



Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting

Item Title – Provision for Rough Sleepers in Shropshire

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1. Summary

This report seeks to update the HWBB on a range of actions being undertaken to support and rehouse rough sleepers in the county.

2. Recommendations

This report is for information only and the HWBB is requested to note its contents as well as circulate the 'how to report information' accordingly.

REPORT

3. Background

Annual rough sleeper Count:

The annual rough sleeper count took place in Shropshire early morning of Thursday 14th November 2019. The count was both a spotlight and estimate. This means we carried out an actual count in the main market towns (Whitchurch, Market Drayton, Wem, Shrewsbury (centre and outskirts), Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Church Stretton) as well as an operational meeting to go through known verified rough sleepers who were not seen. The final figure submitted to MHCLG was 16, a reduction of 6 on last year's 21.

A breakdown of these figures are below:

Snapshot figure		16
Demographic breakdown	Gender	
	Women	1
	Men	15
	Other gender identity	-
	Not known / prefer not to disclose	-
	Age	
	Under-18 (add further detail below)	-
	18-24	1
	Over 25	15
	Not known / prefer not to disclose	-
	Nationality	
	UK national	15
	EU national (excluding UK)	1
Non-EU national	-	
Not known / prefer not to disclose	-	

Cold Weather Provision:

Shropshire Council Housing Services activated Cold Weather Provision (CWP), which is a non-statutory provision of accommodation for all rough sleepers in the County, on Friday 30th November 2019. This will be ongoing till March 2020.

CWP is an offer of accommodation to all current known rough sleepers as well as any new clients who present during the winter months. The offer of Cold Weather Provision is made to all known and verified rough sleepers, unfortunately not all will accept the offer. For those who do accept the offer accommodation, this provision offers stability and security to rough sleepers identified by Shropshire's taskforce, and presents different opportunities for officers to engage with and provide support to those requiring it. Assistance is provided to explore a range of accommodation options in an attempt to find suitable, permanent accommodation away from street homelessness.

For those who refuse the offer of CWP there will be an offer of Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) during times when the weather is considered severe. So far this winter we have operated this for 3 nights, out of 70 Castle Foregate. SWEP is possible through the volunteering of staff, both Shropshire Council staff and our partner agencies such as Shrewsbury Ark and Shropshire Recovery Partnership.

Outreach:

The Outreach service functions all year round and therefore continues throughout the winter period, attending any reports of rough sleepers and making them aware of the advice and support available. Currently Shropshire Council funds Shrewsbury Ark to deliver the Outreach Service through 1 member of staff and volunteers. Going forward we have secured funding from MHCLG to set up a rough sleeper team. This will consist of 5 additional staff members (1 Coordinator and 4 Inreach / Outreach workers). As we need outreach to cover the whole of Shropshire it is important that we are able to deploy different staff into different areas on the same day. Clearly with only one member of staff this is not possible, but a team will enable us to attend reports of rough sleepers and offer support and assistance much quicker than before.

The Rough Sleeper team will be based within 70 Castle Foregate and will also run the hostel accommodation for those rough sleepers who are ready to engage with services and work to move on into their own accommodation.

Finally, Shropshire Council IT services and Housing Services have worked together to develop an app for reporting rough sleepers. Although in the early stages the app means that outreach workers can input data via their mobile phone during the outreach session which automatically populates a spreadsheet which allows data to be visually shown via Shropshire Councils 'The Bridge'. Better collection of data means we better understand our cohort of rough sleepers. We understand how many new referrals are in fact new and how many rough sleepers engage with the support that is offered. A better understanding of our known rough sleepers allows us to provide more targeted support and assistance, meeting individual needs. This work is starting to prove dividends with a number of long term entrenched rough sleepers supported to move to accommodation, and then continued to be supported whilst they settle into a property.

Alternative Giving Scheme:

Although Shrewsbury has an Alternative Giving Scheme (AGS) there is a recognition by all partners that this needs to be relaunched. Shropshire Council is working with the BID to develop a website for the public to better explain the work we do as a task force, as well as the benefits of financially supporting organisations via the AGS rather than direct to rough sleepers. This work is ongoing.

4. Financial Implications

Shropshire Council has successfully bid for money via MHCLG's Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding. In 2019 we secured £178,000 for staffing and private rent incentives. We have bid again for this funding and are awaiting news of whether we have been successful for funding to take us into 2021.

Further to this we are able to bid for funding to support our work for Cold Weather Provision. This funding is paid in arrears by MHCLG once the winter months have passed.

Finally, MHCLG recently announced increased funding for homelessness across the country. Although this is not specifically for rough sleeping, as the visible side of homelessness and those who are arguably the most vulnerable, additional funding will clearly be used to benefit our rough sleeper projects.

Shropshire was awarded the following:

- Flexible Homeless Support Grant – £359,395 (annual grant but increased this year)
- Homeless Reduction Grant – £176,010 (previously New Burdens annual grant funding but increased this year)
- Homeless Prevention Grant – £315,576 (annual grant – no additional funding)

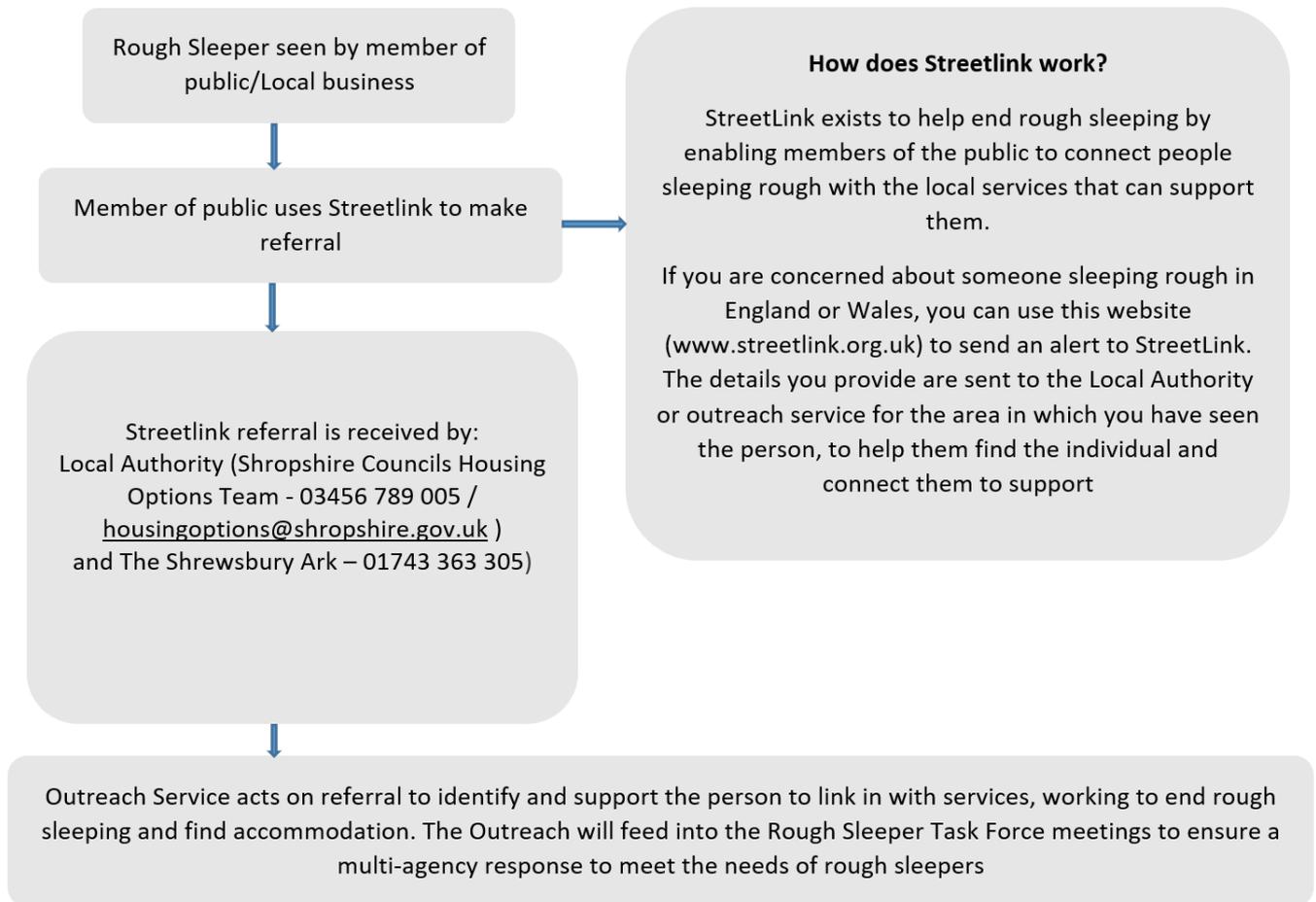
5. Additional Information

Please note in appendix A details of 'How to report a Rough Sleeper' and in appendix B screenshots of the streetlink website. This information can be circulated around organisations.

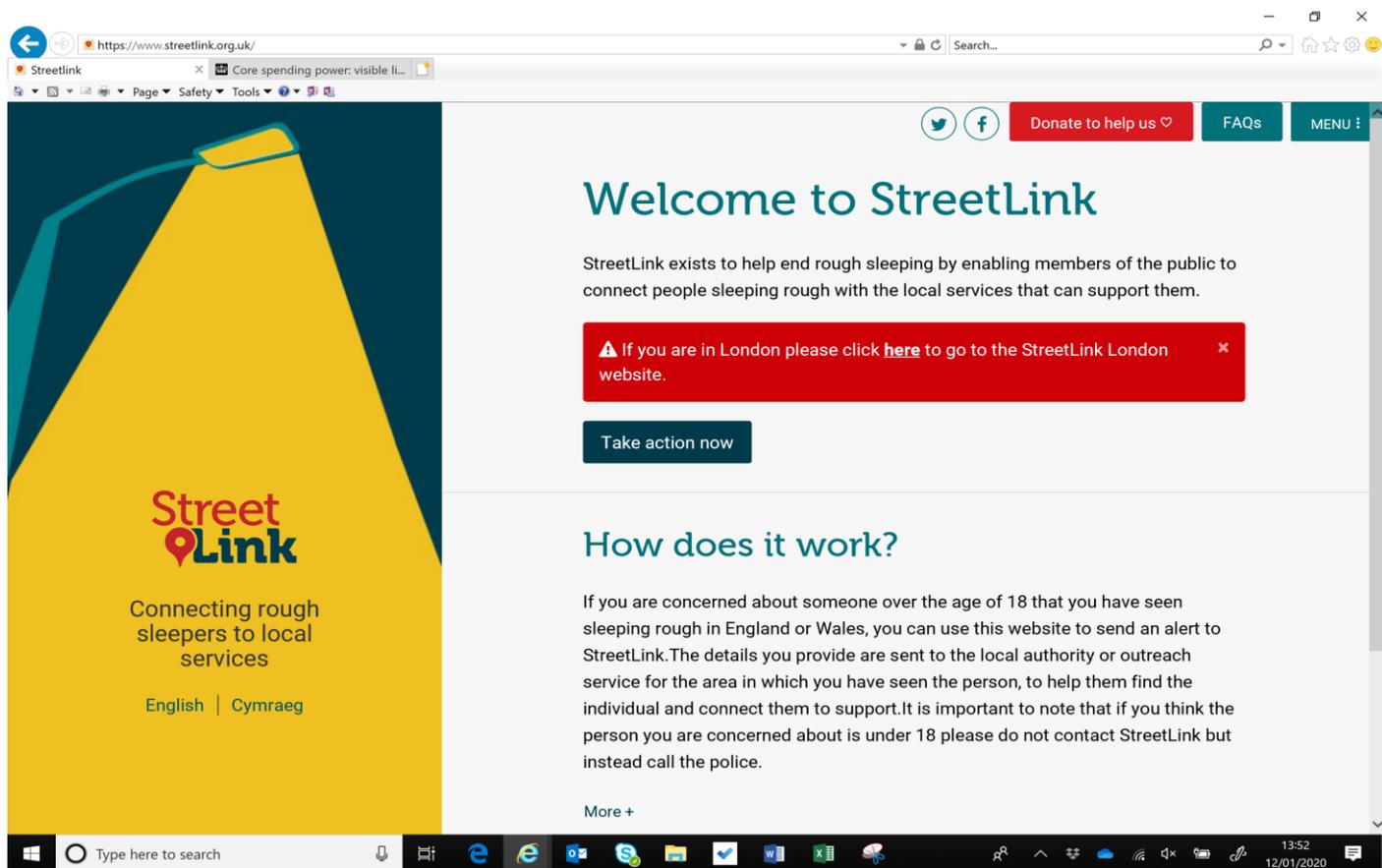
List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Robert Macey
Local Member All
Appendices Appendix A – 'How to report a Rough Sleeper' Appendix B – Screenshots of Streetlink website

Appendix A – How to Report a Rough Sleeper:

If you are a member of the public or a local service and wish to make the Local Authority and services aware of a rough sleeper, please find the process below:

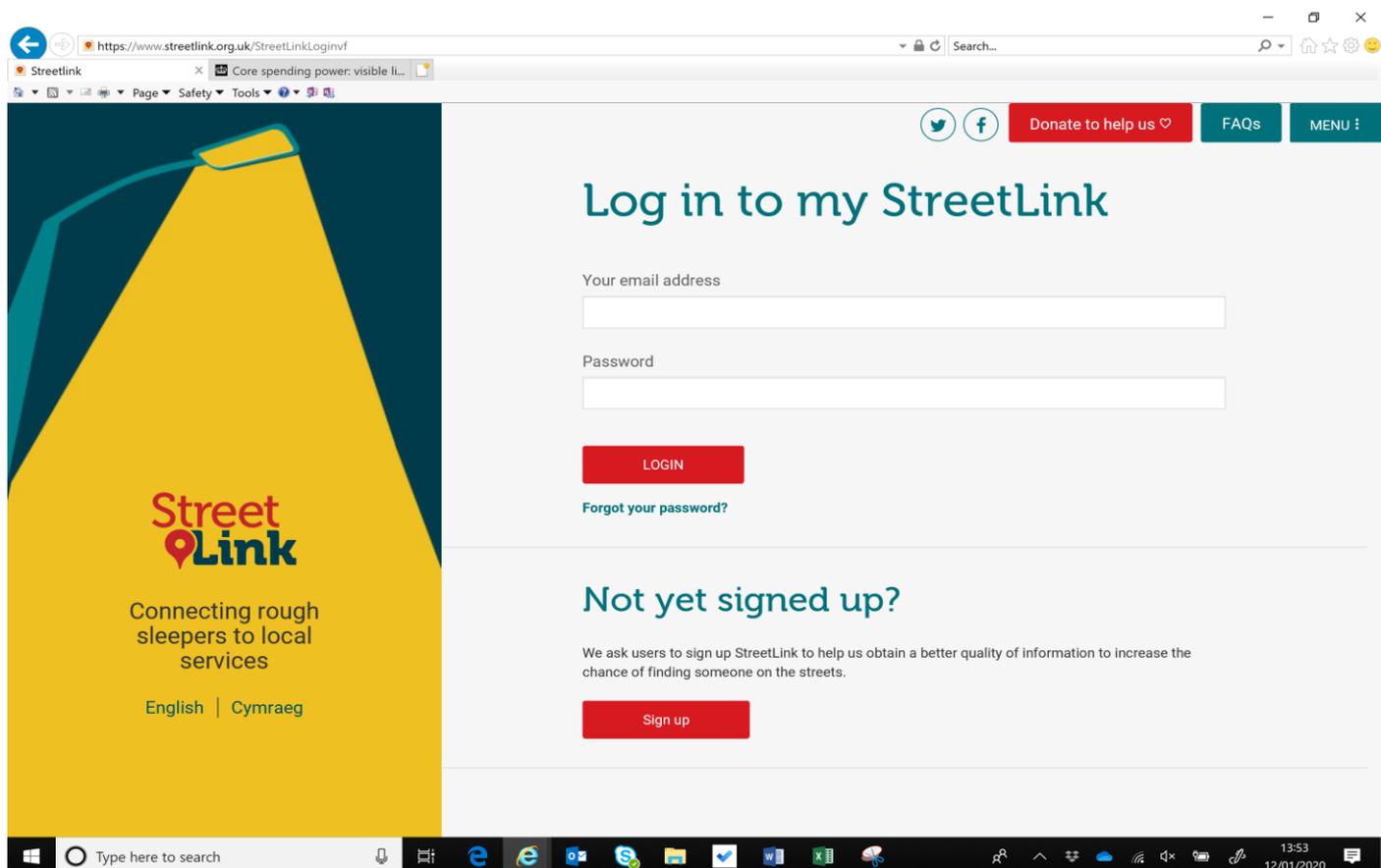


Appendix B – Screenshots of Streetlink website:



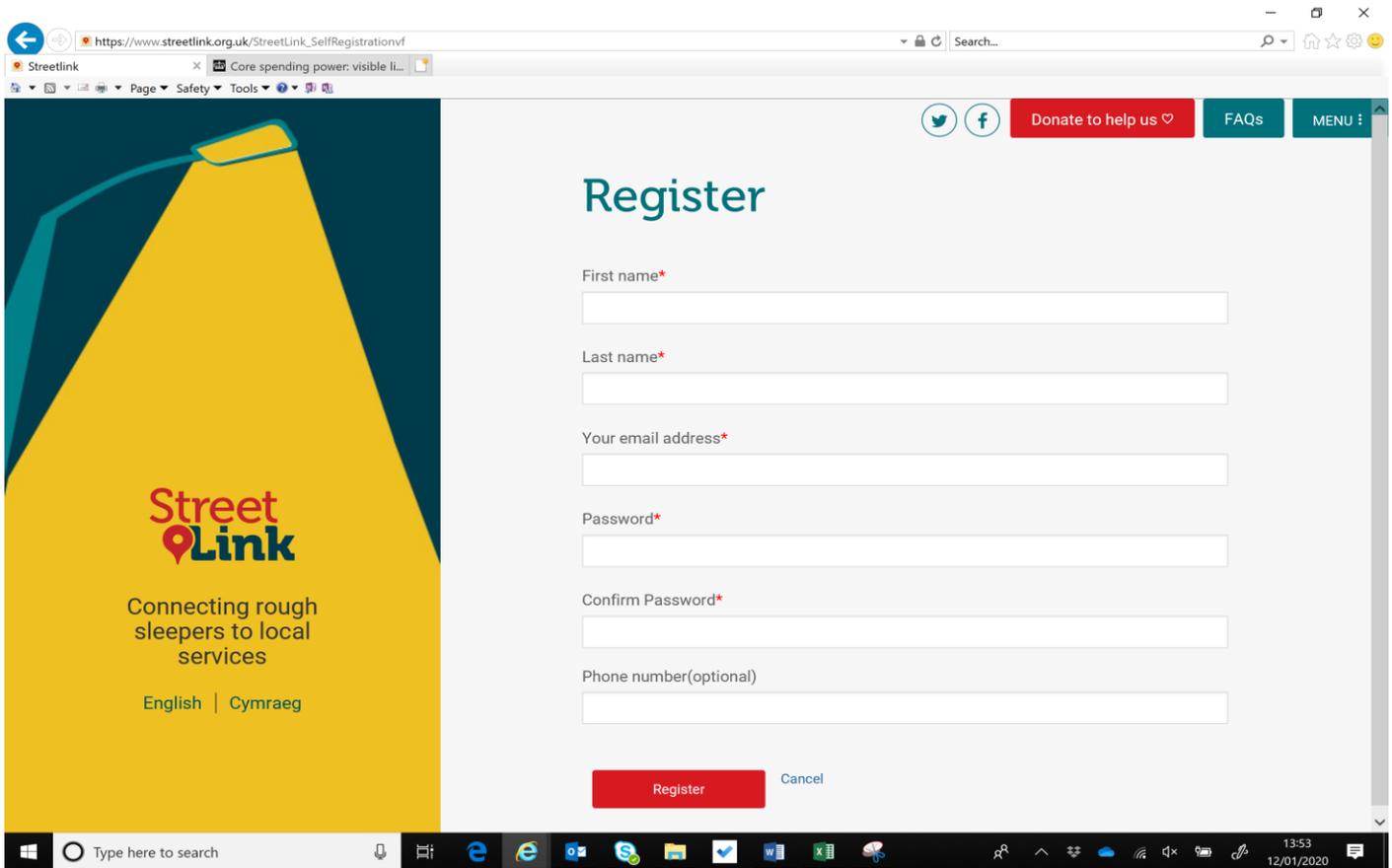
The screenshot shows the StreetLink homepage in a web browser. The address bar displays <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>. The page features a large yellow and teal graphic on the left with the StreetLink logo and the text "Connecting rough sleepers to local services" and "English | Cymraeg". On the right, there is a navigation bar with social media icons, a "Donate to help us" button, and links for "FAQs" and "MENU". The main heading is "Welcome to StreetLink". Below this, a paragraph explains the organization's purpose: "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." A red alert box contains the text: "If you are in London please click [here](#) to go to the StreetLink London website." Below the alert is a dark teal button labeled "Take action now". Further down, the section "How does it work?" is followed by a paragraph detailing the process of reporting rough sleepers and a "More +" link.

Press on the 'Take Action Now' button

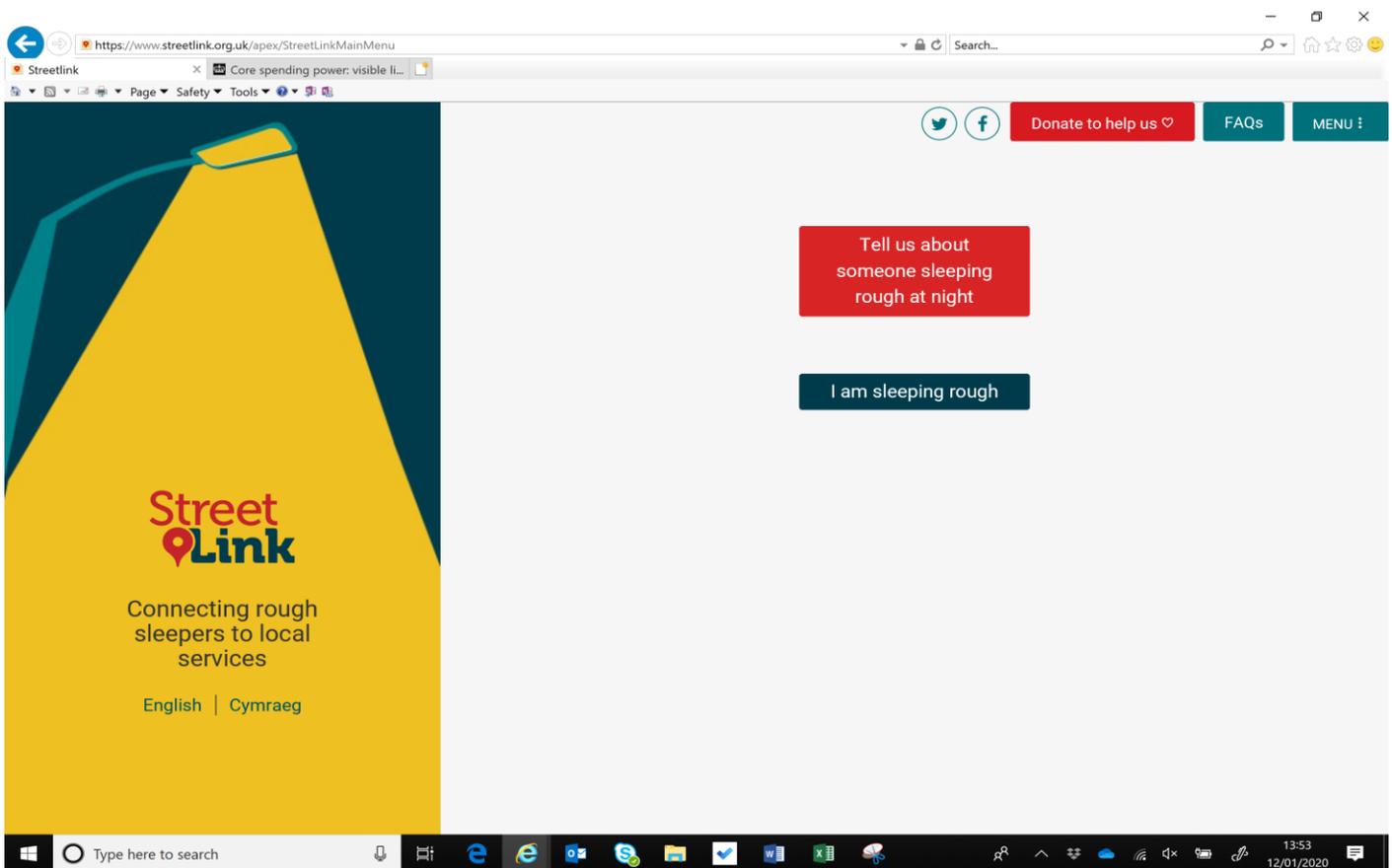


The screenshot shows the StreetLink login page in a web browser. The address bar displays <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/StreetLink.Loginvf>. The page features the same large yellow and teal graphic on the left as the homepage. On the right, there is a navigation bar with social media icons, a "Donate to help us" button, and links for "FAQs" and "MENU". The main heading is "Log in to my StreetLink". Below this, there are two input fields: "Your email address" and "Password". A red button labeled "LOGIN" is positioned below the password field. A link "Forgot your password?" is located below the "LOGIN" button. Further down, the section "Not yet signed up?" is followed by a paragraph explaining the benefits of signing up and a red button labeled "Sign up".

Sign up if you are not yet registered



Basic details are needed to register on the site



Press on the 'Tell us about someone sleeping rough at night' button

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/apex/StreetLinkActionVF?lang=english>. The page features the StreetLink logo on the left and a main heading: "Do you know where this person is sleeping rough?". Below the heading are two buttons: "Yes ✓" and "No ✗". On the left side, a vertical navigation menu lists the following steps: "Take action" (highlighted with a white circle), "Set time", "Set Location", "Details", and "Submit". The top right corner contains social media icons for Twitter and Facebook, a red "Donate to help us" button, and links for "FAQs" and "MENU". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the search bar and various application icons, with the system clock displaying 13:54 on 12/01/2020.

Submit details – on the left of the screen you can see the sections needing to be completed