

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Sub Committee	Date: 06/09/2018
Subject: City of London Police Update	Public
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Summary

This is an update from the City of London Police on the latest tactic to address begging within the City of London. This is called Operation Luscombe.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

Current Position

1. We have learned from previous operations around begging that a robust first stance is not always successful. It can also mean that we can miss the potential vulnerability and welfare issues that many people who resort to begging may have.

Option – Operation Luscombe

2. The Operation Luscombe approach will be slightly different: it will use an offered intervention at every stage and will lead from a soft intervention approach to a firm stance and prosecution, leading to exclusion from the City of London. We use the legal framework provided by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 in order to effect this change. It compels subjects to attend intervention and opens up the potential for criminal proceedings from non-attendance.

The Operation takes the following form:

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3. Over the coming weeks, during the course of their day, personnel from the Environmental Services team will record the number of people seen begging. The cleaning teams are divided into Wards. As such, we will have an estimate of the number of beggars operating in each Ward and at what times.
4. An Intervention Hub, formed of personnel from the Police, NHS, Local Authority Homeless teams, and the Westminster Drug Project will operate on a bi-weekly basis, at four locations around the City of London. The Hubs will be three large gazebos, provided by Police and the City of London Corporation.
5. Police will work on the information obtained from the Environmental Services team, together with existing intelligence to target saturated areas of the City of London.
6. When a person is identified as begging, or likely to be engaged in begging, an initial Intervention Notice will be issued. The notice will give clear instructions to stop the offending behaviour and will also invite the person to engage with services at the Intervention Hub at a particular time, date and location.
7. It is believed that a great number of people recorded in this initial phase will not engage with services and move away from the City and potentially not come back to notice. This was evidenced during the similar Operation Fennel.
8. Those who come to notice again will be subject of a further intervention notice, styled on a Community Protection Notice (CPN) – first warning. The warning will have a requirement to cease offending and also to attend the Hub. This is a legal requirement to engage with services under S.43-51 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
9. Reoffending, or failing to engage with the Hub, will be a breach of the CPN warning and will make the person liable to a full powers CPN, excluding them from the City of London and a small portion of the MPS area of Tower Hamlets. An intervention will again be offered at this stage. A variation to the CPN will allow entry to the City to attend the Intervention Hub, again at a specific date, time and location.
10. If the person breaches the CPN requirements and is seen in the City of London, they will be subject to arrest or summons for the offence. The subject will receive a further direction to attend the Intervention Hub and will be reminded of the CPN, which will remain in force. It is our intention to prosecute all persons who breach the CPN without reasonable excuse and make application for Criminal Behaviour Orders.

Proposal

11. The Operation will run for an initial three-month period and for a further six-months on a reduced frequency basis of one Hub per month. The time period is specific due to the length of time a CPN lasts (three months) and also to

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prevent new beggars from moving in to vacant plots, as one is potentially moved on. This will also provide us with a clear indication of whether the approach has been a success or failure and will allow for sufficient data collection.

Implications

12. During the run up to, and during the Operation, a media campaign run by the City of London Corporate Communications Team and the City of London Police Media Team will educate the public about giving money to beggars. The campaign will also promote the aim of the operation, which is to help beggars to take steps to break their addictive behaviour and make the City a safer place as a result.
13. The Intervention Hub will operate during the day from 8am to midday and then 1pm to 4pm. At lunchtime the hub will become a Community Policing Surgery for local residents and businesses to ask questions and find out more information. The topic can be changed on a bi-weekly basis to educate the public on a variety of different policing matters, from Acquisitive Crime and Bike Marking to Stay Safe, and so on.

Conclusion

14. Since this operation started in June 2018, to date, 109 tickets have been issued by the police. Of these, 79 were green, 23 were orange, seven were red. There has been one arrest for contravention of the CPN. Two individuals have been summonsed.
15. Intervention outcomes provided from St Mungo's:
 - Total number of engagements: 24 (20 individuals)
 - Total number of referrals into drug/alcohol/mental health services: three
 - Total number of people accommodated: two (one No Second Night Out, one 'staging post' accommodation).

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City of London Police – Begging Profile

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Appendix 1 – City of London Police – Begging Profile

Force Intelligence Bureau



Begging Problem Profile 2018

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Reference and Storage	I:\03-WIP\FORCE_INTELLIGENCE_BUREAU\CoLP_Review\Profiles & Products\Vulnerability
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Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Sources	3
3	Definition and Legal Framework for Enforcement	4
4	Limitations.....	4
5	Executive Summary.....	5
5.1	General Figures.....	5
5.2	Locations.....	6
5.3	Gender	8
5.4	Age.....	8
5.5	Type of begging	9
5.6	Repeat and Prolific Offenders.....	11
6	Current Activities and Preventative Measures.....	11
6.1	Community Protection Notices (CPNs).....	11
6.1.1	Number of CPNs/warnings	12
6.1.2	Individuals receiving CPNs	13
6.1.3	Repeat individuals receiving CPNs.....	13
6.1.4	Locations of those receiving CPNs	14
6.2	Criminal Behavioural Orders (CBOs).....	15
6.3	Civil Injunctions.....	15
7	Comparisons	16
7.1	London	16
7.2	National	17
8	Intelligence Gaps.....	17
9	Recommendations	18
10	Bibliography.....	21

1 Introduction

This report has been written in response to increasing national and local concern over the issue of begging and its associated harms. During late 2017 rough sleeping was adopted by the City of London Police (COLP) as a specific strand under its threat, harms and risk intelligence assessment of general vulnerability, and as an umbrella term that also includes begging. However, it is important to note that begging is an issue not limited to the homeless community; as explored in more depth during later sections of this report.

The aim of this report is to ascertain whether there is a genuine issue with begging in the City of London, and to briefly examine other areas that could be hypothesised as being linked. These considerations include, in particular, drivers for violent crime and acquisitive offending. Where there are issues identified, the report will seek to make recommendations to mitigate harms.

Begging is illegal under the 1824 Vagrancy Act and was made a recordable offence in 2003 in an attempt to “help tackle the anti-social behaviour or some aggressive beggars, which can intimidate the public, leading to increased fear of crime”. The Government also stated that this would permit the police to recognise repeat offenders and would make it easier for officers to deal with those involved in more serious crime.¹

Homelessness and rough sleeping were highlighted as a national concern in the 2017 November Budget in which Philip Hammond pledged to eliminate rough sleeping by 2017.² As a result of this topic being brought to the forefront, begging has also received increasing media attention and is being noticed and challenged more by the public.

The City of London is a unique entity, making it very different to other London boroughs and police force areas. It covers approximately one square mile and has an accordingly low residential population of around 8,700 residents; expected to reach only around 9,200 by 2021. In contrast with this small population, the City sees an extremely high daytime working population of more than 383,000 people; which is projected to grow to 428,000 by 2026.³

The key function of a police force is to protect and serve the public. As a part of this, it is important to address begging, both for the protection of those who find themselves begging, and for the protection of those who pass by beggars and may find themselves at risk.

2 Sources

This reports covers a review period of 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. The data and intelligence used has been obtained from a variety of locations, most of which are noted in the bibliography; key sources included:

- NICHE/UNIFI – these are the internal record management systems utilised by COLP; UNIFI was replaced by NICHE with effect from 25 October 2017.
- A spreadsheet kept by Communities which lists the Community Protection Notices (CPNs) that have issued, along with further information, including the offender details, offence location and reason for CPN. This spreadsheet can be found in the following location:

I:\03-WIP\UPD\Public\Community_Engagement\Mental Health and Vulnerability\Op Alabama

3 Definition and Legal Framework for Enforcement

Begging can be defined as “the solicitation of money or food, especially on the street”.⁴

It is notable that this definition does not specify that begging is restricted to among the homeless and rough sleeper community, despite a prevailing general public perception.

An important distinction is the difference between passive and active begging, as each allows for the application of alternative approaches. Passive begging refers to cases where individuals “either sit or stand in one spot with a sign alerting passers-by that they need money...include[s] an extended hand towards passers-by”. Active begging describes those who follow or approach passers-by and ask for money – this can be expanded to also include aggressive begging techniques, referring to those who use more threatening language or behaviour and are less easily deterred by a refusal.⁵

¹ <http://www.politics.co.uk/reference/begging>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/autumn-budget-2017-philip-hammonds-speech>

³ <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/housing/homelessness/Documents/homelessness-strategy-2016-19.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.politics.co.uk/reference/begging>

⁵ <http://www.hanover.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/A-Question-of-Begging-June-2001.pdf>

Local agencies have certain enforcement powers under the below acts:⁶

- Vagrancy Act 1824 – this permits the arrest of a person who is begging and is a recordable offence, carrying a level 3 fine (£1,000 at present).
- Highways Act 1980 – a person wilfully obstructing free passage along a highway is guilty of an offence, and this carries a level 2 fine (£500 at present).
- Public Order Act 1986 – if a person causes harassment, alarm or distress to another, carrying a level 3 fine or a penalty notice of £80.

Community sentences can be imposed if the court considers the offence serious enough to warrant such a penalty. Additionally, the courts can issue community sentences instead of fines to adult repeat offenders who have been convicted four or more times for an offence that would not have otherwise been serious enough for such a penalty.

4 Limitations

The data used within the following section has been obtained from intelligence reports recorded during 2016 and 2017 on NICHE and UNIFI. It must be noted that, while all efforts have been made to provide the most accurate data possible, due to a number of different ways in which intelligence reports can be labelled, it is possible that there could be cases which have not been included in the below statistics.

5 Executive Summary

This report has examined begging in the City of London during 2016 and 2017, and whether this is a problem. Overall across the review period, the levels of begging appear to have decreased. However, confidence is low about this being a true reflection of street level and public space incidence.

The predominant Force hotspot has been identified as Bishopsgate, followed by Moorgate. The areas around Eastcheap/Monument, Cheapside and Aldersgate Street are also common locations.

There are often intelligence gaps around the individuals found begging in the City. Where the information has been recorded, beggars have been predominantly male and the most common decade in which they were born was the 1970s. The category into which a begging *modus operandi* (MO) fell was not known in the majority of cases, while it was noticeable that there were a large number of rough sleepers and that there were perhaps more potential organised gangs than may have been expected.

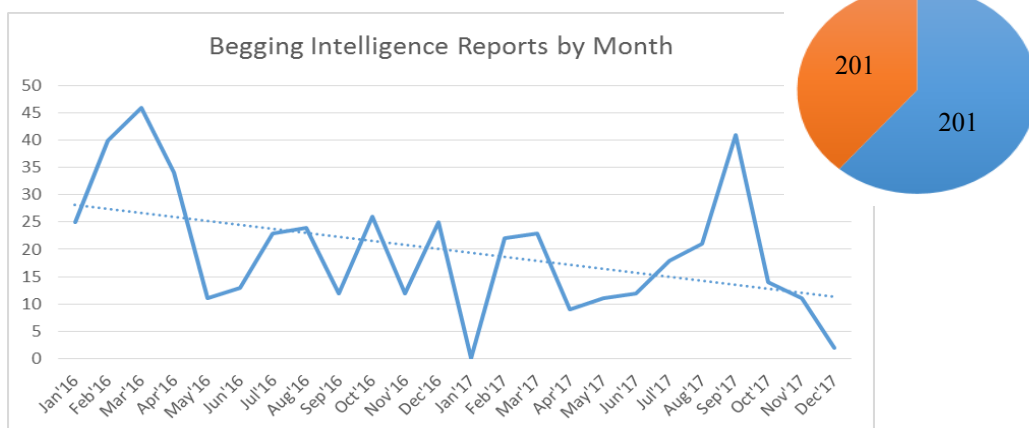
At present, COLP do utilise enforcement powers such as CPNs, Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) and civil injunctions. Wider use of these interventions should be tested and tracked in addition to testing alternative action such as the use of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs).

There are a number of large intelligence gaps around begging and therefore the conclusion drawn must be caveated with this point.

The report's principal finding is that begging is an issue in the City and it is considered likely that the levels will remain static or increase if the issue is not effectively addressed.

5.1 General Figures

The following graphs report the number and proportion of Intelligence Reports of begging that have been recorded in the City during 2016 and 2017.



⁶ <https://www.mylawyer.co.uk/begging-a-A76076D35097/>

It can be seen that more intelligence reports were recorded during 2016 than during 2017, and the overall trend over the two years suggests that the number of begging reports are decreasing.

The data suggests that the levels of begging have decreased during the two-year review period. This conclusion is surprising given that begging is believed to be increasing across the country; equally there have been no specific management interventions by the Police nor Corporation of London. This suggests that the decrease in intelligence reports may be due to reasons other than a decrease in incidence. It is important to note the fact that the Force's intelligence submission figures are based on police reports added by City officers and these chiefly relate to the Force Control Strategy and Intelligence Requirement. Officers are specifically but not exclusively directed to submit intelligence according to perceived levels of harm and the threat landscape. The focus of the Force Control Strategy, while recognising vulnerability, has chiefly focused on high threat, high impact issues such as Terrorism, Cyber Attack, Fraud and Serious and Organised Crime.

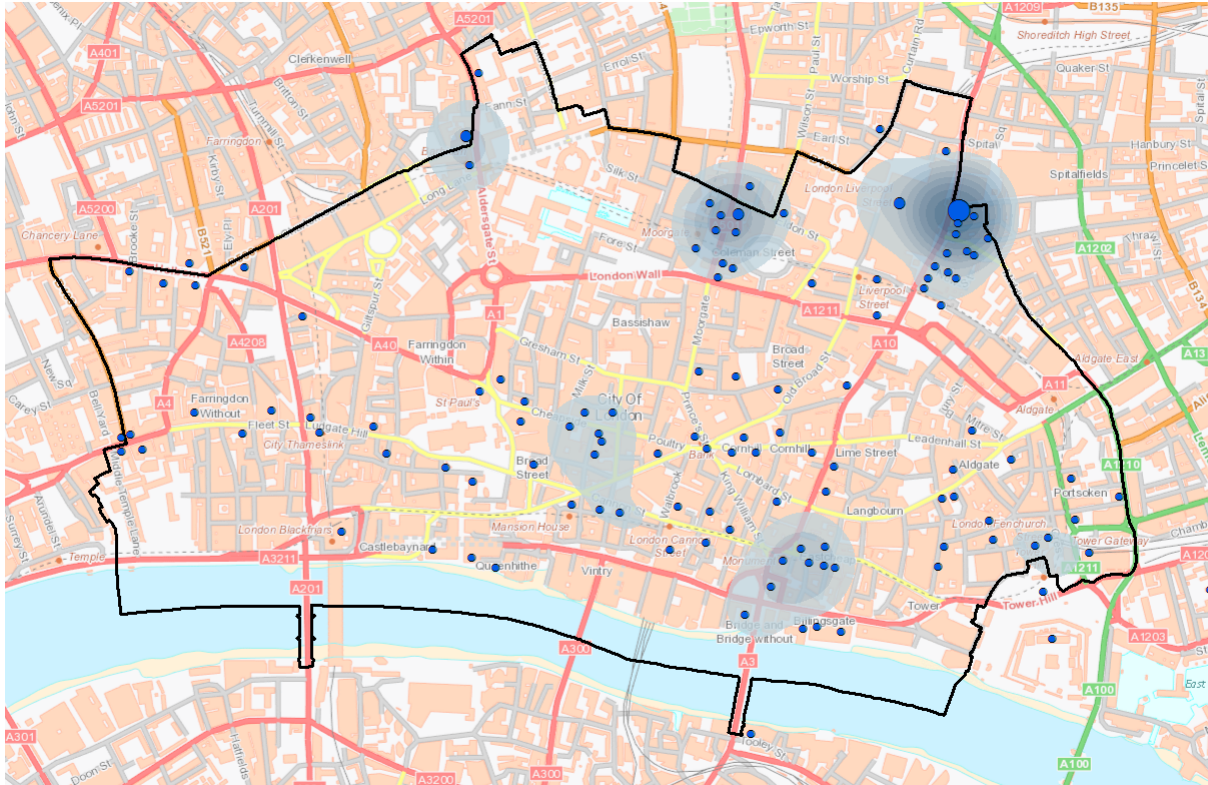
Interestingly, no particular seasonal trends are evident between 2016 and 2017. This may have been expected due to changes in the weather and a lower number of tourists visiting the City during colder months. Comparing numbers of reports during the same months of 2016 and 2017, there do not appear to be any emerging trends – for example, there was a peak during March 2016 but the corresponding month of 2017 did not see a repeat, nor was there a peak in September 2016 while September 2017 saw the second-highest number of reports across the two years. Similarly, there were no begging intelligence reports recorded during January 2017, while January 2016 reported marginally more than the average number of reports.

This seemingly random pattern of peaks and troughs offers few insights and supports several hypotheses, including: that the number of reports varies due to a transient begging population; that levels of passive and active (problem) begging change; that officer prevalence in the public space varies; that officer reporting varies subject to competing demands (such as threat levels and events); or that begging incidence is influenced by changes in giving patterns by passers-by.

5.2 Locations

The following map shows the key locations where individuals have been recorded as begging for the reporting period 2016–2017.

Often the exact locations are not known due to recording limitations of the Force's now legacy record management system, and usually only the general road name is recorded. With these cases, a representative postcode along the road segment has been allocated and that same postcode has been allocated to all cases that occurred at an unspecified location on the road. For example, Bishopsgate is a recurrent location and appears to be a major hotspot on the City boundary. Begging instances may have been more evenly distributed along Bishopsgate, officer density is high in close proximity to Bishopsgate Police Station and the Force Custody facility is based there. Despite these limitations, the map does provide a useful indication of begging activity and inactivity.



Recognising Bishopsgate as a key hotspot, the next highest density location is Moorgate, then the Eastcheap/Monument area, Cheapside and the area around Aldersgate Street.

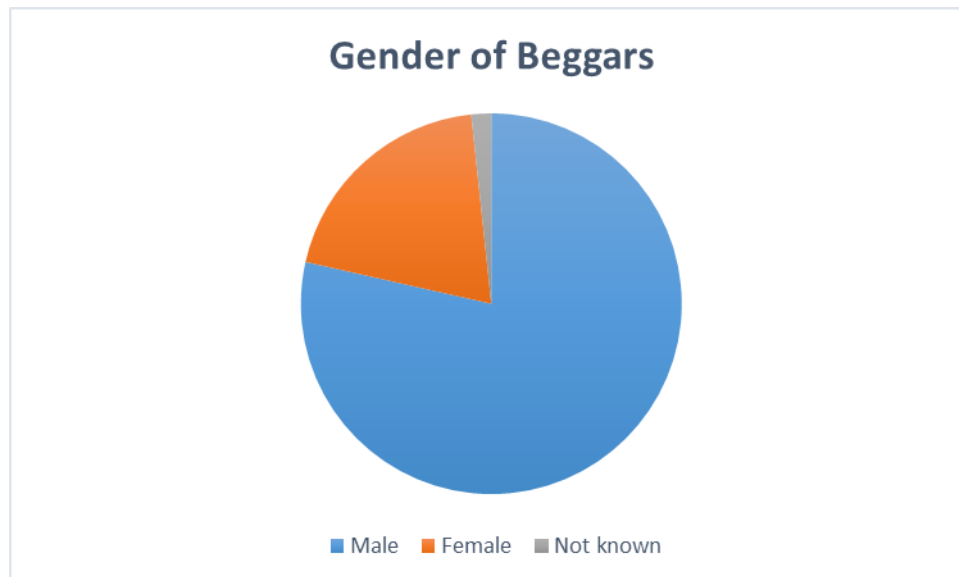
The geographical distribution offers some possibilities for conclusion, including that there are major transport hubs in the vicinity of the most common locations – Liverpool Street Station, London Bridge and Moorgate Station. All of these locations report extremely high footfall, demonstrating that individuals begging specifically target areas of high traffic and therefore likely higher returns.

Alternatively, the difference between levels of begging to the East versus the West of the City may be indicative of the members of the public who beggars prefer to target. Generally speaking, it can be suggested that there are more offices towards the East and therefore more of the working population is found towards that side of the City. Conversely, St Paul's and access to tourist attractions such as the Tate are towards to the West, so there is more likely to be a higher density of tourists found on this side of the City. Therefore, the above map data may suggest that beggars are more likely to target workers rather than tourists; although the reasons for this are unknown at present. Tourists may be more cautious, have culturally different attitudes to the issue, or it may be a reason unrelated to those giving – for example, different policing teams may have different tolerance or priority levels. While these are untested conclusions, they offer avenues of further investigation for any future studies.

A temporal analysis of begging reports is challenging due to the completeness of the intelligence. Temporal data would provide for a deeper understanding of the issue and, for instance, enhanced precision in targeting interventions. For example, it may indicate whether begging activity increases during 'rush hour', evening commute or on the weekend. As begging is a source of income, targeting intoxicated persons may be a deliberate strategy as they are generally considered to have enhanced emotional responses and reduced quality of judgement. This could explain why more individuals beg on the East side of the City as there is a high concentration of licensed premises and commercial offices there, combined with the key commuter transport hubs.

5.3 Gender

The gender of individuals involved in incidents of begging is shown below.

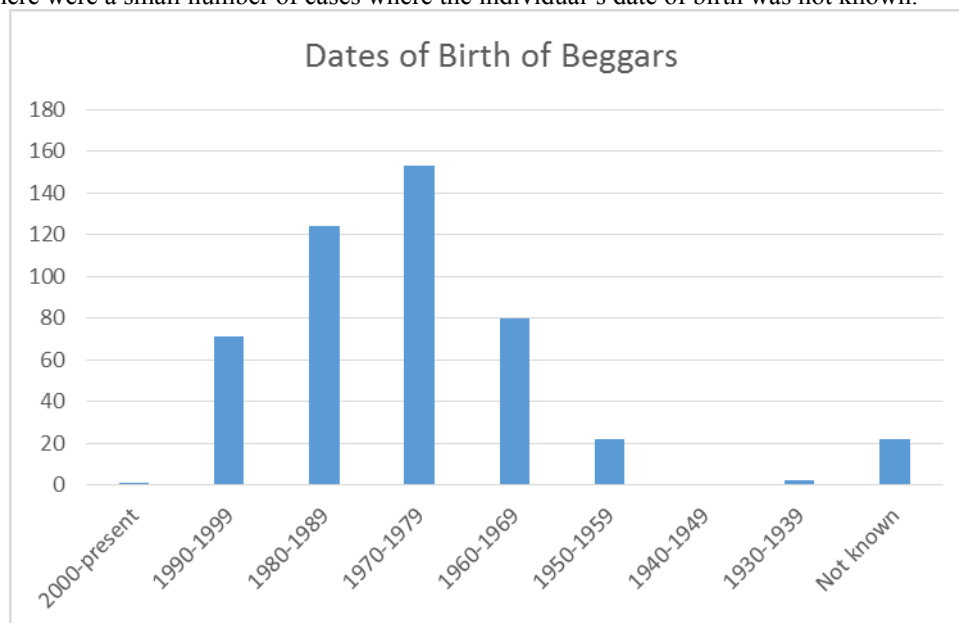


Of individuals who beg, 79% are known to be male, and 21% are female. It is of interest that during 2017, a similar percentage (at least 78%) of rough sleepers were male. A general conclusion would be to summarise that levels of rough sleepers and begging are related. At this time there is insufficient evidence to prove that link and the correlation is not necessarily indicative that the majority of those begging are consequently rough sleepers. Both begging and rough sleeping can be considered high-risk activities and males are generally disposed to higher risk tolerance and activities. The degree of vulnerability within the two populations is not yet sufficiently evidenced.

Members of the public who are victims of aggressive begging may find males more threatening. Seeing such a high percentage of male beggars may, therefore, mean that there are a large number of intimidating individuals seen begging in the City.

5.4 Age

The following graph shows the ranges for dates of birth of those begging in the City and recorded via intelligence reports. There were a small number of cases where the individual's date of birth was not known.



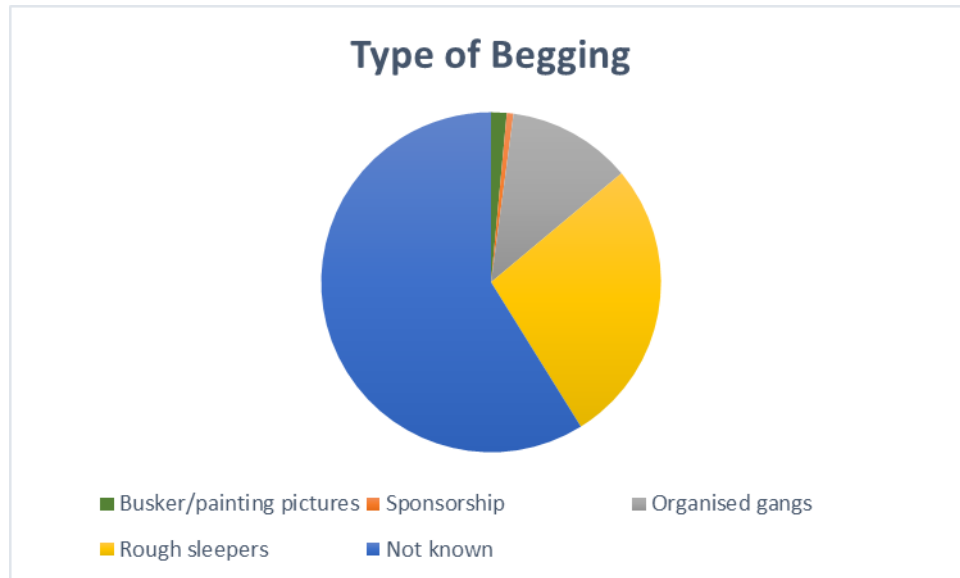
The most common decade in which individuals begging were born was the 1970s, followed by the 1980s then the 1960s.

It is beneficial to know the rough ages of those begging as it helps to create a profile of the “average” beggar in the City, which will enable more specific engagement. For example, 54% of incidents involved an individual who was born in 1979 or earlier. These people are older, where patterns of behaviour are generally entrenched; they may, therefore, be more difficult to deter or divert from begging.

Substance abuse is a likely co-factor, although officer reports do not currently provide this level of detail.

5.5 Type of begging

When considering those who beg in the City, the first general impressions would suggest that they are rough sleepers. However, the following table indicates that there are a number of intelligence reports recorded that are believed to relate to organised gangs. The reason for this may relate to disproportionate reporting due to officers’ potential belief that organised crime group-related activity is a subject of interest and a current Force priority.



In 59% of the reports, the category of motivation for begging activity was not known. This is clearly a large intelligence gap, but may also be difficult to address as it will often not be clear whether somebody is part of an organised gang, a rough sleeper, or purely an opportunistic individual. It is important information as different groups may be more likely to target different people – for example, the organised gangs may be more likely to target tourists while rough sleepers may prefer to target City workers. Little information is known about who the different beggars seek money from and it may be beneficial to carry out further investigation.

It is unsurprising to see that, where the category was known, rough sleepers accounted for the highest number of intelligence reports. This high number is due, in part, to repeat offenders – despite there being 129 reports known to relate to rough sleepers, these only involved 52 individuals. Other than the likely reason that substance addiction levels are often high in this group (meaning that they beg to fund their addictions), this may also indicate that there are a relatively small number of persistent offenders who could be effectively addressed with enhanced enforcement and preventative measures.

Other categories noted were those who busked or painted pictures, seeking donations from passers-by in appreciation of their efforts, and those who requested money from the public on the pretext that they were helping to sponsor a foreign student or that they were participating in a sports event. There were not a significant number of incidents that fell into these particular MO categories.

A number of suspected organised gangs have been identified in the dataset – there may be overlap between the groups but this cannot be confirmed. It is also not known which of these groups are still active in the City. The table below shows the groups and number of related intelligence reports, along with the number of individuals known to be involved.

Notable Groups Identified:

Organised group MO	Intelligence reports	Known individuals
1 – Romanians, meet at Pret Café before and after begging.	13	10
2 – Predominantly believed to be Romanian. Often use a short crutch or walking stick.	21	10
3 – Oriental, dress as “monks”.	20	11
4 – MO not known, seen whistling to communicate with each other.	1	4
5 – MO not known, group begging in underpass.	1	Not known

Some of these potential organised gangs are known to harass passers-by. Members of the public may find these gangs intimidating.

The third gang mentioned above employ harassment techniques where they approach members of the public and give them a small “token”. After this “token” has been taken, the beggar then puts a bracelet on the person’s wrist and requests money in return. They are extremely persistent once they have engaged an individual and it is difficult for the individual to extract themselves. This behaviour amounts to harassment and could be found intimidating, in particular by tourists or those who are not familiar with the group.

The fifth gang in the table above could be found threatening if they are a large group and are begging en masse in an underpass, although little information is known about their MO or the size of the group.

It is clearly a concern to have suspected organised groups present in the City who are intimidating and/or harassing members of the public, businesses and tourists. This can cause reputational damage to the City.

5.6 Repeat and Prolific Offenders

Although there were 475 intelligence reports recorded during 2016 and 2017 that relate to incidents of begging, there were only a maximum of around 311 individuals. The exact number cannot be stated as there were 26 reports where the name of the person begging was not known or not recorded.

One individual came to notice more than 10 times; there were nine people who came to notice between five and nine times, and 78 individuals who were recorded as begging between two and four times during the review period.

6 Current Activities and Preventative Measures

6.1 Community Protection Notices (CPNs)

CPNs can be issued when the conduct of the recipient is having a detrimental effect on the quality of life in the local community, or when it is of a persistent nature and is considered unreasonable. A CPN may stipulate a requirement to stop doing specified things, a requirement to do specified things and/or a requirement to take reasonable steps to achieve specified results. They can be issued to anybody who is aged 16 years or over and can be given to individuals or businesses. CPNs grant powers of forfeiture/seizure and to take remedial action. Breaching a CPN is deemed a criminal offence and may incur a fine.⁷

A CPN warning must be issued before a CPN can be given out. The warning must make clear that a CPN may be issued if the recipient’s anti-social behaviour is not stopped. Other information to be included may be an outline of the anti-social behaviour, an outline of the time by which the behaviour should be stopped and clarification of the potential consequences of being issued with a CPN.

The data used to review this area is from a spreadsheet that is kept and updated by the Community Policing Team. The information that they include is the offender’s name, date of birth, gender, ethnicity, address, location offence, date of CPN/warning and level, reason for CPN/warning and relevant reference. As this is a manual spreadsheet, the absolute accuracy of the figures included cannot be guaranteed as there may be human error, resulting in cases being missed. However, it is believed that the numbers have a good level of reliability. It is a strong recommendation that, for operational effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (including MOPI and GDPR compliance), this information should be transferred to NICHE records management system.

⁷

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251313/01_Factsheet_Environmental_ASB_-_updated_for_Lords.pdf

6.1.1 Number of CPNs/warnings

Between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2017, 184 individuals were given CPNs/warnings. These were split by level as follows:

Level of CPN/warning	Number
First warning	204
Second warning	27
Third warning / arrest	19
Not known	2
TOTAL	252

In the 27 instances where second warnings were given out, a first warning had been given in all bar one of the cases. Of the 19 cases where a third warning/arrest was made, all the individuals had received a first warning and around 50% of the individuals had been issued with a second warning.

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There were 24 different combinations of reasons for issuing the CPNs/warnings, of which 10 involved begging. These can be seen in the following table:

Reason for CPN/warning	Number of cases	First warning	Second warning	Third warning / arrest
Begging	101	100	19	4
Begging & Abusive	1	1		
Begging & Accosting	1	1		1
Begging & Littering	3	3	1	1
Begging & Loitering	46	45	4	7
Begging & Loitering & Accosting	1	1		1
Begging & Loitering & Littering	4	4		1
Begging & Loitering & Obstruction	1	1	1	
Begging & Loitering & Littering & Obstruction	2	2	1	
Begging & Obstruction	1	1		
TOTAL	161	159	26	15

It can be seen that the majority of cases where a CPN/warning was issued pertained to the offence of begging (often in conjunction with other offences).

6.1.2 Individuals receiving CPNs

There were 184 individuals who were issued with CPNs/warnings, of whom 20 were repeat offenders – this latter group will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Of the 184 individuals, 143 received a CPN/warning in relation to begging (often in conjunction with other offences). This clearly indicates that CPNs/warnings are very commonly used to address this offence.

Of the individuals whose CPNs/warnings related to begging, 66% were of no fixed abode, 28% gave an address of some kind, and for 6%, the address was not known or had not been given. While two-thirds of individuals given CPNs/warnings were of no fixed abode, this number may be even higher as those addresses given include hostels and Outreach service day centres which are often used only on a temporary basis, with users frequently returning to rough sleeping.

The high number of those of no fixed abode raises a number of questions. It must be considered whether this genuinely indicates that the majority of people who beg in the City are members of the homeless community (and therefore more likely to be rough sleepers); or whether there are other reasons. One alternative possibility is that those of no fixed abode are less likely to move or care if they notice police officers approaching, possibly due to the sanction being an ineffective deterrence; meaning that a disproportionately high number are given CPNs/warnings.

6.1.3 Repeat individuals receiving CPNs

There were 20 individuals who received multiple CPNs/warnings of the same level. These are defined as repeat individuals for the purposes of this section. The majority of these people received more than one first warning. However, there were some individuals who were issued with more than one second warning, and one person who received more than one third warning/arrest. Of these 20 people, 17 received CPNs/warning in relation to begging (including when in conjunction with other offences).

It is positive to see that the number of repeat offenders is relatively low, as it suggests that, where CPNs are used, they are effective in preventing people returning to the City. It should be noted that the true efficacy of CPNs is not known due to the lack of reliable information collection and the “hit

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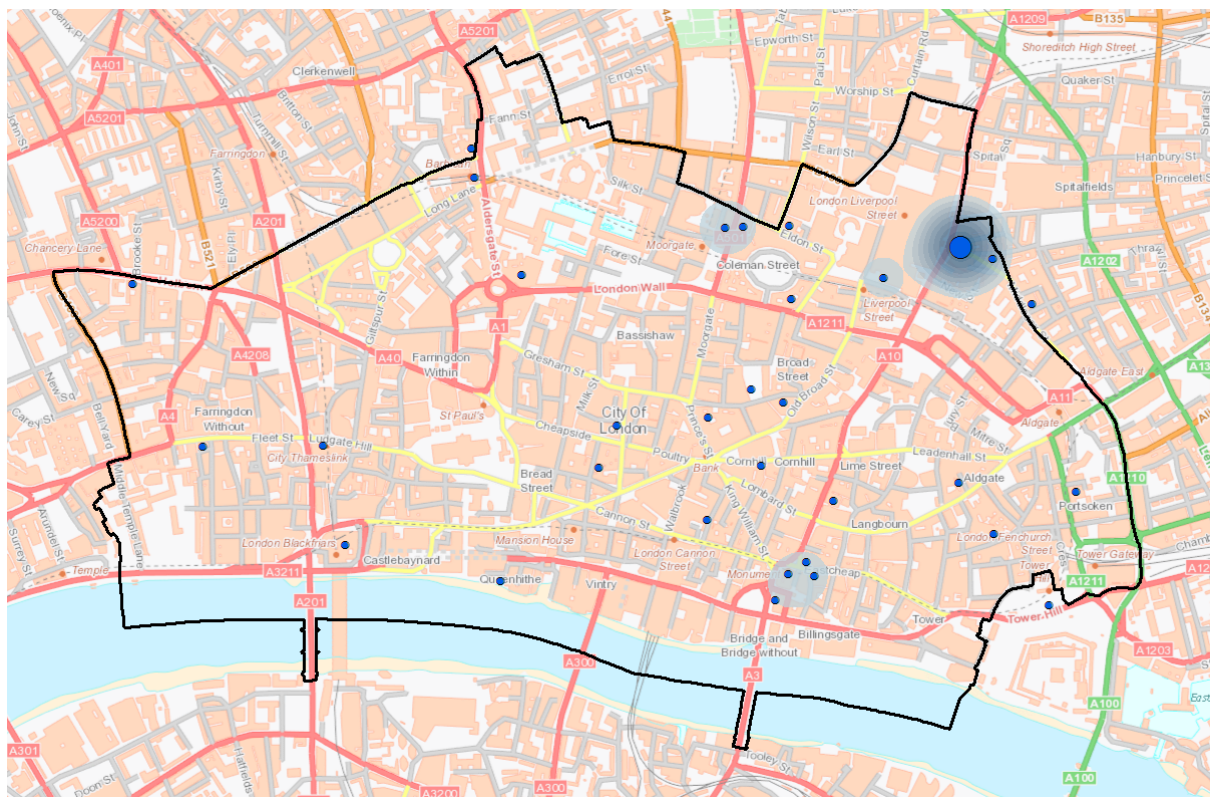
and miss” approach to begging. Furthermore, it is not fully clear how many beggars may be present in the City but have never received a CPN.

The following section details pertinent intelligence gaps for further investigation.

6.1.4 Locations of those receiving CPNs

The following map shows the locations of individuals begging when they were issued with a CPN/warning.

The exact locations of where many were stopped is not known, as frequently only the road name is recorded. With these cases, a postcode along the road has been allocated and the same postcode has been allocated to any cases that occurred upon that road. For example, Bishopsgate is a recurrent location, so although it appears that there is a major hotspot near the City boundary, in fact the beggars may have been more evenly distributed along Bishopsgate. The map provides a guide to the key locations where beggars are issued with CPNs/warnings.



cause or be likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person. The CBO can be used to either prohibit specified acts or to require the offender to undertake specified acts. It will only be made on application of the prosecution and must be in addition to a sentence being imposed or a conditional discharge. It cannot be made in conjunction with an absolute discharge.

An example of where a CBO has been used to curb begging was in Maidstone in 2015, when a prolific beggar was issued with a two-year CBO which banned her from approaching people and asking for money, sitting or loitering with a container and instructing anyone to do either on her behalf.

Work by the charity Thames Reach indicates that the majority of people who beg do so in order to fund addictions to hard drugs or alcohol.⁸ CBOs may therefore be used to the benefit of those begging, as positive requirements could specify that they must undertake rehabilitation, which would help their physical and mental health.

6.3 Civil Injunctions

The aim of a civil injunction is to prevent individuals engaging in anti-social behaviour and to try to address problems before they escalate. They are issued by the county court for adults or youth court for juveniles, and can include both prohibitions and positive requirements. When requesting an injunction, the applicant must demonstrate that the respondent has engaged, or threatens to engage, in anti-social behaviour and the court must consider it just and convenient to grant the injunction for the purpose of preventing the respondent from engaging in anti-social behaviour. Breaching a civil injunction is not a criminal offence but the breach would have to be proven beyond all reasonable doubt – for adults, a breach could result in an unlimited fine or up to two years imprisonment, for juveniles the result may be a supervision order to a detention order of up to three months.

There are many examples of where civil injunctions have been used in other areas to prevent begging. One such case was in Cheltenham in 2017, where a prolific beggar who has housing and receives benefits was issued with a civil injunction due to his anti-social behaviour, which was deemed to have an ongoing detrimental impact on specific individuals and businesses in addition to the wider community. The injunction included conditions forbidding him from begging in Cheltenham, entering a specific exclusion zone, and from engaging in conduct capable of causing nuisance to any person in Cheltenham. A positive requirement was also included to help him address his anti-social behaviour which stipulated that he must attend and engage with the relevant support agency. This is a good example of how injunctions (in a similar fashion to CPNs) can be used to prevent begging taking place in the City and also help those who beg.

It is important to consider whether neighbouring boroughs are using powers such as the civil injunction or CPNs. If they are and the City is not, it is likely that numbers of beggars will increase in the City as those people displaced from other localities move to an area considered to operate a less robust enforcement approach.

7 Comparisons

There is limited information freely available online in relation to the number of beggars found in different areas of the country and the various London boroughs. This means that comparisons are restricted. Information can, however, be found about other issues that may affect begging in the City.

7.1 London

The street counts and estimates in the *Rough sleeping in England: Autumn 2016* report, available on the government website, provide data in relation to the levels of rough sleeping seen across London.⁹ As it is known that a number of rough sleepers in the City beg, it is a fair inference that rough sleepers in other boroughs also

⁸ <https://thamesreach.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigns/killing-with-kindness/giving-money-people-begging-frequently-asked-questions/>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2016>

beg. Of the boroughs that border the City, both Westminster and Southwark saw higher numbers than the London average for individual rough sleepers in the 2016 count.

In 2015, all the boroughs surrounding the City fell in the upper half on the deprivation score scale, suggesting higher than average levels of deprivation in those areas. Indeed, Tower Hamlets had the highest deprivation score, followed by Hackney¹⁰ – both boroughs that border the City.

It is a reasonable possibility, then, that the fact that there are high levels of rough sleeping and deprivation seen in the City's neighbouring boroughs indicates that there may also be increased levels of begging in these localities. This could result in higher levels of begging in the City itself if individuals who were previously begging in the surrounding boroughs move into the City for various reasons – including perceived higher success when begging, or that other boroughs are less tolerant towards beggars.

The Metropolitan Police have an ongoing operation looking at a network of organised criminals trafficking victims into the UK from Bulgaria to work as pick-pockets. These are commonly young girls of Roma origin who are also sexually exploited on arrival and may have multiple children who are subsequently taken into care by Social services. It is possible that this network, operating in North London, will have some operatives coming to notice in the City of London, particularly as a lot of their activity is on the public transport network involving distraction theft. It would not be inconceivable for there to be potential links between this network and begging, as begging may be a natural precursor to acquisitive crime, with offenders being forced to increase their criminality if proceeds from begging are not considered great enough.

7.2 National

Again using data from the *Rough sleeping in England: Autumn 2016* report, comparisons can be drawn between the City of London, London and the rest of the country about the number of rough sleepers, and thus give some indication around begging. Countrywide, the City of London had the 13th-highest number of individual rough sleepers in 2016 – this suggests that there could be a disproportionately high number of individuals begging in the City.

It is notable that open source work indicates that a number of local authorities and police forces across the country have advertised their use of enforcement powers – examples have been seen in Section 5 of this report. If individuals who beg are displaced from other localities and the City is considered to be less active in preventing begging, then there is a strong likelihood that beggars will gravitate towards the City and numbers will increase.

8 Intelligence Gaps

There are a number of intelligence gaps around begging, key of which is the lack of reliable data. This is due in part to the fact that begging is not deemed a major threat risk and harm priority for the Force. As a result, it is difficult to have a high level of confidence in the figures pertaining to begging that are recorded each month as they are more dependent on the number of other crimes and staffing levels than the actual number of instances of begging seen in the City.

In addition to this, there are a number of ways in which occurrences or pieces of intelligence relating to individuals begging can be recorded on the Force's record management system – NICHE. This means that it is not possible to be certain whether the numbers that are being extracted from NICHE are representative of the whole, particularly as officer familiarity with the system and recording process compliance is continuing to develop since implementation of NICHE in October 2017.

Low level intelligence reporting relating to begging indicates a potential link to modern day slavery, with beggars made to carry out the activity because of force or threats made by another person. The Force currently knows little of the network behind those individuals coming to notice and this should be considered as an intelligence gap for further development.

9 Recommendations

- Ascertaining the full extent of the begging issue in the City

In order to address the problem of begging in the City, it is fundamental to improve reliable data collection. Improvements in information that relates to individual beggars will provide for improved engagement, diversion, deterrence and other forms of intervention. For example, ascertaining whether an individual is a rough sleeper or a member of an organised begging gang will allow different approaches and optimise use of the most efficient means of dealing with those who beg.

¹⁰ <http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/3/gid/3007000/pat/6/par/E12000007/ati/102/are/E09000012/iid/91872/age/1/sex/4>

Although it would be time-consuming, the most effective way of ascertaining roughly how many beggars are in the City would be for officers and staff to spend a period of time on the streets undertaking a sample survey count of the number of individuals who they see begging. It would be particularly effective to do this at contrasting periods of foot traffic – once at peak times and once at off-peak times to gain an idea of how the numbers vary. This could also lead to further work around establishing where those who beg go during the day if the off-peak number is lower than the peak number, which is information that would also be significant when attempting to effectively and efficiently address the problem.

- **Obtaining data from surrounding Boroughs**

It is important to improve understanding of comparative begging in neighbouring boroughs, and particularly to determine whether there is overlap between the prolific individuals seen in the City and those in nearby boroughs, which may permit a joint response. Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) hosted a pan-London meeting of Crime and Disorder Partnership Analysts during the second week of March 2018. This provided an effective opportunity to ascertain what data is collected and to forge improved links with surrounding localities, enabling an understanding of the wider issue in London.

- **Minimising levels of rough sleeping**

The case for any link between rough sleeping and begging may benefit from further investigation. It is indisputable that there are a number of rough sleepers in the City who do beg, either passively or actively. Consequently, a reasonable conclusion would be that reducing the levels of localised rough sleeping would also result in a decrease in begging.

A number of recommendations have been made in the associated FIB Problem Profile for Rough Sleeping. Key suggestions are to work more closely with other agencies (NHS, prison services, mental health services, etc.) which remains sub-optimal due to a lack of Information Sharing Agreements.

- **Trialling the use of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)**

Under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, a number of councils have implemented PSPOs in order to attempt to prevent begging. Two conditions must be met in order for a PSPO to be instigated: firstly the activities being carried on in a public place within their area must have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; secondly it must be likely that activities will be carried out and they will have such an effect. One such example has been proposed in Tunbridge Wells, where all persons would be “prohibited from approaching another person either in person or verbally in order to beg from the other person, and; All persons are prohibited from sitting or loitering in a public place with any receptacle used to contain monies for the purpose of begging”.¹¹

There is limited information available on the internet about the effectiveness of PSPOs, so it may be beneficial to first request data from other forces to determine this. However, a trial period of use of PSPOs as a deterrent should certainly be considered.

- **Increased use of Criminal behavioural Orders (CBOs)**

COLP do use CBOs to a limited extent and it may be beneficial to trial using these on a wider basis in order to tackle the issue of begging. Their use is restricted by the fact that they must be applied for at the same time as an offender is sentenced for a crime. However, there are certainly a number of individuals who commit alternative offences who could be issued with a CBO at the same time.

- **Opportunities for further analysis**

Further work should be considered around the use and efficacy of different powers, such as CBOs, CPNs and civil injunctions, to determine which should be used most widely.

It would be useful to monitor and record cases where these tools have been utilised across a period of two years to review whether the individuals involved continue to come to notice begging in the City and whether other

¹¹ https://issuu.com/one-media/docs/twells_all_1stnov

remedial action is taken. It is a recommendation that the Force consider a joint proposal working with the Community Safety Partnership.

- Working more closely with the King's College London Homeless Research Centre

The King's College London Homeless Research Centre investigate homelessness and factors associated with this topic. Although there are few research papers available on their website, anecdotally a doctor has warned to be cautious of linking homelessness with begging. It would be beneficial to obtain further information around this and particularly to have sight of the evidence that has caused the doctor to reach this conclusion. Additionally, the Centre may have further information about begging which would help inform any decisions on this subject.

- Encouraging members of the public not to give money to those begging

It is not considered conducive to the long-term welfare of those begging to receive money from passers-by – evidence suggests that often beggars do so in order to buy hard drugs and high-strength alcohol, which cause a rapid deterioration in their health.¹² This is also likely to lead to a vicious cycle in which individuals must continue to beg in order to fund their addictions. Additionally, it may dissuade those who are homeless and begging from accepting services from Outreach workers and encourage them to remain on the street.¹³

It may, therefore, be beneficial to instead encourage members of the public to donate to charities in order to assist those who beg. This could be done through additional advertising of the work that these agencies carry out and how to contact them –to make donations and to alert the charity workers to the locations where beggars and rough sleepers have been seen.

END REPORT.

¹² <https://thamesreach.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigns/killing-with-kindness/giving-money-people-begging-frequently-asked-questions/>

¹³ <https://www.cityoflondon.police.uk/community-policing/Pages/Rough-sleepers.aspx>

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