

Rough sleeper count shows support is vital – Julie James

“Although the annual estimates of the number of people sleeping rough in Wales have shown no significant increase compared to the same time last year, we all know from walking through our towns and city centres that this most visible form of homelessness remains persistent in Wales, and there is much more for us all to do.”

The Rough Sleeper Count is an estimate of the number of people sleeping outdoors over a two week period and over a one night period in Wales. Local authorities estimate that the figures show an additional two people sleeping rough over the two week period compared to the same time less year, an increase of less than one per cent to 347 people.

Local authorities reported 158 people sleeping rough on the night of the snapshot count, a decrease of 16 per cent or 30 people, on the previous year. However bad weather was reported across Wales on the night of the count which may have affected figures.

Across Wales there were 184 emergency bed spaces on the night of the snapshot count, of which 18 per cent or 33 bed spaces were unoccupied and available.

Julie James said:

“While we have to be cautious about these estimates, the number of people sleeping rough appears to be stabilising overall and in some areas numbers appear to actually be decreasing.

“We are investing more than £30m this year and next year to prevent and tackle homelessness. We are committed to building more affordable housing and protecting our social housing stock.

“We will continue to trial the Housing First model in various pilots across Wales, supported by over £700,000 of additional funding. These projects are in their early days but we are already seeing signs of success with people who have been sleeping rough for a long time supported into housing.

“I recently visited the Salvation Army Housing First project in Cardiff and met someone who has been successfully housed through the project. He told me about the dramatic difference it has made to his life and what it means to have his own home again. The reasons people find themselves sleeping rough can be complex and varied; we are committed to ensuring that everyone in Wales has a home that meets their needs.”