



Our Reference: CC/MJ/GW/MT15093
External Telephone: 01656 655555
Extension: 20200

Your Ref:

23rd January 2018

Mick Antoniw AM
10 Market Street
PONTYPRIDD
CF37 2ST

Dear *Mr Antoniw,*

Cardiff Rough Sleepers

Thank you the letter from yourselves dated the 8th of January 2018, to which I respond.

I share your concerns around the people affected by rough sleeping in Cardiff and in other areas across the South Wales Police area. Indeed, on taking up my role as Chief Constable, I made it a priority to patrol with officers engaged in our work on the issue. From personal interaction with the community, I am very aware that the majority of those sleeping rough are doing so as a result of challenging personal circumstances and are amongst the most vulnerable within our community. In many cases they need the protection of the Police and other agencies.

It is important at this stage that I make a distinction that the majority of the beggars who have come to our attention are not homeless. There is no single 'street community' and we have been clear to emphasise that in our communication. Where officers come across members of the homeless community they are expected to treat them with dignity and compassion, something not only I have seen, but which has been reported in local media. It is understandable that the homeless community members may have some reticence towards the police and local authority, but I have witnessed first-hand the City Centre teams giving guidance and reference material to those they encounter whilst on patrol and making contact with outreach workers to try and obtain accommodation for them from the mobile phone at the scene.

HEDDLU DE CYMRU

SOUTH WALES POLICE

(Cont.)

Pencadlys Heddlu De Cymru, Heol y Bont-faen, Penybont CF31 3SU
Mewn argyfwng ffoniwch 999, fel arall, ffoniwch 101
Gwefan: www.heddlu-de-cymru.police.uk

South Wales Police Headquarters, Cowbridge Road, Bridgend CF31 3SU
In an emergency always dial 999, for non-emergencies dial 101
Website: www.south-wales.police.uk

Mae Heddlu De Cymru yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.
Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

South Wales Police welcomes receiving correspondence in Welsh and English.
Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

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As well as patrolling with the City Centre team, I have also spent time in the Huggard and Tresillian Centre, where I was able to see first-hand what is being done by our partners, and I must emphasise partners, because homelessness is not an issue where the principle response will come from policing. The work they undertake to make accommodation available sees more spaces than people in need of them. We have pledged to work with the local authority in order to see more members of the community accommodated, particularly now in the winter months. We are mindful that not everyone will wish to access services because of the presence of aggressive individuals and it is important that we deal with those issues, as there are occasions where the vulnerability and need is lost in the wider issue of aggressive begging. I am keen that we support the work of the 'Big Issue' in coordinating the work around alternative giving and projects such as 'Give Differently' so that help really does go to those who need it and issues such as substance misuse are not compounded.

I appreciate the concerns you raise around personal property and I can confirm that there have been referrals made in relation to some property on a small number of occasions. There are two circumstances where this would happen; firstly, where a person is in hospital or custody to reunite them with their property. Secondly, where there are public health concerns, as uncapped needles are often found and human or animal waste is sometimes present. I have seen tents and other material checked and left in situ, but we do remain vigilant to left items at a time of heightened security. The use of plain clothes has allowed officers to discreetly talk to members of the community to afford them some dignity in their interactions.

I am grateful you are not suggesting poor practice, indeed it is because of our need to protect those who are vulnerable that we cannot share more widely some of the positive work undertaken, but I am committed that we are transparent in what we are doing. To that extent, I would like to invite you to patrol with the City Centre team, so that you can talk to the officers and witness first-hand the work that is being done. If you do wish to do so, please contact Chief Inspector Ian Randell on 01656 869211 x30201.

Yours Sincerely



Matt Jukes
Chief Constable