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STREET PEOPLE

Thousands of rough sleepers in city assisted

STAFF REPORTER

SOME 5073 people were helped off the streets in 2024/25, compared to 4409 the previous financial year, through shelter placements, reunification of families, and other forms of reintegration, the City of Cape Town said.

"The City does as much as possible, but we cannot do it alone. Our partners play an integral part in assisting rough sleepers and we can do more, because of their role. I want to thank them for their selfless dedication and commitment to some of the City's most vulnerable people," said Community Services and Health mayco member, Francine Higham.

Further efforts to get people off the streets included:

- ◆ 691 people participating in development programmes at City-run Safe Spaces.

- ◆ 80 Expanded Public Works Programme work placements to help those staying at the Safe Spaces and in shelters get back on their feet.

- ◆ 627 referrals for social grants, identity documents, specialised care

facilities, and substance abuse treatment.

The City's support for people sleeping rough on the streets includes access to City-run Safe Spaces and partner shelters, work and reintegration programmes and assistance in overcoming substance abuse as part of its Rough Sleeper Strategy.

One of the people who was assisted is 40-year-old Legidas Ndaviragiye who returned to his home country of Burundi earlier this month.

Legidas was in the country legally, but had fallen on hard times after a fire destroyed his home.

"Our field officers first met Legidas in 2022 as a rough sleeper after a complaint was received. Our staff arranged shelter placement, and followed up for two years. Along with the Haven Night Shelter, we assisted him with the reunification process and soon he was ready to return to his home country.

"His life is one of many changed through our interventions. We are serious about restoring dignity and impacting the lives of those who find themselves on the street, in a positive way. We are committed to assisting as



ROUGH sleepers at various unlawful occupation hot spots in Cape Town agreed to move to City shelters. | ARMAND HOUGH Independent Newspapers

many people as possible with solutions that make an impact and are sustainable," Higham said.

The 2025/26 budget includes a proposed R9.9 million for upgrading and expanding safe spaces; and

a proposed operations budget which includes R 1.7m for street people initiatives such as support programmes and winter readiness, and R1.4m for the EPWP street people economics project.