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Lichfield District Street Aid

Lichfield District Council is launching Street Aid to encourage people to ‘give small change for real change’, with the aim to help people who are sleeping on the street turn a corner in their lives.

The Street Aid fund will offer grants to help people, who are on or have been on the streets in Lichfield District, to maintain accommodation and employment, or make changes in their lives which will help them avoid returning to the streets.

The scheme offers people an alternative way to give rather than giving directly to people who are begging on the streets.

Each donation will be combined with others to provide grants for items needed to get people off the streets or help them stay off the streets. This could include paying for clothing for job interviews, a secondhand bike to travel to work, training courses, IT equipment, funding to access copies of birth certificates or other forms of ID, and more.

Organisations can apply to the fund for financial help that they cannot find elsewhere, and items will be given to the individual, rather than cash.

Councillor Ashley Yeates, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, “As homelessness and rough sleeping has increased locally, so too has the desire of local people to do something about it.

“We know we have a caring community and we are hoping people will donate to Street Aid rather than giving directly to those on the street, as it could help people in need to get support to change their lives.

“Our housing team works hard to find accommodation for anyone who is sleeping rough locally. However, begging can sometimes exacerbate issues and prevent people from making positive steps towards housing.

“We want to end rough sleeping and street begging in Lichfield District, and launching Street Aid is one of a number of ways we are tackling homelessness.

“We have also employed a dedicated officer who is working with people who have complex needs to make sure their tenancy starts well. Spring Housing is working on our behalf to provide an outreach service to rough sleepers and local homeless people, and we are progressing with plans to buy up to five properties to accommodate people with complex needs.”

As part of Street Aid, the council is planning to install 'tap and go' donation points across Lichfield City. This would allow people to tap their contactless credit or debit card on the outside of a shop or business window and a machine, which is installed inside the shop, automatically debits a small, set amount from the card.

Donations will be pooled together into a Lichfield District Street Aid fund, which will be hosted by Staffordshire Community Foundation. All the money donated will go directly to helping people within Lichfield District.

To find out more and how to donate, go to www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/streetaid.

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