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East London council cut threatens Catholic homeless centre

23 January 2015 12:24 by Paul Donovan

A Catholic charity for the homeless may be forced to close down its rough-sleeper centre following a withdrawal of support by the London Borough of Newham.

East London-based Anchor House set up an assessment centre in Stratford that takes rough sleepers of the streets with the help of a £150,000 government grant. The centre provides accommodation at its hostel in nearby Canning Town and helps with education and training support.

Now the Government has decided to channel such funding through local authorities and Newham failed to support the project.

Director of Anchor House Keith Fernett said 200 people had been taken off the streets in the last year and were living, and many were working, in the community.

“Surely if you have a high-performance outfit outdoing performance targets you should use it,” said Mr Fernett. “At present we are funding the assessment centre out of the reserves but that can only go on til March. We need continuity funding or it will close down.”

A Newham Council spokeswoman said: “We value the work of Anchor House and we work closely with Keith and his staff to ensure some of our most vulnerable residents receive the help they need. We have a longstanding contract with the organisation who provide units of self contained hostel provision for single homeless people”

She added: “The council has seen swingeing cuts to its budget by the Government, which will increase this year, so our own resources are limited. We understand that many third-sector organisations are experiencing financial problems because of the current economic climate and increased demands and the council is doing what it can to help.”



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