

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 03164
Date 01 March 2016

Begging in Wolverhampton

Request:

I'd like to establish the facts of this case and grateful if you can oblige:

- 1) What is the city council's estimate of aggressive begging in Wolverhampton City Centre?
Wolverhampton ASB Team is currently working with West Midlands Police on tackling issues around begging. We have identified 18 individuals who it is alleged are regularly begging in the city centre, however, not all of these are aggressive begging.
- 2) Can the city council produce a map of known spots where begging is reported as a problem?
We can confirm that we do not hold this information. In order to advise and assist you can contact West Midlands Police who may be able to assist.
- 3) Can the council disclose their evidence of the connection between street begging and alcohol consumption. If none, say so?
As the ASB Team currently has a 'live' case involving individuals who are alleged to be begging in the city centre, we are unable to disclose the evidence we hold at this stage, as to do so may prejudice any potential legal proceedings.
- 4) Can the council confirm its spend on the following areas for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16?
 - preventative support substance misuse
 - preventative support against alcohol addiction
 - preventative services to reduce the risk of homelessness

Year	Substance abuse & Alcohol addiction	Homelessness
2013/14	£5,529,747	£784,339
2014/15	£4,567,418	£639,204
2015/16 (spend to date)	£4,501,076	£925,451

We are unable to split the costs between Substance Misuse and Alcohol as there is a joint contract for this work.

- 5) Can the council set out the number of people who have been subject to exclusion orders on the grounds of begging in public places?
Since 2013, 8 individuals have received Anti-social Behaviour Orders or Injunctions on the grounds of begging in public places.
- 6) Can the council set out the number of notices placed in the city to deter begging or people giving to those who beg for money?
Information not held.
- 7) The number of places for people who are considered homeless in Wolverhampton and the council has a duty to house?
2013-14 342
2014-15 299
2015-16 284 up to February 2016.
- 8) The number of people who report themselves homeless to authorities in Wolverhampton regardless of whether the council has a duty to house? I'm not interested in the individual circumstances of this person. I believe it is a matter for the legal authorities. I struggle to see how the evidence can be proven and therefore there is a risk inherent in public comment that should be borne in mind.
2013-14 3110
2014-15 3300
2015-16 2380 up to February 2016.