

# Westminster City Council UX Challenge

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## Westminster City Council UX Challenge

There has been an increase in rough sleepers due to the rise of living costs. Most people want access to facilities and council services to help support them. We need a way for residents and businesses to have a platform to give back to rough sleepers and for the rough sleepers to receive this support/aid.

Things to consider:

- Remember, giving out physical cash on the streets is not an option.
- Our research shows most rough sleepers don't have bank accounts.
- Access to our services should be quick and seamless.
- There must be some way we can use technology to help the rough sleepers.
- There are hubs across the borough where digital devices can be accessed by rough sleepers.

We are less focused on the solution but want to see your approach to the problem via user research and your understanding of the UX design process. You will be expected to evidence your thinking and approach using a virtual whiteboard. This can be via Powerpoint, Miro or Figjam etc.

First thoughts: Read, think and understand the task.

Upon receiving the email from Sally I read it really quick because I was on my way somewhere else and thought that it was about something totally different.

It was not until I was able to sit down and read it properly and aloud to somebody else, my wife in this case, that I understood what the email and the challenge was about.

I like reading things to people who are totally out of the Ux Design space and start a discussion about what they think that the task / job is, I find this type of brainstorming really helpful for me to be able to get input, grasp the concept of what I need to do and engage with the problem.

It is probably a way for me to actually sit down, focus and have time to think about what the problem is instead of multitasking and not paying enough attention to either of the things I need to do.

## The Task

Under my point of view, the task is for businesses and residents to have a platform to give back to rough sleepers and for rough sleepers to receive this support / aid because most people want access to facilities and council services to help support them

What does "platform" mean?

- 1) A raised surface for people to stand on, especially when they are speaking to a lot of people.
- 2) The area in a railway station where you get on and off the train.
- 3) All the things that a political party promises to do if they are elected.
- 4) A way of telling the public about your opinions

I think that in this case platform means: A system of some sorts that has to have technology in it as per the task.

Second thoughts: Investigate how the Westminster council is already tackling "rough sleeping".

The rough sleeping strategy 2017 - 2022 is a great starting point in order to see what plans and actions have been outlined to tackle rough sleeping in the Westminster city council.

So, rough sleeping for the council is used to refer to people who are sleeping or bedding down in the open air; in places such as streets, doorways, parks, benches or bus shelters; or even in sheds, car parks or tents. While rough sleeping is far from the only form of homelessness, it is the most visible and striking manifestation.

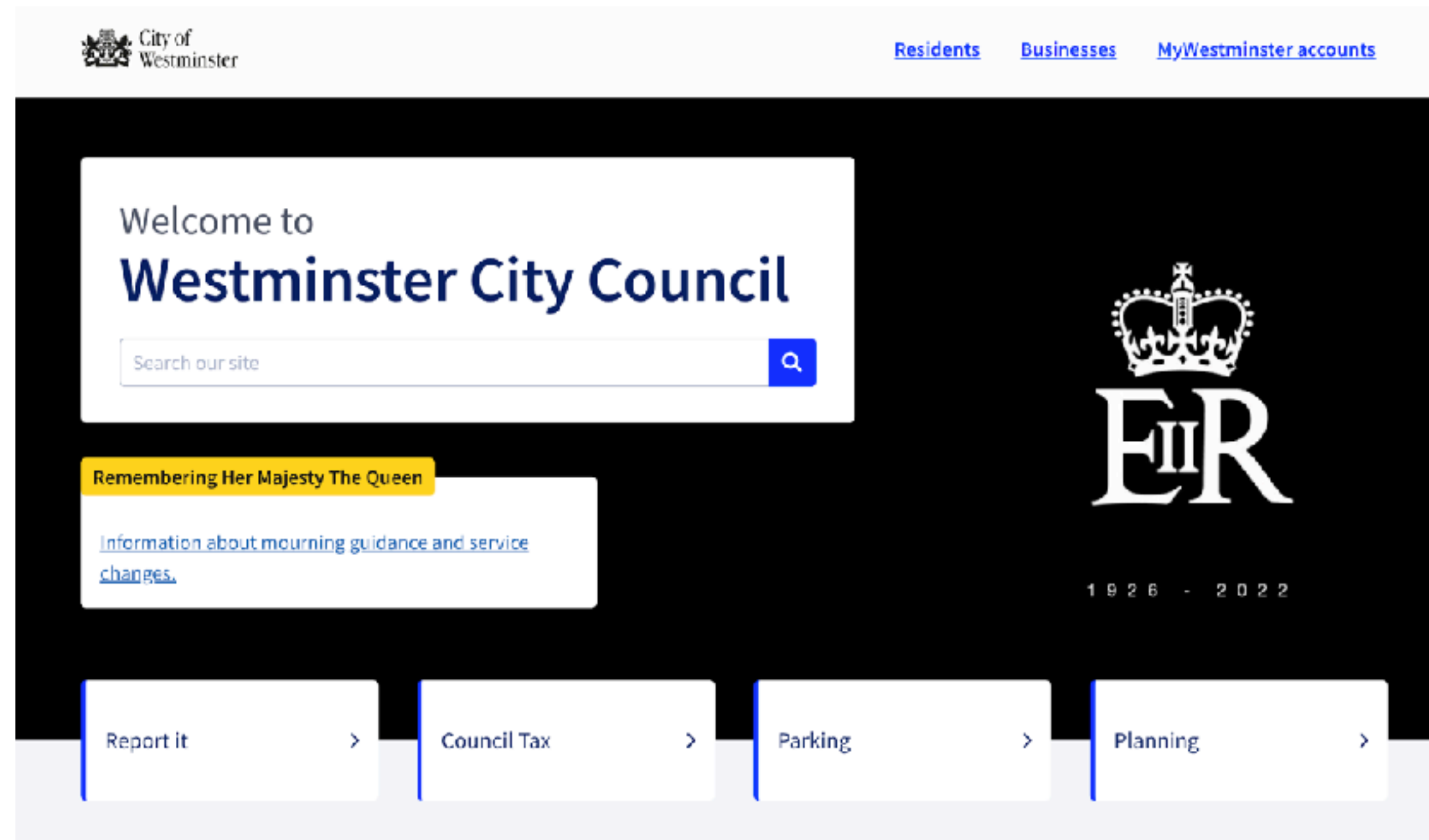
So, I want to understand what processes are for rough sleepers within the Westminster city council / website and how, I, as a rough sleeper can access to them.

I also want to understand how other councils or countries are engaging with rough sleeping

The council already has a "HOMELESSNESS", "ROUGH SLEEPING SUPPORT" and "THE HIDDEN NETWORK" tabs on the website.

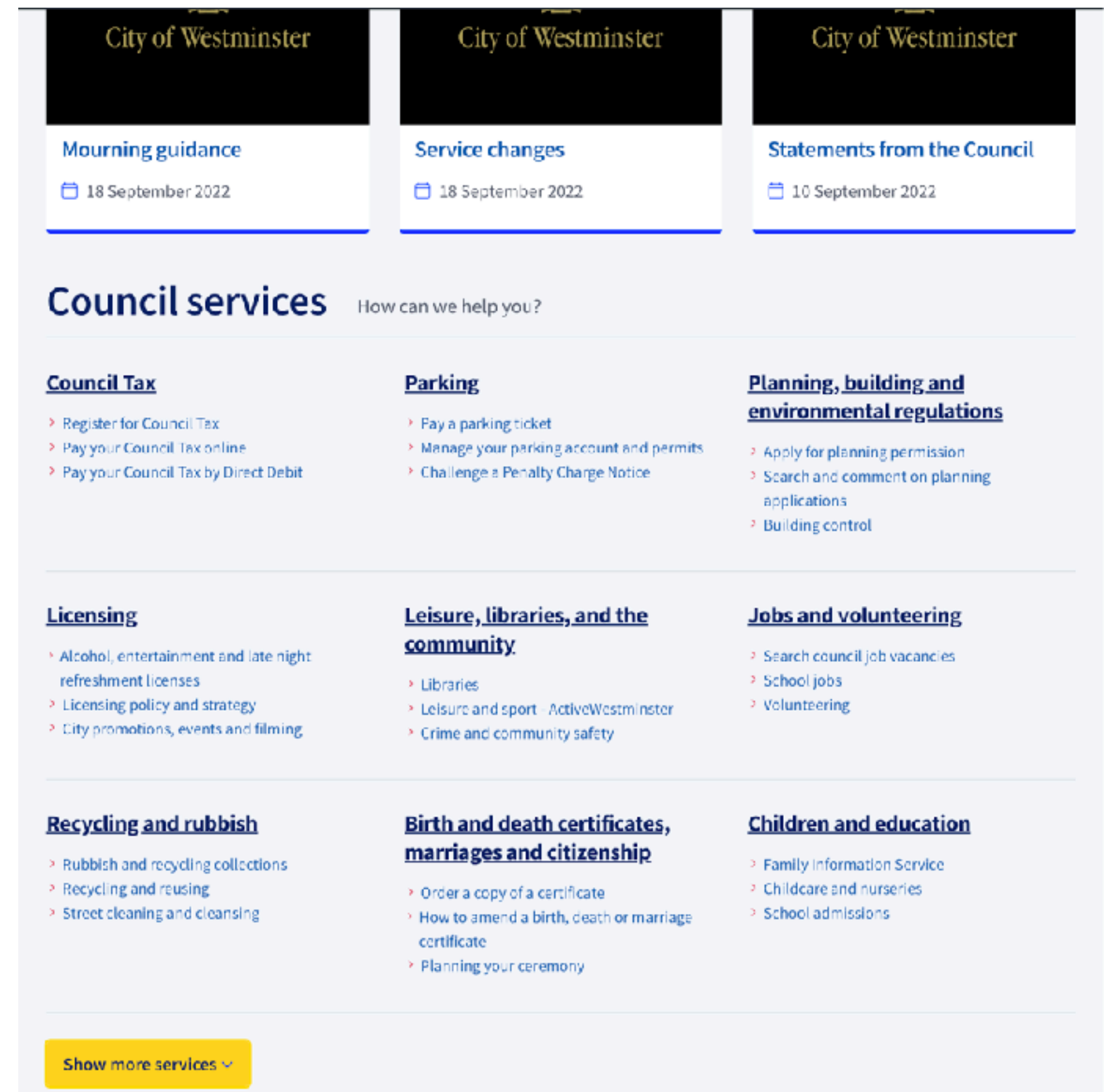
There is also the already mentioned ROUGH SLEEP strategy booklet.

My next step would be to take a look at the different sections on the website and see how easy a rough sleeper / Westminster resident / local business could make a donation or get access to the different programs.

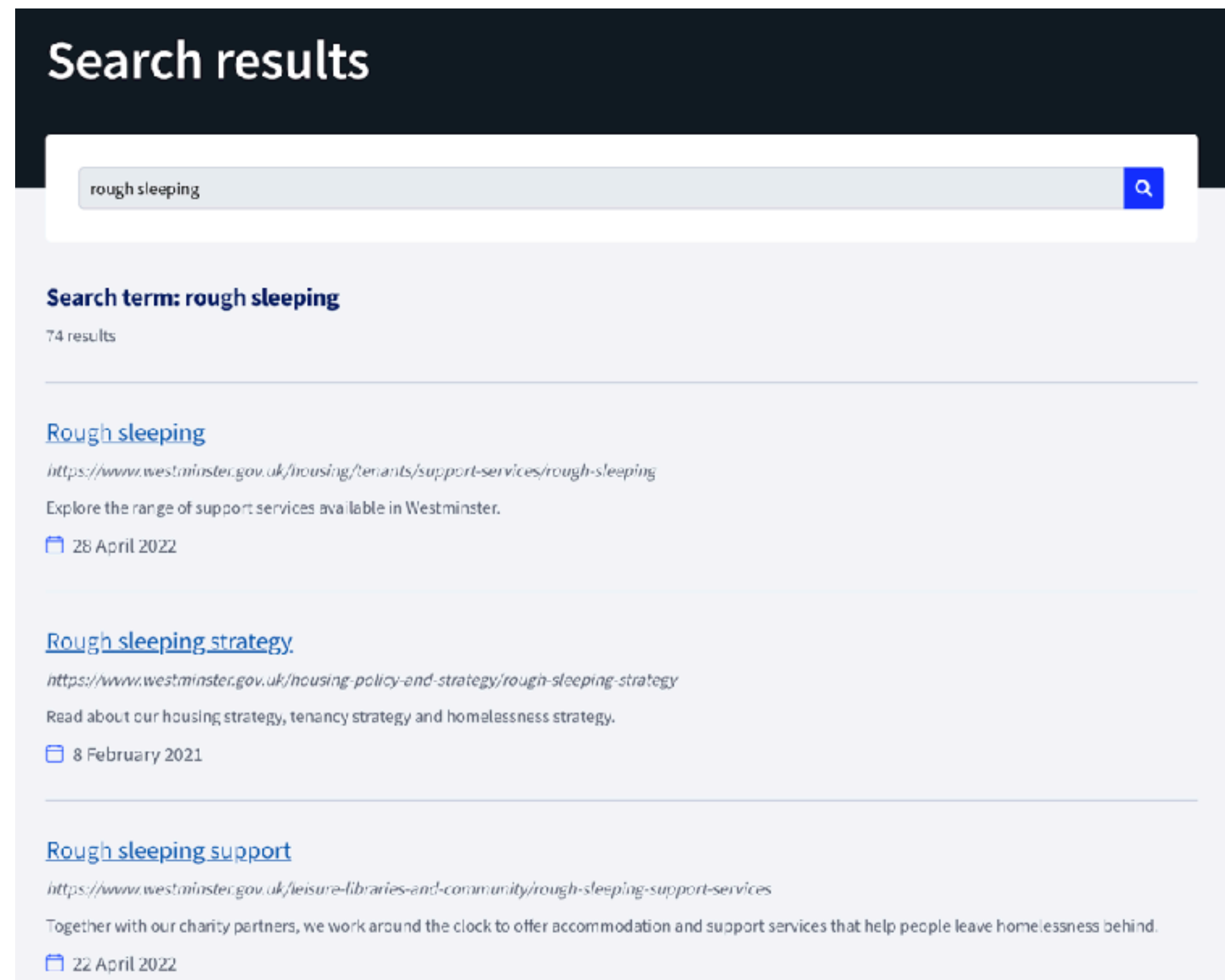


Not very easy access to the rough sleeping section within the council's website.

Resident / local business or rough sleeper has to click on the Show more services button and then find the appropriate tab.



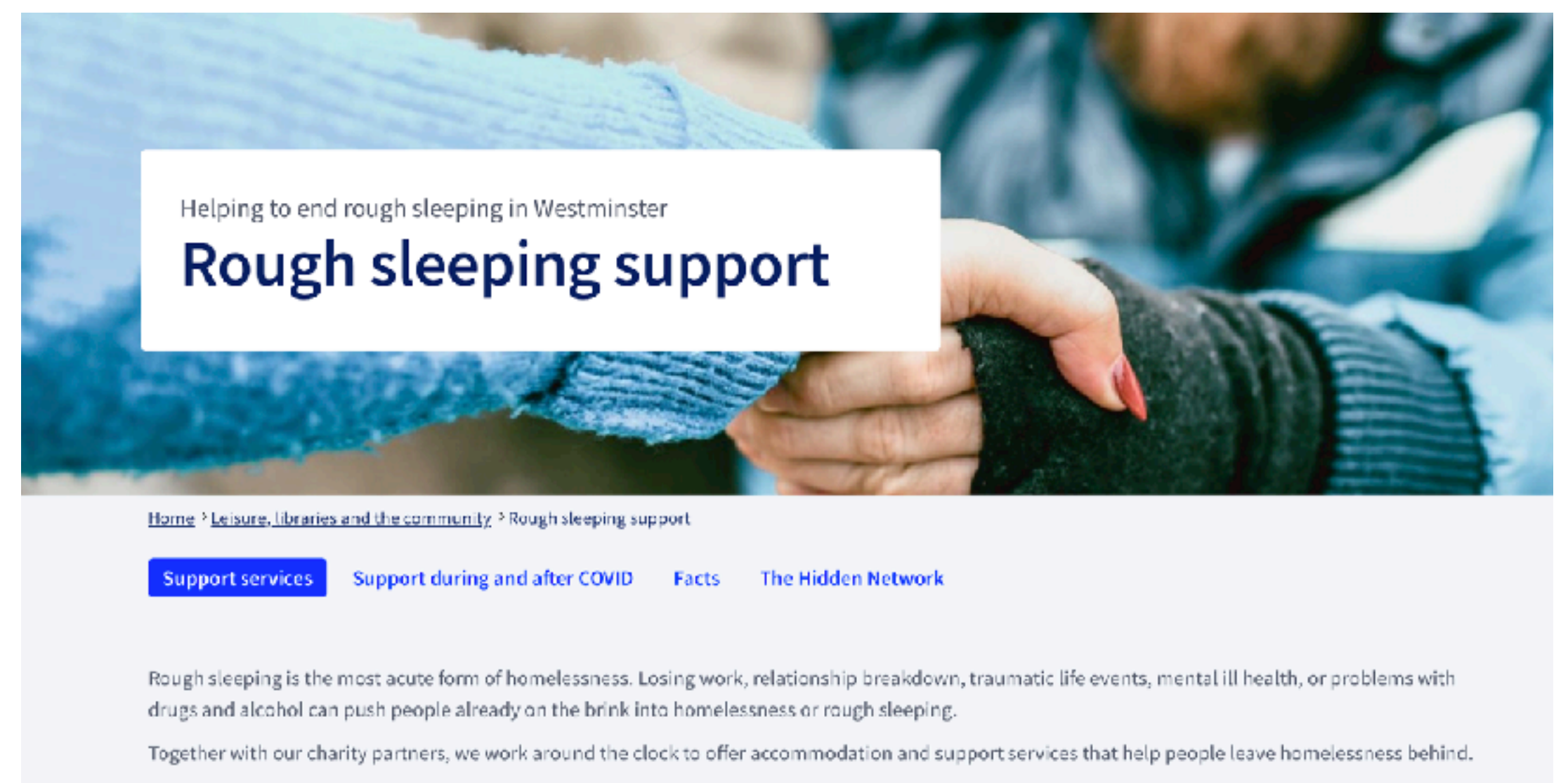




Or as a resident / local business / rough sleeper I can use the search tab, which brings loads of results and is very quick and I can find The Hidden Network.

The Hidden Network is a great initiative composed of a lot of services that can help rough sleepers.

As a resident or a local business I want to explore more and see how I can engage and donate.



# Donating to The Hidden Network through the Westminster City Council's website

Anybody, resident or business owner can donate to The Hidden Network by entering the link at the bottom part of The Hidden Network tab on the Westminster Council's website.

Really simple process, not a lot of visibility for residents and businesses to find it but much better than some other councils (like Barnet, which doesn't have a dedicated page on the site)




Your payment reference: 0000363158  
Total amount £5.00

**Thank you for your donation to the hidden network.**

Your support will help rough-sleepers rebuild their lives. This is thanks to kind people like you, and experts like Peter, an outreach worker from Turning Point. Peter helps rehabilitate some of the most vulnerable people in Westminster, enabling them to recover from the issues that led them to the streets and enjoy a brighter future.

Thank you, again. Together we can help to end rough sleeping in Westminster.

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## Talking to people in Westminster

On Friday and Saturday I went to do some interviews with businesses and residents of the Westminster council because I wanted to know what was their understanding about how the council and themselves were supporting rough sleepers and homeless and if they (as business owners and as per their business) knew how to contribute towards rough sleepers or had any ideas as to how to do so.

It was interesting to find out that the Westminster council had put together a hackaton in 2012 where an app allowing the public to submit information about people they see who are sleeping rough, an application connecting Homeless Link's data with geo-location data to identify the nearest suitable service for a homeless person to contact and a personal organizer for homeless people to log their contact with government agencies and track their applications for benefits were built.

On the following pages you will find three snapshots of the interviews I made.

I am waiting for TAP LONDON to answer.



Interview Snapshot

Castellain Road Post Office - September 2022



*"As a business owner I don't have a box to tick or a tool that allows me to send part of my taxes to charities / rough sleepers."*

Quick Facts

- As a shop keeper I cannot tell the customer if they want to round up the price of an item to give those cents to charities, customers have to tell me.
- When a customer asks me to round up the price there is nothing in the receipt that shows it.
- I would like to leave boxes with food and other things for rough sleepers in front of my shop.

Insights

- The post office is a very well established local shop in Castellain Road, Maida Vale.
- The owner of the shop does a lot of charity work himself, through the community and through his local church.
- There is a link between all the shops in that area, if one of them starts something the rest of them will follow.

Opportunities

- Training on how to use the Council tools to support charities / homeless / rough sleepers.
- Possibility of setting up a TAP system on the window / door.
- Technological system in place (cashier machine and etc) to offer rounding up to every client.

Interview Snapshot

Paddington Sports Club - September 2022



*"You should come here in an events day and talk to the people around, they are business owners in the borough and they would be happy to help."*

Quick Facts

- We hold charity events and members can donate and attend.
- They didn't know if part of the taxes were directed towards charities.
- They don't know why they don't offer rounding up.

Insights

- Anne, the club manager knows everybody in the Maida Vale neighbourhood.
- The club is linked to a lot of high income residents of Westminster and business owners.

Opportunities

- Training on how to use the Council tools to support charities / homeless / rough sleepers.
- Possibility of setting up a TAP system on the window / door.
- Technological system in place (cashier machine and etc) to offer rounding up to every client when availing of food / drinks in the bar.
- With each membership they could offer a 1 pound fee for rough sleeper charities.

Interview Snapshot

Tap London - September 2022

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Quick Facts

Insights

Opportunities

Investigate how other councils are already tackling "rough sleeping".

After doing the interviews with people and businesses from the Westminster area I wanted to know what other councils, local businesses and residents in London were doing regarding rough sleeping.

That thought quickly became something a bit bigger just because having lived in Ireland for more than a decade and being a Spanish citizen made me aware of how different rough sleeping was treated across countries.

I discovered that London and its councils have a great network of outreach and support teams, some councils are more engaging than others but I think that the knowledge is passed across very well.

Because we always start thinking about solutions before knowing what the problem is I had already thought about a device that allowed people to tap on it and donate 1 Pound each time that a user tapped.

I was pleasantly surprised when I discovered that somebody else had thought about that and had made a wonderful project about it, which is TAP LONDON!.





## Welcome to StreetLink

StreetLink exists to help end rough sleeping by enabling members of the public to connect people sleeping rough with the local services that can support them.



If you are in London please click here to go to the StreetLink London website.

**TAKE ACTION NOW**

Amongst the other projects that different councils or the city of London has or uses I found Street Link, Beam or GoodBox.

## Build a fairer society, one person at a time

Support homeless people and  
refugees into careers and homes

**Donate today**

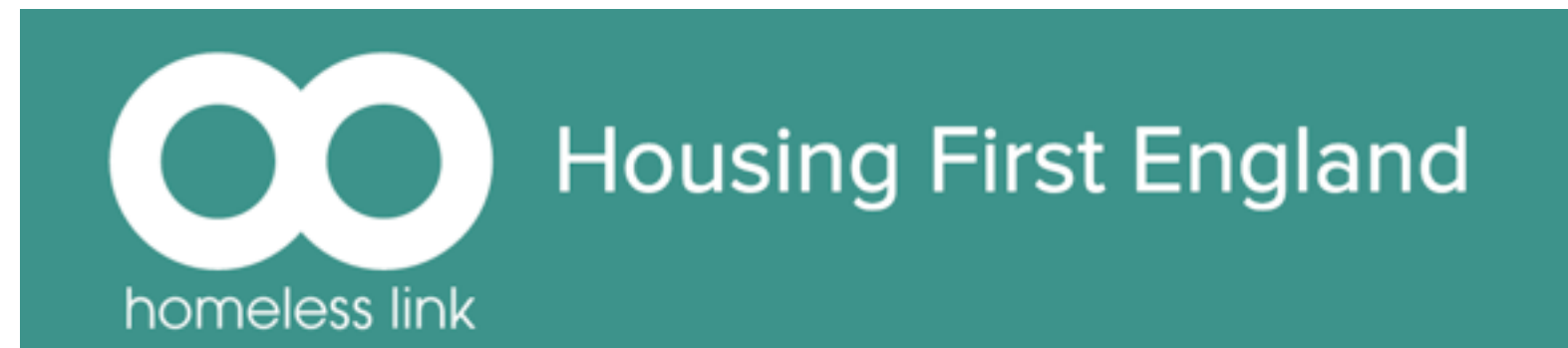
Through some informal chats with business owners in different parts of London (mostly Barnet council and shops like Budgens, local pharmacies and coffee shops), I found that they didn't know much about how to support rough sleepers as a local business.

The manager at Budgens told me that they had the "bag for charity", if a customer wanted to help charities they could choose to get a "more expensive" bag for their shopping (30p if I remember correctly) and that money went straight to a charity. He didn't remember which one.

Yet, as a new Barnet resident I had no idea that I could support charities that way.

Hastings had a great approach that can be read on:  
<https://digital-health-lab.org/hastings>

And more examples of how charities are doing great job regarding rough sleeping can be found on CHAIN at St. Mungo and Housing First England.

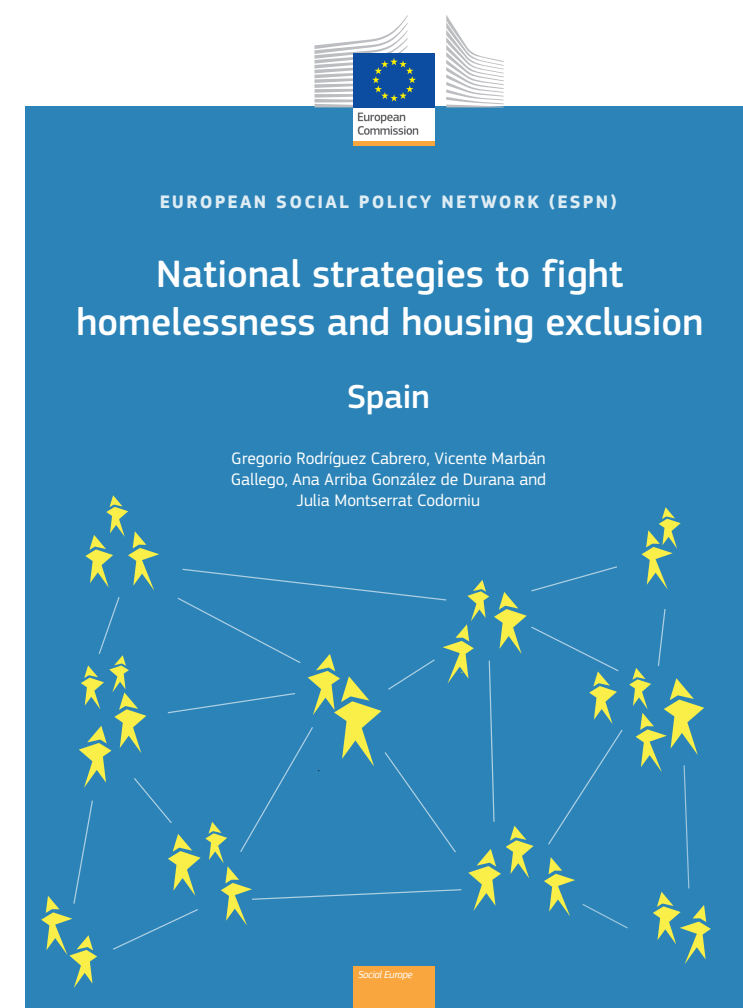


Investigate how other countries are already tackling "rough sleeping".

As the task was starting to get bigger and bigger I decided to reach out to other people to talk about rough sleepers and how a different country was dealing with the fact that there were more and more people sleeping in the streets.

In Spain, particularly in Madrid, we have a vast population of rough sleepers, this increased in the 2008 crisis and again in 2012.

Data can be seen on the following paper.



I already mentioned that I like talking to people outside the UX design space to see how they understand the issue / task at hand.

My mum is a great person to talk to, she analyses everything in great detail and is able to grasp the core of a conversation extremely well.

She commented that since I left Spain in 2009 there had been a lot of improvements in how the country understands and tries to help rough sleepers.

I was aware of some of the points she made, part of the campaigns / movies I decide to take on as a cinematographer are those that deal with social issues, specially homelessness.

However, I was not aware of a very simple thing that she mentioned that was rounding up the price of the shopping in local and governmental stores.

# Proposed solution

I like non technical solutions to problems because usually they take the less time to implement and that leads to happy users.

I believe that in order to create a really good solution the emphasis should be on treating a rough sleeper as the user of council services and seeing how local shops and residents could support the council.

It is a very difficult task because the council already has plenty of services, charities and support for rough sleepers and I'm sure that a lot of super smart people has already worked around this for years.

However, in the interviews I have done around businesses they told me that they currently don't offer round up "services" and that they cannot offer that to customers.

I believe that this could be a great addition to the other support teams that the council has in place.



JAZZTEL 4G 17:47		
Buscador de movimientos		
OTR	Pago en SE CORREOS Y TELEGRAFOS SALCORCON ES	-55,12 €
Lunes 18/10/2021		
OTR	Pago en SE CORREOS Y TELEGRAFOS SALCORCON ES	-91,50 €
Miércoles 18/08/2021		
OTR	Pago en SE CORREOS Y TELEGRAFOS SBARRIADA DE SES	-4,72 €
OTR	Pago en REDONDEO IMPACTO CORREOS BARCELONA ES	-0,28 €
Jueves 05/08/2021		
OTR	Pago en SE CORREOS Y TELEGRAFOS SALCORCON ES	-43,75 €
Opciones		

As mentioned before, in Spain local shops and governmental authorities / businesses offer rounding up services as seen from this screenshot and probably a system similar to this could be placed in tills and self service machines.



*"People donate money for disaster relief because they feel empathy for the victims.*

*They feel good to give something they have to someone who has greater need.*

*In the same way, no-one gives money to someone homeless in order to get them off the street.*

*We donate because we feel a sense of empathy and may even try to visualise ourselves in their worn shoes, wondering how on earth we would cope in such difficult circumstances.*

*With less empathy there will inevitably be less donations both to the street homeless and to the charities."*

Stephen Gray