

P-05-864 Ban the use of 'Hostile Architecture' – Caer Las to Committee 14.06.19

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am responding to the attached request for views concerning 'hostile architecture' and rough sleeping.

Our organisation Caer Las, works with homeless people across four local authority areas; Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Neath Port-Talbot, and Bridgend.

We assist almost 2000 people every year across a range of services.

In Swansea and Port-Talbot we have services dedicated to assisting street homeless people.

Examination of Wales own 'rough sleeper counts' (attached), and Caer Las' own project data, makes it clear that Wales, like many areas of the UK has a significant (and rising) population of rough sleepers.

The speculative 'causes' of homelessness, are complex, but in spite of 50 years of public investment, and an ever more sophisticated range of services, the problem is not diminished.

The question for Caer Las is whether 'hostile architecture' helps reduce rough sleeping.

Simply put, it does not, and only serves to make the trauma of homelessness a demonstrably worse experience.

Given that no-ones interests are served by a cohort of our citizens living on the streets, it would be far better to understand the concerns of those businesses and organisations that create these hostile environments.

The assumed purpose of so-called 'hostile architecture' is to protect property. It is clearly not helpful to either the individuals experiencing street homelessness or the agencies working with them.

It would be more rational for the companies to work with the agencies set up to assist rough sleepers, and to direct their investment at tackling the 'humanitarian' problem.

Reducing rough sleeping and creating mutual understanding and dialogue would better serve the interests of all parties.

This is far more likely to create a win/win/win for all concerned.

- People on the streets need shelter and support

- Agencies want to have the means to provide assistance
- Businesses want to protect their rights to trade.

Our concerns is that 'hostile architecture' contributes to a growing list of factors that contribute to an individual's social exclusion.

Poverty, a paucity of affordable housing, rising mental health concerns, epidemic substance use, a punitive benefits systems already push people to the margins of society and serve to create an underclass.

Hostile architecture simply exacerbates the problem.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions,

Best wishes, Jim

Jim Bird-Waddington

Prif Swyddog Gweithredol

Chief Executive Officer