

Example of a grant awarded from Funds set up with ECF and matched funding from the Proceeds of Crime Scheme:

Off the Streets, based in Southend, received £2,500 from the River City Fund, managed by Essex Community Foundation (ECF) and set up with support from the Proceeds of Match Funding Scheme (POCA).

The money supported the operational costs of the organisation which supports rough sleepers getting into independent living, as well as helping with issues that might contribute to becoming homeless, such as drug, alcohol and gambling addiction.

Homelessness is a complex issue, rarely seen in isolation, and Off the Streets takes this understanding into their outreach work. They treat every person as an individual, deserving of dignity, honesty and sympathy, no matter what circumstances may have led to them becoming homeless. Once the person enters the shelter in Southend, the organisation immediately starts to build a trusting relationship and find them permanent housing, so that the journey never loses momentum.

Over a period of 106 weeks, the team were able to get 97 people out of rough sleeping and into more permanent accommodation. One of the individuals who received this help had been without fixed accommodation for a decade. In addition, they helped 21 people find jobs to support themselves. The impact of the team's work is noticeable and is greatly appreciated by those who stop at the shelter.

Thanks to support from ECF and other funders, Off the Streets can continue its vital work, handing out more meal parcels, bringing more cases to local agencies to get people into accommodation, and providing more advice to those in need of mental health support.

These volunteers provide so much to the vulnerable rough sleepers of Southend.



Staff members outside the shelter, and a heartfelt message