



Update from Heaton Greens,
November 2016:

Don't let Newcastle criminalise the homeless and destitute



More people than ever before are being forced to ask for money on our city's streets. Benefit sanctions, unaffordable housing, unemployment and addictions all play their part.

Multiple causes demand multiple solutions. But the Council is proposing a 'one size fits all' approach. This would penalise those most in need — it would even make carrying a duvet through the streets a criminal offence.

The City Council is consulting on a **Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)**. Paragraph 16 of its draft order states, "A person shall not ...

- "have in their possession any item for holding, inviting or receiving money for the purpose of begging;
- "visibly have in their possession or deposit any materials used or intended to be used as bedding."

If introduced, anyone who does either of the above will be guilty of a criminal offence, liable to arrest and a £1, 000 fine. Council officers could hand out a fixed penalty notice to anyone committing the same 'offences'. **The PSPO consultation closes 25th November:** see below for how to respond.

Newcastle Green Party has objected to this and other parts of the draft PSPO. We have asked the Council to apply a human rights test to their proposals. Laws designed to tackle anti-social behaviour should not be used to hide the true levels of deprivation within our city. Threatening beggars with fixed penalty notices is the wrong approach to tackling those with complex needs or who are inadequately housed.

Your local Green campaigner, Andrew Gray, has worked with national groups Liberty, Manifesto Club, Keep Streets Live and Homes not Handcuffs, to ensure that the Council's proposals are properly challenged. But to defeat these plans, we need more responses to

