000 job vacancies in Harrogate so anyone without a job, with some application and advice, could get a job to pay rent. They could also get the correct amount of benefits, which they may not be getting at present. Some people just need a little 'push', some interest in them, and help to move on. This mantra lies at the bottom of what I am trying to do.

I am informed that the majority age group who have been made homeless and then approach HBC for help is between 16 and 30. I have also been informed by Harrogate College that they have students who have homeless problems and that they are sent to HBC. Apart from being sent to HBC my solution is for these people to be referred to the HUB for Free Legal and all other forms of advice. Mediation could be provided to see if individuals who have fallen out with parents/cohabitees can find a solution to get back together, thus reducing the homeless figure by one each time.

Alongside the above solutions I understand from the AFRO that Harrogate does not provide many young people for the Armed Forces. The Leeds Recruitment office is very keen to change that situation. They are prepared to come to Harrogate and provide 'Outreach sessions' for young people to get them to join the Services. In the RAF alone there are over 100 different jobs available. I am sure that would be the case in the Army as well as the Navy. I left home at 16+ to join the Metropolitan Police. I know that what I am suggesting as I have had a wonderful subsequent career. This opportunity via the Military should not be missed for people who need direction and a home.

Last but not least I want to make the 118 figure the most it will ever be. I believe that if the above suggested solutions are acted upon there is no reason why that should not be the case.

David Cooper

15th February 2019