



We **don't** think an addiction makes anyone less in need of help.

Drug and alcohol use often starts as a way to cope. People begging for money are almost always in a desperate situation – just perhaps not the one they say they are in.

Police, homelessness organisations and the council are actively working to deal with the complex issues faced by each individual person begging in North Devon. Outreach workers are out regularly helping homeless people often with many complex issues.

There are a number of services offered to people rough sleeping including daily help and food at the Freedom centre and a weekly dinner in Barnstaple at The Voice offices run by Encompass. Additionally there is cold weather provision available when temperatures fall below freezing.

Help us to help people in need by not giving spare change.

“So how can I help?”

It's difficult to walk past someone in need. We ask that, instead of giving spare change to people who beg, you work with us to make real change:

DONATE You could donate your change to local charities working with the homeless like Freedom Community Alliance or Encompass Southwest whose services specifically help people in the North Devon area. If you'd like to donate go to www.freedomcommunityalliance.org.uk or www.bpag-encompass.org.uk/

VOLUNTEER The Freedom Community Alliance and Encompass Southwest both use volunteers to support the work they do. If you wish to support in a practical way please visit their website for details

CHAT If you'd like to stop and chat with someone on the street and feel that they would welcome conversation, please do. You might be able to help direct them to a service that can start their journey to real change.

IN-KIND ASSISTANCE By all means, buy a cup of tea or food for people on the street if you wish



Spare Change
OR
Real Change?

BEGGING IN NORTH DEVON

What's being done and how you can help



Produced by



With kind permission from



Any spare change, please?

When we see someone in distress, our first instinct is to help. Giving spare change seems like a kind, easy way to help. But it's often the opposite.

Every person begging has a different story to tell. People end up on the street through all kinds of problems, often building up over years. At some point on this path, many people develop an addiction to alcohol or drugs as a way to cope.

Sadly, people can become dependent on begging. Research by Thames Reach shows that over 80% of people who beg do so to fund an addiction. Along with other issues they may be facing, this can keep them on the street.

Every day, people die as a direct result of alcohol or drugs paid for by begging.

We want to help people off the streets but we need your help to do it.

Begging is a vicious cycle which keeps people on the streets.



This cycle also

- feeds the drug trade
- leads to needles, syringes and other litter left on the street

By not giving spare change, we can weaken or break this cycle.

Changing how we help can be the spark that sets someone on a different journey, engaging with outreach workers and staff to move on to long-term accommodation or appropriate treatment.

Don't give spare change. Give real change. Together, we can help.

"I give to people if they're in need – what they spend it on is their choice."

If they have an addiction, it may not be.

When somebody with an addiction stops drinking or taking drugs, they feel distress, discomfort and intense cravings.

They can even suffer seizures and hallucinations. Stopping without support can be very difficult but without help, addictions can lead to overdose and death.

Someone with an addiction is extremely likely to buy substances rather than essentials like food. Instead of helping people who beg, money given by well-meaning people can kill them.

