

ROUGH SLEEPING

BIRMINGHAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY CONSULTATION

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Working together to end street homelessness



Making a positive difference everyday to people's lives



Introduction

We are consulting members of the public on our Rough Sleeping Addendum which forms part of our overall Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+. Since 2017 there have been several significant local and national developments specifically relating to rough sleeping.

- **April 2018** - Birmingham was one of three regional pilot areas in the country to establish Housing First with partners across the West Midlands Combined Authority, offering those who have experienced rough sleeping, with chronic health and social care needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives, through the offer of intensive wrap around support.
- **August 2018** - the Government published a National Rough Sleeping Strategy setting a goal to end rough sleeping in England by 2027. Alongside a package of short term funding the government announced it would require local authorities to update their existing Homelessness Strategies detailing specific work being undertaken in response to rough sleeping.
- **November 2019** - following eight consecutive annual increases in the numbers of people sleeping rough, there was 42% reduction which continued moving downwards in early 2020.
- **March 2020** - as part of its emergency COVID-19 public health measures, the Government issued an '*Everyone-In*' instruction and additional accommodation funding to local housing authorities, in order to accommodate anyone sleeping rough on the streets including people who traditionally had limited access to own to their local services as rough sleeping rough. This resulted in reduction of 80% in rough sleeping less than 6 months.

Background

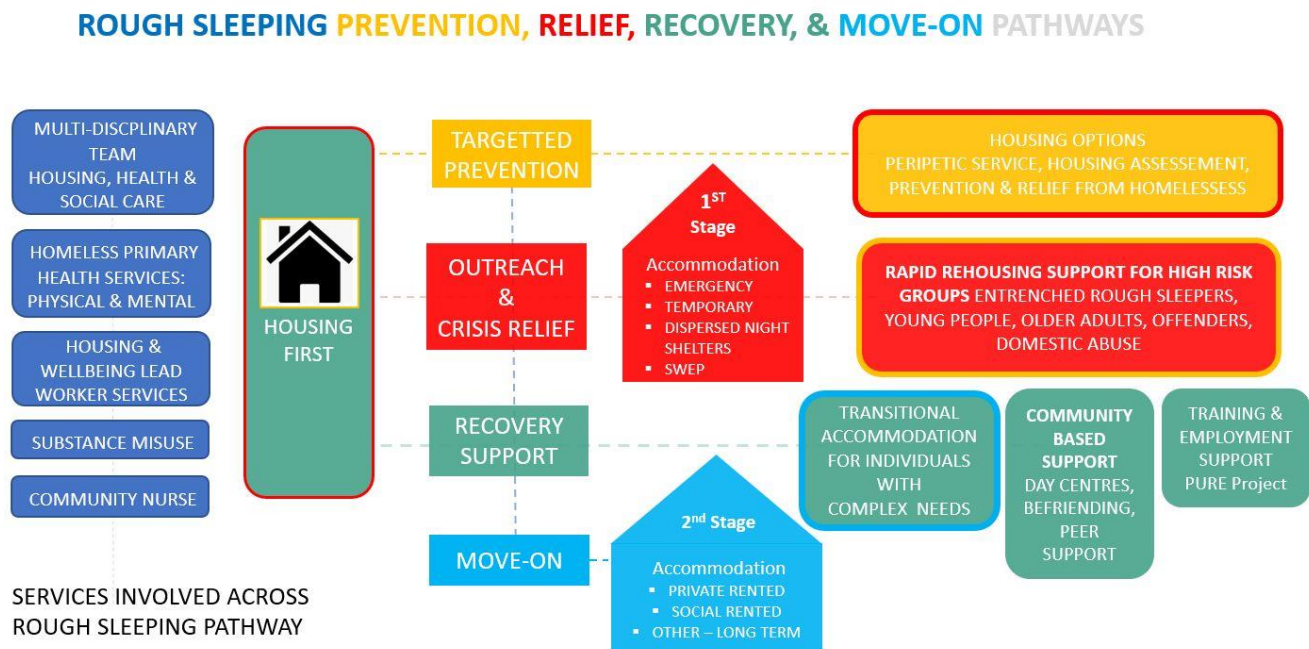
Multiple services are involved in meeting the needs of people sleeping rough. These are normally initiated through street-based outreach services linking rough sleepers to key services including emergency night shelters, housing options, specialist physical and mental services such as substance misuse and housing and wellbeing recovery support and prevention. Often people who sleep rough will need several of these services at once operating across public, voluntary and private sectors, requiring a coordinated approach to provide timely support.

We would like you to tell us what you think by about overall approach and core actions in response to rough sleeping be completing the questionnaire. Below are documents provide more detail and background information in relation to this consultation. Rough Sleeping Addendum, Rough Sleeping Needs Analysis Jan 2020.

Overall Approach – prevention, relief and recovery from rough sleeping

Our overall approach to achieve sustained reductions in rough sleeping is based on embedding comprehensive and preventative solutions to provide pathways out of rough sleeping. By this we mean a safety-net (figure 1) from rough sleeping that is capable of offering personalised support which can be adapted to the individual’s needs capable of preventing rough sleeping, provide relief at the crisis point being roofless on the streets and enable people to recover and move-on from rough sleeping.

Figure 1: Illustration of rough sleeping pathway



Based on our Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+, draft actions area set out at 5 levels or framework domains figure 2).

Core actions identified under each of these levels of action capture both on-going and planned activity in relation to tackling and responding to rough sleeping

Figure 2: Prevention Framework Domains

- 1 Universal - Prevention
- 2 Preventing Rough Sleeping in the First Place
- 3 Crisis Relief
- 4 Recovery
- 5 Move On

After concluding consultation on this strategy, a 3-year action plan will be published with strategy and be routinely reviewed and refreshed on annual basis. The draft priority actions under each of the five themes are described in more detail (pages 4,5,6)

Rough Sleeping Addendum - Draft Priority Actions 2020-2023

1. Universal prevention

We aim to undertake measures to both to further raise public awareness around rough sleeping and to improve how services work collectively to address and prevent rough sleeping. Our key actions include: -

- Development of a communication plan that is regularly updated to raise public awareness and understanding of issues, informing them how they can they can respond to rough sleeping.
- Working with voluntary and community faith sector groups responding to rough sleeping to promote good practice and COVID considerations.
- Rolling out multi-agency processes and protocols such as data and information sharing arrangements to:
 - Enable the delivery of joined-up support rough sleepers in their journey off the streets.
 - Use collective learning from multi-agency processes such as adult safeguarding reviews and information sharing protocols, to continuously improve services responding to rough sleeping. A key example in this area includes investigation, learning and action to prevent rough sleeper deaths.

2. Preventing rough sleeping in the first place

We want to target prevention efforts at gaps in provision for individuals from vulnerable groups most at risk of rough sleeping. Working in partnership with homeless prevention partner organisations and the wider care and support sector, including health and social care services, the groups we have identified are:

- Vulnerable single adults (and couples without children)
- Young people (including those who are care experienced)
- Prison leavers (offenders)
- Specific provision for women and people affected by domestic abuse

These groups and their precarious housing circumstances they find themselves in, require timely multi-agency support and accommodation offers to prevent falling into the crisis of homelessness and sleeping on the streets. Locally investment in specialist Lead Worker and accommodation services for these client groups have also been established to offer early personalised and flexible onward support staying in place individuals as they progress with their move-on plans into settled housing or supported accommodation. Key actions in this area include: -

- Enhancing access to housing advice, prevention and rights for single homeless/childless couples, over 25's
- Putting in place clearer routes into local authority temporary accommodation to ensure the risks of rough sleeping for single adults is minimised.
- Engagement with providers of supported exempt accommodation to promote good practice opportunities in reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.

3. Crisis Relief

Expanded in 2019 Birmingham's Rough Sleeping Outreach Service operates closely with a range of housing, health, social and other critical support services, in crisis settings. Examples include drug and alcohol treatment support and mental health, housing navigators and multi-disciplinary hospital discharge teams. Building upon this and additional investment in health services for rough sleepers, our key areas of action include: -

- Embedding multi-agency working arrangements covering the full range of issues amongst rough sleeping community.
- Establishing clearer support pathways for destitute rough sleepers with no public funds and reconnection support to those arriving on the streets from outside of the city to their local authority.
- Putting in place a team of service navigators to support the most entrenched long-term rough sleepers into services and accommodation
- Ensuring there is room for all people on the streets including severe weather emergency provision in way that is safe and meets COVID-19 requirements.

4. Recovery

For many, recovery from rough sleeping means more than a roof, with coordinated support across the housing, health, social care and community sectors involved. Ongoing key initiatives in this area include Housing First launched in 2018 as part regional pilot and local Lead Worker services established 2019, serving a range of different communities a greatest risk of homelessness and rough sleeping. Whilst different both provide wrap-around housing and wellbeing support on range of needs. Housing First is currently helping over 100 people with a high level of complex or multiple needs that were previously sleeping rough, through securing settled accommodation and the offer of long-term intensive support. Lead Worker services provide support to single adults with complex needs, offenders, young people, domestic abuse and across a variety of accommodation settings.

In light of the COVID-19 emergency, homeless recovery is an emerging and evolving area of work. On-going activity includes EU funded PURE project in Birmingham which includes tailored help to people seeking access education, training and employment being linked to several homeless support services. To prevent homelessness leading to rough sleeping as protections from evictions and public health measures change it will be important to have in

place available professional, community and peer support. Our priority actions in this area include: -

- Putting place peer and professional to support to provide recovery support for vulnerable homeless groups at risk of risk returning or falling into rough sleeping.
- Exploring with the community and faith sectors ways in which to promote good practice opportunities in order to put in place community-based recovery support.
- Identifying and addressing gaps in provision for female rough sleepers.

5. Move-On

The overall shortage of available affordable accommodation continues to present challenges in terms of adequate levels and types of suitable accommodation across the city to the meet overall current and future housing needs. For anyone sleeping rough, when they are ready to move out of emergency accommodation, there needs to adequate levels of move-on accommodation available across council, housing association and private rented sectors. Core actions specifically in relation to improving move-on options for rough sleeping include: -

- Co-locating BCC Housing Options services with voluntary sector provision to provide enhanced access to for those clients potentially on pathway to rough sleeping – particularly single adults (and couples without children).
- Assessing and making better use existing supported exempt accommodation sector housing across the city where this is appropriate for supporting planned moves out of emergency accommodation.
- Maximining national, regional funding and other opportunities to secure move-on opportunities for rough sleepers such as the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI), Everyone-In, Next Steps Accommodation, West Midlands Combined Authority RSI.

Thank you taking the time to read this document and responding to the on-line survey.