

NEWS RELEASE
26 November 2009

Kent and Medway rough sleeper count

On Wednesday 25th November, Porchlight held their 9th annual count of people sleeping on the streets. This year's count involved 256 volunteers and took place across Kent and Medway for the first time making it the largest count ever undertaken by the charity. The results will feed directly in to official government statistics.

This year's results are as follows:

Local authority area	Total people found sleeping rough	With evidence of how many more?
Ashford	0	1
Canterbury	3	4
Dartford	0	0
Dover	1	5
Gravesham	1	2
Maidstone	1	0
Medway	5	5
Sevenoaks	0	1
Shepway	5	2
Swale	0	2
Tonbridge & Malling	0	0
Tunbridge Wells	3	9
Thanet	4	0
TOTAL	23	31

Due to the nature of the count and the guidelines that have to be followed, a more accurate picture of the county's rough sleepers can be seen by looking at the amount of individuals accessing the Porchlight Kent Outreach Service which works directly with rough sleepers in the county.

On the day of the count 75 people were accessing the rough sleeper support of the Kent Outreach Service.

On the same day 123 people were on the waiting list to access the team's rough sleeper support.

This means that the Kent Outreach Service was aware of **198** people who have declared themselves as street homeless in Kent prior to the count.

Porchlight are asking the public to use the charity's freephone helpline number **0800 567 7699** to report rough sleepers to their outreach team so that they can react quickly and help even more people.

"The count is about more than just one night," explained Outreach Strategic Area Manager, Gill Bryant. "The outreach team are working with significant numbers of rough sleepers and vulnerable people on a daily basis. The public's help in identifying people in need combined with our drop-in sessions, street outreach and freephone helpline can provide a powerful tool in tackling the desperate situation people in our county are finding themselves in."

This year Communities and Local Government declared Porchlight as an 'Ending Rough Sleeping Champion' as part of its "*No one left out*" strategy to wipe out rough sleeping in England by 2012.

Porchlight works with the local authorities to co-ordinate the counts and follows count guidance from Communities and Local Government.

To find out more about the work of Porchlight and for details of local drop-ins visit www.porchlight.org.uk

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Notes to the editor:

1. The rough sleepers count is undertaken according to guidance set out by the Communities and Local Government Guidance on Evaluating the Extent of Rough Sleeping 2007 revision.
2. The Porchlight Kent Outreach Service has been working with rough sleepers and people in temporary accommodation across Kent since January 2008 provides street outreach, local drop-ins and a freephone helpline 0800 567 7699.
3. Results from Porchlight's previous counts:

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Ashford	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	2
Canterbury	7	12	3	5	5	2	8	4
Dartford	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Dover	7	4	16	7	5	6	7	1
Gravesham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Shepway	-	-	-	-	0	1	1	1
Swale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Thanet	6	1		2	1	1	3	1

4. Drop-ins are available for people to get homelessness and emergency housing advice from the Porchlight Kent Outreach Service team. Latest times and locations can be found at www.porchlight.org.uk/your-local-drop-in.

Drop-in details:

Local authority area	Day	Time	Location
Ashford	Tuesday	10am-12 noon	Ashford Gateway Centre 14 Park Mall Ashford Kent TN24 8RY
Canterbury	Monday	10am-12 noon	St. Peters Church St. Peters Lane Canterbury Kent CT1 2BP
Dartford	Tuesday	2pm – 4pm	MIND 18 West Hill Dartford Kent DA1 3DU
Dover	Thursday	10am-12 noon	Porchlight 7 Church Street Dover Kent CT16 1LY
Gravesham	Tuesday and Thursday	9.30am-11.30am	The Grand 43 New road Gravesend Kent DA11 0AB
Maidstone	Wednesday	9am-11am	Maidstone Gateway Centre King Street Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ
Medway	-	-	-
Sevenoaks	TBC	TBC	TBC
Shepway	Thursday	10am-12 noon	The Rainbow Centre Cornerstone, 69 Sandgate Road Folkestone Kent CT20 2AF
Swale	Tuesday	10am – 12noon	Swale Plus 8 Hope Street Sheerness ME12 1QH
Swale 2	Thursday	10am – 12 noon	KCA 8 Park Road Sittingbourne

			Kent ME10 1DR
Tonbridge & Malling	Wednesday	11am – 1pm	Glen Dunlop Centre 3 St Mary's Rd Tonbridge TN9 2LD
Tunbridge Wells	Monday	10.00am-12.00 noon	Moat Housing 83 Colebrook Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN4 9DP
Thanet	Wednesday	10am-12 noon	Porchlight COSS, ECHO 38 Plains of Waterloo Ramsgate Kent CT11 8HX
Thanet 2	Friday	10am-12 noon	St John's Church Community Centre Victoria Road Margate Kent CT9 1LN

4. Porchlight is a Kent wide independent local charity that works to support single, vulnerable homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. It was established in 1974 as Canterbury Cyrenians and works throughout Kent.

5. Porchlight has accommodation based projects in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. The outreach team works with street homeless people as well as supporting former homeless people in their own homes, to prevent them returning to street life. Other services support people in their own homes who are at risk of becoming homeless.

6. In 2008-9 Porchlight helped over 1,600 vulnerable people. Porchlight projects include:

Kent Outreach: Our street outreach team work across Kent including working within prisons to help offenders who will be released from prison homeless. They operate a 24 hour free phone helpline for help and advice with housing emergencies - 0800 567 7699

Young Person's Services: This includes a direct access hostel, longer stay hostel and shared house, providing support for a number years, until each individual is ready to live independently.

Mental Health: We run a housing project in Dover specifically for people with enduring mental ill-health. We also provide support to 7 clients in another purpose built accommodation project in Margate. In addition we also have a young persons'

mental health service that enables young homeless people with mental health problems to better access the health services they need.

Supported Accommodation: We have hostels in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. They range in the levels of support provided from high support needs with staff available 24hrs a day, to medium support with staff available on a 9-5pm basis.

Floating Support: This is a preventative service that provides support to vulnerable people in their own home who are at risk of becoming homeless. Many of these clients have been through the hostel system and are almost ready to live independently but just need a little support every now and again.

Training and Service User Involvement: We have a team that works with people accessing any of our services and helps them develop their skills and education. We provide tailored training and encourage people to get involved in the running and improvement of their project, or volunteer on a more formal level in the organisation. Porchlight is committed to involving our service users throughout all the activities of the charity. They are actively encouraged to become involved in education, employment, volunteering and service user involvement opportunities.

For more information about Porchlight visit www.porchlight.org.uk or contact Mark Parry on 01227 813196 / 07734 595308 or email markparry@porchlight.org.uk