



The number of people begging has been increasing. Giving money supports their addictions and may keep them away from agencies that can help. Should we donate? Or try to discourage donating? Is the information below any help in making the decision?

Killing me Quicker with Kindness?

Things we could consider about those who are begging:

£1 donated may mean 1 hour less to live!

1. SCCRAG advice is - "*It may not help to give cash to people who beg. Ask if they want a sandwich or hot drink, engage with them; ask whether they are connecting with agencies*".
2. Why do we say that?
3. Because giving cash can make them self-sufficient, so no need to seek essential help.
4. There are many agencies that will offer help on housing, food and addictions ... but the street person has to make the approach. Help-Us-Help is a great solution, but we have to get them there.
5. Through Help-Us-Help, everyone on the streets is checked and monitored regularly.
6. Where it starts: "*Got any spare change please?*"
7. If £1.00 per week is the theoretical Sheffield donation from kind people + 60,000 students.
8. If £60,000 is given to 60 beggars = £1,000 per beggar per week of theoretical earnings.
9. Police experience shows over £100 per day being collected per beggar = £500 per week? Observations suggest begging at some locations can generate £70 in 30 minutes.
10. This often feeds addiction and there is no incentive to seek help from supporting groups
11. It is unlikely that anyone with addiction to alcohol, drugs, prescription painkillers and illegal highs can recover without help from specialist agencies like Archer Project, DACT, Help-us-Help.
12. Begging income purchases drugs, removing the need for involvement with these agencies.
13. Getting off the streets and not begging for each fix is a tough decision for those addicted.
- 14. Typical life-span of a street addict is 40-50 years**
- 15. SCCRAG estimates, extrapolating from known data = £1 donated = 1 hour less to live**
 - a. £500 per week = 500 hours less to live = 20 days
 - b. 52 weeks at this rate = approx. 3 years less to live
 - c. Ten years on the streets = 30 years less to live
16. Which fits the life-span at 14 above and at www.omnicalculator.com/health/addiction

So – for those who beg and spend the earnings on addictive substances, their lives will be shorter and A&E will be busier. In Sheffield this can prevent people from seeking assistance from Help-Us-Help agencies. See our link to the Help-us-Help website for the rehab work provided for those who seek it.

The decision is yours as the donor. To give or not to give. Or to support the agencies that are helping rehab. Or both?

Sheffield City Centre Residents Action Group

Contact SCCRAG at www.SCCRAG.org