

Disabled man threatened with arrest after handing out food to the homeless in Brighton

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A disabled man in a mobility scooter was threatened with arrest after handing out sandwiches, soup and socks to the homeless.

Steven Sayer, 51, claims a police officer grabbed him by the arm and turned off his disability scooter after he refused to hand over his personal details. The incident happened in New Road, Brighton, on Monday afternoon.

Mr Sayer, nicknamed 'meals on wheels' by his homeless friends, said: "The police said there was a Section 35 order in the road because of drunken behaviour, so they asked me and the rough sleepers to leave.

"I told the homeless chaps they'd better move on and we started to leave. But as we left, an officer ran up to me demanding my details. I told him I'd done nothing wrong and wasn't giving my name.

"I went to leave, but the officer grabbed me by my arm and switched my scooter off. He said he would arrest me for aiding and abetting antisocial behaviour if I didn't hand my details over."

Mr Sayer, who has been helping the homeless "every Monday for three years", said the officer left him for "20 minutes in the cold" while he spoke to his supervisor.

He added: "The officer came back over and said 'right, my inspector said he's giving you permission to go this one time but if you come here again you'll be arrested'.

"I'm disabled with ME, prolapsed discs and osteo-arthritis, and now I'm banned from New Road for handing out sandwiches to the homeless."

[Sussex Police](#) said a Section 35 order gives officers the power to direct people to leave an area for up to 48 hours if there has been ongoing antisocial behaviour.

Inspector Brian McCarthy said Sussex Police received 67 calls from local businesses about antisocial behaviour in the New Road area from September 27 to November 16.

He added: "Obviously the good work done by charities in Brighton and Hove, particularly in the run up to the festive season, is extremely worthy. However, we work with a number of charities and organisations which work with homeless and vulnerable people in the city in appropriate ways and places."

Police said a 35-year-old man, who Mr Sayer said was not part of the group he was with, was arrested for using threatening, abusive words and was given a caution.